

**Paradoxical Integration: Globalised Knowledge Flows and  
Chinese Concepts in Social Theory**

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## Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.



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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores questions of conceptual change and transformation, especially under conditions of globalisation. Drawing on textual analysis, historical investigation and conceptual interpretation the thesis argues that the intensification of globalisation over the last century in particular paradoxically promotes both the spread of West European and American social science concepts and methods at the expense of local concepts and approaches and at the same time provides opportunities for the incorporation of local concepts, including Chinese concepts, into Western or mainstream social theory.

The thesis begins with an empirical and theoretical examination of patterns of global knowledge flows. By considering the role of diverse knowledge institutions and research traditions it argues that the history of globalisation has produced generally asymmetrical knowledge flows through which Western intellectual dominance has been maintained. Yet within this dominance, certain Chinese concepts – such as *guanxi* and *face* – have been taken up and deployed within Western disciplines. A key focus of the thesis is therefore on the processes of conceptual change that occurs under conditions of globalisation. The thesis argues that ‘intellectual entrepreneurs’ combine ideas in new ways, paying attention not only to the selection of alien concepts but also to the modification of the existing intellectual and cultural framework into which foreign concepts are inserted. The thesis thus raises challenging questions about the paradigmatic nature of the intellectual heritage of a society that undergoes significant social and cultural change.



Having focused on the asymmetrical nature of knowledge flows, the thesis then goes on to argue that Western theoretical traditions could benefit from a more systematic engagement with particular Chinese concepts. Through a discussion of several ideas, including xin (heart/mind), the final chapters explore key aspects of Chinese traditions. The value of concrete rather than abstract conceptualisation and a concern with the interrelationship of things are qualities typical of Chinese concepts and their relevance to social theory is explored in these chapters. The thesis concludes that particular Chinese concepts have a significant capacity to expand existing approaches in social theory.

## **Introduction**

Flows of ideas and knowledge, like flows of capital, commodities and people, have increasingly come to typify the globalised world we live in. These flows are also increasingly important in exploring the relations between the West and the East, especially as China emerges as a major economic, political and cultural force in the world. Indeed, the rise of China is transforming the global system itself (Arrighi 2008: Guthrie 2006: 306-332). The academic discussion of globalisation has concentrated on its economic and cultural dimensions. Underlying these are flows of ideas which are often left unexplored in the literature: these are not residual mental phenomena but embodied in practices and relations between people. Yet these ideas and knowledges themselves can also take the form of tradable items that flow in the circuits of global exchange within and between regions of the world.

Particular knowledge, like goods or commodities in general, is produced, desired and consumed in and between different social formations. It is therefore shaped by economic, political and social contexts, by historical changes in those contexts, and by the relations of power which operate within and between such social formations in an increasingly globalised world. This thesis is concerned with those asymmetric knowledge flows which arise through concentrations of resources and relations of power. Not all knowledge is equal. As a cognitive system, knowledge cannot be easily separated from its institutional and social context, so that a politics of knowledge is unavoidable (Delanty 2005: 6). Some knowledge claims are

privileged over others. In the global system 'local' knowledge can be made irrelevant, displaced or otherwise compromised by the knowledge of those associated with dominating power. This thesis will not only examine key aspects of knowledge flows between the West and East, it will also argue that Western knowledge in the form of dominant social theory may expand its explanatory capacities by incorporating alien ideas, especially those associated with selected Chinese concepts. Chinese concepts are especially relevant for the enhancement of social theory because they tend to be concrete rather than abstract and sensitive to the relational properties of associations. The argument here is not that only Chinese concepts have these properties but that the relevant literatures concerning Chinese history, society and philosophy are sufficiently developed to make the argument cogent and supported with firm evidence, as shown in the chapters to follow.

A good deal of the discussion of the thesis is concerned with concepts. Without concepts observations cannot be meaningfully assimilated into an experience or a point of view (Merton 1968: 143-5). This notion may seem mistaken because a common prejudice assumes that we construct our ideas from our experiences. Linguistic and cultural theory, however, tells us that cognitive categories or concepts affect the way in which people think and behave. Indeed, the world is known through the concepts that are used to grasp and understand it. Concepts are in this sense the basis of knowledge. Concepts are the lens through which our experiences of the world and our actions in it are shaped. The debate in the history of philosophy between empiricists, who believe that experience determines knowledge, and rationalists, who believe that reason – and the concepts upon which reason draws – determines knowledge, has been largely resolved by cognitive and social scientists who show that individuals – and cultures – understand their

experiences, and respond to them, though the interpretive schema that they have. These interpretive schema are known as ‘frames’ (Goffman 1974; Tversky and Kahneman 1981) and they consist of cognitive categories or concepts that make up the ways through which we see and explain the world we experience and thus influences our actions in it.

The discussion of the thesis is less concerned with the power of concepts to simply influence thought and action and more with the ways in which concepts and the knowledge forms that they are associated with are transformed in moving from one context to another. This concern with conceptual change and the processes through which it is achieved operates on two levels. One is the level of societal and historical movements of concepts from, say, Europe to China. Another level concerns the incorporation of ‘alien’ concepts into mainstream Western social theory in order to expand its explanatory competence. Both sets of issues become particularly pressing under conditions of globalisation and in consideration of the consequences of globalisation for knowledge flows.

Globalisation is the process through which economic goods and resources, people, cultural practices, techniques and knowledge circulate more or less freely across the restrictions of national barriers. Globalisation is sometimes seen as a historically recent phenomenon, associated with late modernity (Giddens 1990; Harvey 1990). There is a contrasting view that globalisation has affected human communities for millennia and is a constant source of dynamism in human history. These different positions are discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis. The point being made here, though, is that knowledge and the concepts that constitute it can be subject to the circulations or flows that characterise globalisation. Given the differences between forms of knowledge in an increasingly global world, and the

unequal relations between its different parts, the direction of knowledge flow is likely to be from the more powerful economic and political regions to those with fewer resources or capacities. In this way some forms of knowledge may be modified by contact with other forms of knowledge, synthesised with them, or even displaced by them, among other possibilities.

The concepts that are of particular interest in this thesis are those taken from the Chinese intellectual heritage, as indicated above. China's place in the world has changed enormously in the 150 years since it was defeated in the Opium Wars in the middle of the nineteenth century. At that time the question of what foreign ideas, values, meanings and practices flowed into China and how they might integrate or coexist with various trends in Chinese culture was a question of immense political and cultural significance for the Chinese political elite and intellectuals, as well as for the foreign missionaries, statesmen, merchants and military personnel of the nations that subjugated China. Since the 1980s China's position in the system of globalisation has reversed from subordination to one of great influence and regional if not global leadership. Chinese manufactured goods increasingly tend to predominate in economic circuits and Chinese cultural products and knowledge, including traditional Chinese medicine and Chinese language are increasingly exported to Europe, America, and the rest of the non-Chinese world including Australia.

As well as the questions raised by the reversal of China's subordination in the global system for consideration of knowledge flows and conceptual transformation, which will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3, Chinese concepts are of particular interest because of their characteristic qualities of interrelatedness and concreteness, which are discussed in chapter 4. These qualities are particularly appropriate for

social and cultural theories. The history of social theory, its development and intellectual practices are Western in the sense that it grew out of reflection on the nineteenth century transformations of European and American industrialisation, democratisation and urbanisation (Nisbet 2004). Despite this beginning, or more realistically as a consequence of it, social science has always claimed for itself universal or general applicability and been part of the unequal knowledge flows that are a feature of modern globalisation. This is treated in chapters 1 and 2. It is also argued in chapters 5, 6, and 7 that social theory can indeed more ably realise its ‘universal’ pretensions by incorporating certain Chinese concepts into its theoretical domain.

The arguments of this thesis have in common with other approaches a perception that asymmetric knowledge flows are potentially problematic for those in the subordinate culture. Globalisation tends to compel people from non-Western cultures to reconsider the position of their own knowledge-set in light of global asymmetries. Two broad responses to the established asymmetric globalised knowledge flows located in the literature will be identified and briefly discussed here and a third possibility will be outlined, to be more fully substantiated in the chapters to follow.

One response of intellectuals in the periphery to their subordination in global asymmetric knowledge flows is simply to reject ‘Western knowledge’ in order to preserve or at least protect their own local culture. This approach, which constitutes a conservative orientation toward established local systems, entails a blocking of Western knowledge. The problem, however, is that such a strategy does not so much preserve the original culture but in combating external influence the local culture is effectively transformed by highlighting isolationist and combative elements,

ironically demonstrating the impossibility of preserving a culture when it faces contact with another. In attempting to avert the direct influence of foreign knowledge by isolationist measures, the protective strategy itself has transformative consequences that otherwise would not have occurred (Césaire 2000).

In recent indigenous anti-Western-hegemony discourses in Latin America, Africa and New Zealand a strategy of protectionism has been promoted as a means of preserving local knowledge against the intrusive encroachment of Western knowledge conveyed through global processes (Stewart-Harawira 2005). Similar strategies have been applied in Burma and North Korea, for instance, but with a level of political enforcement that is not found in those other cases. Such an extreme course of action, as Samuel Huntington (2010: 324) has put it, serves ‘to insulate [these] societies from penetration or “corruption” by the West, and, in effect, to opt out of participation in the Western-dominated global community’. Yet the idea of a pristine culture implicit in these strategies misunderstands the necessarily porous nature of culture, including intellectual culture.

Cultural transformation sponsored by resistance to exogenous forces indicates the inevitability of failure for any endeavour to isolate a culture from influence by another culture. In an interesting comment on the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986 to the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, Ulf Hannerz (2008: 114) reflects on the way Soyinka’s imagination, rooted in Nigerian mythology and creatively drew on Western literary expertise. It is necessary to say ‘creatively drew on’ because Soyinka did not simply absorb or contest Western literary forms, but his complex relationship with them – of resistance and attraction – enriched his own writing. Hannerz goes on to caution that ‘[w]ithout a certain openness to impulses from the outside world, we would expect science, art and literature to become

impoverished anywhere'. The issue might be construed not as the problem of contact itself with a foreign culture but rather one which concerns the terms in which that contact occurs. This leads to a second type of response to asymmetric knowledge flows.

This leads to a second type of response to asymmetric knowledge flows, which operates in a quite different register. This response is designed to harness the explanatory power of non-Western concepts in order to enhance the development of the theories constructed and applied by Western and non-Western researchers alike. In an important treatment of what the Australian sociologist, Raewyn Connell, calls Southern Theory is the argument that 'colonised and peripheral societies produce social thought about the modern world which has as much intellectual power as metropolitan social thought, and more political relevance' (Connell 2007: xii; see also Lingard 2006: 300; Luke 2005: 164). In this context, according to Connell, the claims of their universal relevance made by Western theory in general can be achieved only by abandoning its hegemonic presence. Connell argues that while 'thematising colonialism and world inequality within metropolitan social science' might be 'inspiring' it nevertheless 'has a profound problem: it works through categories produced in the metropole, and does not dialogue with the ideas produced by the colonised world' (Connell 2007: xi). The emphasis here, on a 'dialogue with the ideas produced by the colonised world', both acknowledges a place for Western theory and the significance of its conversation with ideas produced outside of its original construction. It is in this dialogue that the democratic element that Connell calls for can be located, as necessary in the production of a global social science and, presumably, more broadly social theory and socio-cultural analysis in general. Through such a dialogue Western or what Connell calls metropolitan social science



must engage with contemporary Southern theorists as opposed to their intellectual traditions. This distinction between present and past thought is important for Connell because she believes that a feature of metropolitan social science is to relegate non-Western theories to history through their displacement by metropolitan social science itself when it is applied in colonised regions. Thus under the domination of metropolitan theory ‘the Indian intellectual [for instance] is forced to relegate local bodies of thought to the past – to treat them as “traditions” of historical or ethnographic interest’ (Connell 2007: xi).

It might be true, as Connell claims, that finding alternative ‘founding fathers’ of social science in non-Western histories ‘may be counter-productive, placing the glories of Arab or African thought firmly in a distant past’ (Connell 2007: xi). But that is to refer to one possible (mis)use of intellectual resources and not their capacity to encourage current theorising. It is unnecessary to separate the past and the present, however, as social thought about the modern social world typically draws on antecedents wherever that thought is produced. Any dynamic knowledge system, as Catherine Hoppers (2002: 8) indicates, ‘has to evolve through the continuance of traditional knowledge and contemporary innovations’. The case studies Connell presents are about thinkers who draw on national traditions in various ways. This is one aspect of the unification of social science that Connell seeks, in which conceptual borrowing for theory development must be multi-lateral: ‘Every significant development in the social sciences in the periphery makes some use of concepts or techniques from the metropole’ (Connell 2007: 223).

Connell (2007: 231) takes it as a democratic cause to contest a privileged minority’s control of a field of knowledge and ask for recognition of ideas from the periphery. Similarly, Arjun Appadurai (2001: 4) is concerned with ‘the conditions of

possibility for the democratization of research about globalization in the context of certain dominant forms of critical knowledge, especially as these forms have come to be recognized by the social sciences in the West'. This is a matter that concerns Paulin Hountondji (2002: 37) also, who expresses a need to 'invent ways in which knowledge can be better shared by the North and the South in all its phases, be it the phase of production, accumulation and capitalisation, or of application'. In order for there to be a dialogue between the North and South, it will be necessary, Connell (2007: 227) says, to change the nature of institutional affiliations, citation practices, publication strategies and research funding. Appadurai calls for hemispheric collaboration in similar terms to Connell's (2007: 214) idea that it is necessary to rework 'the relations between periphery and metropole, to make a shared learning process possible', when he writes that 'a new architecture for providing and sharing knowledge about globalization could provide the foundations of a pedagogy that closes this gap and helps democratize the flow of knowledge about globalization itself' (Appadurai 2001: 20).

An approach which addresses asymmetric knowledge flows through the democratisation of a dialogue between metropolitan social theory and theorists of the colonised periphery acknowledges the significance of a political context permissive of a more symmetrical knowledge production. The question remains, though, of the mechanisms through which the production of that more global knowledge is to be achieved. The institutional issues which Connell refers to, mentioned above, including the bases of organisational membership, citation practices, publication strategies and sources for the funding of research are all important matters. But the intellectual practices through which Chinese and other 'foreign' concepts are incorporated into Western social theory in order to augment its competence, not only

for the development of a global social science but even in its own terms of general applicability, are not addressed by Connell, Appadurai and other contributors to this discussion of the democratisation of social sciences under conditions of asymmetric global knowledge flows.

In treating the question of the intellectual practices of augmenting the explanatory capacities of Western social theory a third approach to the problem of asymmetrical knowledge flows emerges; it is the one presented in this thesis. This approach argues that concepts from non-Western knowledge systems can be integrated into what Connell calls metropolitan theories. For a number of reasons which have already been alluded to and which will become clearer in subsequent chapters the non-Western sources drawn on here are exclusively Chinese. While the significance of Chinese concepts as resources for research and theorising will be defended in what follows it is not the argument of this thesis that only Chinese concepts are meaningfully available for the purpose of not democratising Western social and cultural theories but enhancing their explanatory competence. Connell draws upon a number of intellectual traditions, including Islamic, Indian, Latin American, and African, in demonstration of the potential for the development of globalised social sciences from these sources. But in order to not simply advocate the possibility of extending the theoretical power of Western theory through some form of democratic integration with non-Western or local concepts it is necessary to show how such reformulation of Western theory can be achieved and how local (in this case Chinese) concepts can be employed in actually developing social theory of Western origin. It is said here 'of Western origin' because the transformation of theory through incorporation of Chinese concepts must mean that the resulting theory can no longer be readily characterised as simply Western or metropolitan.

The position to be developed here is not to argue for democratic co-existent equality and fair representation of ideas or concepts in social science, drawn from representative cultures. Nor is it within the scope of this thesis to address in practical terms the unequal distribution of economic power associated with current globalisation and its impact on institutions of asymmetric knowledge flows between different regions of the world. These important issues of institution building are practical matters that must be addressed by those who exercise power in education ministries, research funding organisations, universities and academic publishing houses. The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate not only the nature of asymmetrical knowledge flows but also the way in which Western or metropolitan social theory might be reconstituted through the incorporation of particular relevant Chinese concepts.

The argument here is that by integrating particular Chinese concepts into theories conveyed by or received through uneven knowledge flows there arises the possibility of alternative perspectives on understanding social relationships and institutions. In this way the original social theories are themselves transformed and the resulting reorientation of explanatory outlook constitutes an alternative to existing frameworks in mainstream social theory. The ‘scientific’ and not merely ‘political’ reason for doing this is noted by Alasdair MacIntyre’s (1988: 362) discussion of the means of overcoming epistemological crisis, the solution of which ‘requires the invention or discovery of new concepts and the framing of some new type or types of theory’. Epistemological crises aside, the advancement of theory under any conditions and the framing of new theories must include the development and application of concepts that both better constitute the reality under consideration and explain variations within it.

The place of conceptual innovation and refinement in the development of social theory has been only occasionally mentioned in the literature. In his classic discussion of the reciprocal relationship between sociological theory and empirical research the American sociologist Robert Merton notes that the 'basic requirement of research is that the concepts, the variables, be defined with a sufficient clarity to enable the research to proceed' (Merton 1968: 168). Merton indicates that concepts are the means through which observations are formed and orientated, and that their significance in identifying and defining the elements of empirical data and their relationships is therefore fundamental (Merton 1968: 143-5). The task of conceptual analysis, refinement and innovation or development is necessary to identify and understand previously neglected objects and relationships and thereby advance social theory (Merton 1968: 146-7). In this way a change of concepts, or an introduction of new ones, is a change of theory.

Given the importance of concepts to both empirical research and the advancement of theories, what is the source of new concepts? A relatively small number of concepts in the social sciences are specially engineered neologisms that serve specific analytic functions. These include terms such as 'structuration', associated with the work of Anthony Giddens (1979). The vast majority of terms in the social sciences, however, are taken from everyday language and become transformed by virtue of the specialised role they are given in exposition and explanation. These include 'solidarity', 'mobility', 'vocation', 'identity', and so on. Another source of concepts in social sciences is through the vocabulary of leading non-English writing theorists. The German sociologist Max Weber is responsible for the introduction of 'verstehen' to English-language sociology; the French sociologist Emile Durkheim brought the concept of 'anomie' to American and British sociology;

and the influence of Pierre Bourdieu has popularised 'habitus' in English-language sociology.

Another possibility, which will be argued in chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7, is that the potential contribution to social science of concepts drawn from the Chinese language may be sufficiently significant that 'sponsorship' by a particular theorist is unnecessary. It is interesting that the relevance of certain Chinese concepts for the development of sociological theory is not a new idea. In his path-breaking treatment of 'face' and 'face-work' which redirected sociological theory to an understanding of the social and interactive bases of self conceptions, Erving Goffman (1972: 5-6) drew upon and acknowledged his debt to the Chinese concept of face (*mianzi*), as we shall see in chapter 5. Less well known but equally important for my argument, the potential importance of Chinese concepts for the advancement of social theory was forcefully stated in C. Wright Mills' remarkable but neglected critique – on the basis of Chinese categories of thought – of the sociology of knowledge, in a posthumously published article, 'The Language and Ideas of Ancient China' (Mills 1974).

Before this thesis takes up the question of the augmentation of social theory with Chinese concepts it has been necessary to consider the issue of asymmetrical knowledge flows under conditions of late modern globalisation, in chapters 1 and 2. In order to grasp the actual processes of the assimilation of alien concepts into an existing theoretical field, the case of the flow of knowledge into China from the period of Western incursion from the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century is considered in chapter 3, and for the much earlier period of the sinicisation of Buddhism, from the second century BC until the ninth century AD, in chapter 4. In all of this the concern is to understand the nature of knowledge flows and the ways in which concepts from one intellectual setting can function in a quite different setting.

This requires not only an understanding of the historical background of contact between different intellectual heritages but also an account of the agents and processes of the apprehension and transformation of concepts drawn from one setting and their integration in another setting characterised by distinct cultural practices.

The first two chapters document the patterns of asymmetrical knowledge flows in a globalised world. Chapter 1, 'Globalisation and Asymmetric Knowledge Flows', shows that knowledge flows and their organisational and cultural apparatuses are not only structured but that the patterns within such structures have tended to maintain the inequalities associated with the idea of Western dominance. At the same time it is demonstrated that there is no simple direct or one-way flow. Indeed, various pressures tend to influence the shape, forms and directions in which knowledge flows in a globalised world. After considering the problematic terms 'West' and 'East', which are almost unavoidable in discussion of global inequalities, the chapter considers different conceptualisations of globalisation, its historicity, and the ways in which it operates as a context for knowledge flows. The role of institutions, research careers, publishers and publishing practices are all considered in the chapter.

The empirical analysis of globalised knowledge flows is continued in the next chapter, 'A Case Study of Globalised Knowledge: Guanxi in Social Science and Management Theory', which reports a review of 214 journal articles published between 1999 and 2009. For a number of reasons the Chinese concept of guanxi has become the subject of research that is reported in predominantly American and European academic journals. It is possible, then, to examine the degree to which the theories applied in such studies have been modified by their apprehension of this

concept; that is, whether the direction of ‘knowledge flow’ has been influenced by such contact. It is shown in the chapter that in the vast majority of instances guanxi is explained by theories which are simply applied to Chinese, Southeast Asian or East Asian contexts without the concept influencing the development of the theories themselves. This is explained in the chapter in terms of the national ownership of journal publishing houses, the geographic location of editorial board members and their educational backgrounds. The chapter goes on to consider how the ways in which guanxi is treated in this literature overlooks broader implications of the concept and therefore misses opportunities to expand the competence of existing theories. Through a detailed analysis it is demonstrated in the chapter that guanxi can augment current understandings of social capital and related notions in the social sciences, indicating how aspects of guanxi might transform existing theoretical formulations.

The contemporary situation of asymmetrical knowledge flows and the institutions and practices that tend to support the predominance of knowledge forms that originate in the centres of global economic and political power is considered in the first two chapters. It is argued in chapter 2, however, that the intellectual benefits of alternative movements of concepts can also be demonstrated. This raises the question of the assimilation of alien concepts into dominant theories. Such a possibility is not merely hypothetical because contact between different societies results in cultural borrowing of various kinds. The assimilation of ideas from one society into another has occurred since human societies have existed. Chapters 3 and 4 address the issues that arise out of a consideration of the mechanisms through which concepts from one culture become assimilated into the ‘thinking’ of another.



The historical process of the selection, transformation and assimilation of European and American concepts into China from the mid-nineteenth century to the end of the Republican period in the early twentieth century is treated in chapter 3, 'Western Thought in China: An Historical Case of Knowledge Flow'. The Western incursion into China during the nineteenth century left the Chinese political and social structure more or less intact but brought a national sense of defeat and humiliation to the ruling imperial elite, the intelligentsia of literati and educated youth. The various phases of the selection and incorporation of foreign ideas in order to make China strong are treated in detail although the purpose of the chapter is to explain the processes whereby alien concepts are transformed for inclusion into an existing theoretical framework. In the chapter the question of how knowledge diffusion occurs is answered by identifying the activities of 'intellectual entrepreneurs' who combine ideas in new ways, paying attention not only to the selection of alien concepts which they develop, deploy and elaborate but also to the modification of the existing intellectual framework into which the transformed concepts are inserted.

The argument of chapter 3, then, is that in their combination of elements from both a foreign and domestic context, intellectual entrepreneurs make something that had not previously existed and which can operate as a newly introduced knowledge only if the resistance of the established intellectual framework can be overcome. In this way the local and original conceptual structure cannot remain unchanged. This raises the question of how meaningful it is to refer to an enduring intellectual heritage. This question is answered in chapter 4, 'China's Intellectual Heritage: Paradigms as Frameworks'. The chapter begins with an examination of how Indian

Buddhism was sinicised in the period from the second century BC, when Buddhism was first introduced into China from India, to the ninth century AD when Buddhism had become an accepted aspect of Chinese intellectual life. This is another instance of asymmetric knowledge flow and it provides an excellent case from which to develop the argument of the thesis. The major purpose of the chapter, however, is to show how an intellectual heritage persists through the manner in which it undergoes profound transformation. The paradigmatic nature of the notion of intellectual heritage is demonstrated in the chapter through a discussion of the work of the philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn. An intellectual heritage, it is shown, is a framework which provides continuity for the generation and acceptance of conceptual change. The characteristic features of the Chinese intellectual heritage are identified in the chapter and the contexts which contribute to its distinctiveness and provide a framework for its continuance are discussed. These contexts are China's geographic isolation, its social structure based on inland trade and agriculture and its logographic written and tonal spoken language.

It is shown in chapter 4 that distinctive elements of the Chinese intellectual heritage include a focus on concrete rather than abstract aspects of phenomena and the idea that no matter how dissimilar or opposed things may be they nevertheless partake in a fundamental interrelationship with all other things through which development continuously occurs. These qualities can be found in Chinese concepts which have particular relevance for the development of social theory, a proposition explored in the three remaining chapters of the thesis which each considers a particular Chinese concept and shows how it addresses questions of social analysis and adds to the existing approaches of social theory.

The social anchoring of self in the gaze of others is a universal phenomenon, treated in sociology in terms of the notion of a ‘looking-glass self’ by Charles Horton Cooley (1964) and much earlier by Adam Smith (1982), and through the concept of face by the twentieth century American sociologist Erving Goffman (1972). It is shown in chapter 5, ‘Face: A Chinese Concept in a Global Sociology’, that Goffman drew on the Chinese concept of face in developing his theory of ‘face-work’. The chapter shows how a return to the Chinese concept, which embraces two distinct terms for face, *lian* and *mianzi*, is the base from which a comprehensive account of face can be developed which extends existing theories. Although face is a universal experience the high salience of face in Chinese society means that the Chinese concept of face highlights aspects of face that are less visible in non-Chinese societies and in existing sociological accounts of the phenomenon. It is an irony of the development of sociology in China that until recently Chinese discussions of face have been conducted in English in explaining Chinese characteristics to foreigners. This too is discussed in the chapter and can be seen as a further consequence of asymmetric knowledge flows.

In chapter 6, ‘Relations of Emotion and Reason: The Challenge of the Concept of *Xin* (Heart/Mind)’, the Chinese concept of *xin* is explored in discussion of the relations between emotion and reason. In the European intellectual heritage emotion and reason are typically seen as opposed and antithetical forces. While there are now philosophical, sociological and neurological arguments against this dichotomy it nevertheless persists for social structural reasons that are discussed in the final section of the chapter, which also considers the social structural basis of the Chinese conceptualisation of the unity of emotion and reason in *xin*. The Chinese

concept of xin, then, operates in terms of a non-oppositional interdependence of emotions and reason, unified as ‘heart/mind’. All the major classical thinkers of China discuss xin, some of them in great detail. The chapter shows how the concept of xin supports those Western approaches critical of the conventional opposition of emotion and reason, but which are themselves unaware of this resource. Through consideration of xin neglected aspects of the ways in which emotion and reason interact together in human action are captured.

It is fitting that the concept treated in the final chapter of the thesis is methodological rather than substantive, which addresses questions of the logic of inquiry. Chapter 7, ‘Paradoxical Integration, Contradiction and the Logic of Social Analysis’, focuses on a concept taken from the classic source Daodejing in which the relations of opposites are given meaning. The place of the Daodejing and Daoist thought in general are discussed as background to an exposition of the concept of paradoxical integration (fanhe). The chapter examines three distinct forms of paradoxical integration that are relevant for social research. These are, first, interdependency of opposites, in which one element of a pair is required for the meaning and purpose of the other element. Second, the paradoxical integration of generation is outlined through which one thing contemporaneously becomes something else. Finally, the paradoxical integration of reversal is described, which refers to those situations in which one thing provides access to its opposite. Instances of ad hoc use of paradoxical integration in recent social science are then discussed to demonstrate the importance of the principle of paradoxical integration for social research and theorising.

It can be seen from this brief description of the seven chapters of this thesis that a number of different literatures, methods, and disciplinary resources were drawn upon in the research. As well as social theory, historical, philosophical and linguistic materials have been accessed in the production of an inter-disciplinary argument. The methods that have been applied in the research are also varied, paralleling the diverse sources and approaches used. The purpose of the argument has been to reveal asymmetries of knowledge flows in a global world, but more pressingly to reveal the mechanisms underlying those processes and to show how it is possible to be theoretically creative in enhancing social theory by incorporating selected Chinese concepts.

# Chapter 1

## Globalisation and Asymmetric Knowledge Flows

### Introduction

A defining theme of globalisation is the movement of goods and services, people, ideas, and cultural products across national borders. Kenichi Ohmae (1999), for instance, encourages the view that entrepreneurship and firms operate in what is today a 'borderless world'. This idea, that borders – though they continue to exist – can be simply passed over and are no longer impeding boundaries, applies also to the cultural realm, as when Arjun Appadurai (1996: 37-40) refers to the condition of 'deterritorialization' which he sees as now effectively universal. Indeed, Roland Robertson (1994) shows that through globalisation established identities and meaning systems are challenged by being confronted with an array of apparent alternative representations and possibilities. In this way globalisation refers to both 'the compression of the world' and also an 'intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole' (Robertson 1994: 8). These and similar characterisations of a world in which national and cultural boundaries are porous raise a question addressed in this chapter: what is the shape and direction of the flows, in particular the knowledge flows, that pass through the permeable boundaries of this globalised world?

While the concept of knowledge, which indicates an awareness of something acquired through experience of it, refers to a state of mind concerning a fact, a thing or an event, the idea of a 'knowledge flow' requires some explanation. The term knowledge refers to a form of understanding but it can also indicate a recorded body of information about a subject, that is, all that is known about a subject. The notion of knowledge in this sense is not confined to a state of mind but refers to a record of statements about a subject. Such statements will possess a form that includes concepts and theories, and also the methods adapted to generate the knowledge that has conceptual and theoretical form. Knowledge in this sense may be materially manifest in the form of books and journals and is almost always culturally embedded in both the manner of its expression and communication and also in terms of the practices and identities of the groups associated with it. Indeed, knowledge 'as a cognitive practice [is] ... a medium of cultural production', as Gerard Delanty (1999: 184) has put it. Knowledge is also embedded in technologies of various sorts. It will be clear, then, that knowledge can refer not only to a state of mind but also to more tangible things that may be associated with particular social or economic groups, or geographic regions, or cultural practices. As a tangible thing or product knowledge in this sense can be subject to possession, appropriation and movement. Knowledge flow then refers to the movement of particular concepts, theories and methods between distinct social and economic groups, geographic regions and cultural settings. Knowledge flow may be manifest in the movement of technologies and in cultural exchanges. It always involves the availability of concepts, theories and methods to those outside of the group, area or culture in which it is originally produced.

The flow and mobility of knowledge, and its organisational, technical and cultural apparatuses, are implicated in the movements of goods and services, people, ideas, and cultural products that are central to globalisation. Knowledge flow also has an independent existence in a number of ways, including through the development of both education and publishing as international industries, and through the development of knowledge transfer and knowledge management as specialist activities. The purpose of this chapter is to set out the discernible patterns, structures or shapes of globalised knowledge flows. It will be argued that they are not symmetrical between the different parts or regions of the globalised world but rather asymmetrical, reflecting associated inequalities of resources and capacities and also imbalances of political and economic power. The asymmetries of globalised knowledge flows tend to parallel the inequalities associated with the practices of Western dominance. What is referred to here is not a simple direct or one-way flow, however. Neither does the idea of dominance preclude the possibility of resistance, appropriation, modification and change. Indeed, the following discussion will show how various pressures are constantly tending to influence the shape, forms and directions in which knowledge actually flows in a globalised world. But the details that will be indicated in the following discussion cannot be seen outside of a framework in which the current Western hegemony of academic knowledge is constantly challenged and re-negotiated.

The terms domination and hegemony mentioned in the preceding paragraph will be used in the following discussion simply to refer to those situations in which a position of command or an exercise of control is more or less pragmatically or expediently accepted by those subjected to such power. The idea of hegemony in this sense, which comes from the Greek term *hēgemonia* meaning ‘leadership’, has an



established usage in discussions of national histories and international relations. It is a usage which accepts that leadership may be subject to challenge, internal modification and may even incorporate the capabilities of those subject to such leadership. Antonio Gramsci (1971: 55-60) famously applied the term hegemony to those situations of acceptance of and compliance with ruling class domination through cultural instruments such as religion in the Italian south during the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century in order to explain the problems of 'Risorgimento' or unification. The concept of hegemonic domination in the discussion below similarly refers to the outcome of relationships in which subordination neither implies defeat and conquest nor that the subordinated are denied possible expression of their own resources.

Theories of globalisation, and the discussion concerning knowledge flows found in some of them, play a crucial role in shaping the argument of this thesis and provide some of the theoretical tools deployed in the research and exposition of the position it adopts. While globalising processes have progressively and increasingly integrated the various currents and flows of knowledge – in both intellectual content and conveying media – the direction of these flows, is more or less consistent with the attraction exerted by the concentrations of economic and political power that can be located in the global knowledge networks. While knowledge can always be assessed and judged in its own terms, as being correct or proven or useful in making sense of the things it addresses, the economic resources and capacities that underlie the creation, collection and transmission of knowledge, and the political frameworks, purposes and interests that shape, direct and interpret such knowledge are central concerns in understanding the configuration of knowledge flows under all material conditions, and the conditions of globalisation in particular.

Of continuing interest in this thesis is knowledge about society, including the concepts and theories such knowledge consists of. It was mentioned in the Introduction that, according to Connell (2007), this knowledge flows from the metropole (to use Connell's term), through the conduits of American, British and Western European institutions and fields, to the rest of the world. But the cultural and intellectual dominance of Anglo-American social theory generates a counter dynamic of its own. This is because social theory necessarily derives from or reflects social and political experiences which are unavoidably of a particular place and time, and frequently likely to be at odds with the conceptualisations internal to the sociological knowledge of the metropole contained in books and articles published in London, New York or Paris, say, which is grounded in social experiences frequently unlike those of the destination of such exogenously produced and globally distributed materials. Pierre Bourdieu (1999: 221) expresses this concern by pointing out that texts such as these 'do not bring with them the field of production of which they are a product, and the fact that the recipients, who are themselves in a different field of production, re-interpret the texts in accordance with the structure of the field of reception, are facts that generate some formidable misunderstandings'. Thus in a globalised world Western theory and concepts become increasingly vulnerable to critique, challenge, modification and incorporation in extraneous cultural spaces. An orientation of knowledge flows of this type is therefore unsustainable in a world in which globalisation has effectively encouraged participants in non-Western cultures to regard their own knowledge-set as either threatened, and thus generating a response of 'protectionism' against globalisation, or available for global incorporation, thus challenging the asymmetric patterns of Western hegemonic globalised knowledge flows.

### **A Note on the Terms ‘West’ and ‘East’**

A discussion of global knowledge flows, which ranges beyond singular cultural reference points, is likely to draw on short-hand terms such as ‘West’ and ‘East’, ‘North’ and ‘South’, ‘metropole’ and ‘periphery’ and their functional equivalents. When these and similar terms are used in the present discussion they are not intended to convey uniform, inherent or essential sets of characteristics. Nor are they summary terms indicating clear geographic divisions or dichotomised cultural divides. It is appropriate, therefore, to consider the background and problems of these terms which have a history that Johann Arnason (2009: 220) shows goes back to the likely source of such dichotomising views in ‘the [Ancient] Greek encounter with the Near East – a combination of borrowing and demarcation through distinctive inventions, followed by conflict and counter-offensive’. Arnason (2009: 220) goes on to say that both ‘classical Greek affirmations of a political contrast to the East and Hellenistic speculations about an Eastern ancestry of philosophy could be seen as prototypes of later trends’.

The expansion of markets and exploration which began in the seventeenth century and continued during the eighteenth century by Portuguese, Dutch and English navigators and adventurers led European powers to have contact with other civilisations, including Asian civilisations, which produced a growing interest in the diversity of non-European cultures. These contacts with Asia in particular not only affected European style – expressed in the term ‘Chinoiserie’ – but paradoxically reinforced a sense of division between Europe and the ‘East’ (Honour 1961; Impey 1977). This sense of difference was exacerbated after 1800 when industrialisation became ‘the main dividing line [that] was drawn between the ascendant Western European region and the major Near Eastern and Asian civilizational complexes’

(Arnason 2009: 221). The polarising view which saw the West as ‘a privileged domain of reason and freedom in progress towards universal rule’ and the East as a situation of ‘permanent stagnation, [and of a] failure to develop beyond early beginnings’ Arnason (2009: 221-222) says was primarily expressed in Hegel’s philosophy of history. The distinctive notion of a fundamental divide between West and East is further consolidated by divergent theories in the work of Karl Marx and Max Weber as well as the more recent work of Edward Said.

In the Communist Manifesto Marx (1970: 39) addresses the question of how the industrialising powers of Western Europe, through the development of an international or global market, ‘batters down all Chinese walls’ which have behind them unchanging village economies based on tradition and inertia. Marx’s vision was of a world comprising class relations which both divided that world and were the engine through which those divisions would be ultimately overcome. Marx entertained the idea that different regions were subject to distinct modes of production and while the capitalist mode of production was globally expansive it had an undeniably European origin and location. In its constitution and dynamism it is quite unlike the moribund Asiatic mode of production, distinguished in his ‘Preface’ to The Critique of Political Economy from the ancient, feudal and capitalist modes, through which civilisational differences are shown in clear relief (Marx 1970: 182).

Even more exaggerated is Weber’s (1991) argument concerning what he saw as the unique cultural and economic development of the West or, in his terminology, the Occident, in which a form of rationalisation sponsored by Protestant Christianity is allegedly responsible for the origin of forms of culture, economy, political state and cities denied to the Orient. Weber’s examination of Chinese (Weber 1964) and Indian (Weber 1960) cultures was to demonstrate the ways in which they were

almost completely removed from Western civilisation. It is ironic that this strict division between West and East is continued in Said's *Orientalism* (1979). Said's argument effectively supports the vision of a monolithic Occidentalism opposed to a subject Orientalism. While Said's purpose is to criticise Western views of the Middle East, his Foucaultian treatment of entrenched discourses effectively further contributes to the polarising notions of East and West.

These classic assertions of the dichotomy of East and West have provoked significant contributions to an ongoing reinterpretation of these blanket terms. A number of scholars have shown that the terms cannot represent a significant disjuncture between histories and peoples as there have always been important socio-cultural encounters, interactions and interpenetrations between and across assumed division of East and West. Joseph Needham's (1954-2004) landmark research on Chinese achievements in science and technology, which constitutes a breakthrough in civilisational studies, indicates that there has been a 3,000 year long dialogue across what is assumed to be an East-West divide. Jack Goody (1996) similarly argues that logical thought was present in all the great oriental civilisations and not only in the West, and that the links of kinship, seen by Weber as entirely traditional and non-rational, have contributed to the economic development in the past and present of the West as much as in the East. John Hobson (2004) provides a substantial discussion, arguing that 'the East enabled the rise of the West' (Hobson 2004: 2-3) through diffusion of its global economy and global communications network after 500AD and through the West's appropriation of these resource portfolios.

The geographic divisions of the West and the East, the North and the South, and the metropole and the periphery, which may be seen as particularly meaningful

because they are arguably a physical source of global cleavage, are not any more unequivocal and unproblematic than other bases of the firm distinction that have been noted above. Geography cannot arbitrate on this matter when so many geographic regions cannot be unequivocally allocated to, say, the West or the East. Russia and Turkey, for instance, both stand as ambiguous identities with mixed elements of East and West. Australia and New Zealand are capitalistically developed countries geographically in the South, historically aligned to European and more recently American culture but with significant proportions of their populations affiliated with Asian and Middle Eastern cultures. Sociologically they are quite mixed although Connell (2007) refers to them as 'Southern'. Japan is regarded as an instance of an economically developed metropole although it has never achieved a dominant position in the production of social and cultural theories. China and India are rising as centres of political and economic power and are predicted to overtake North America and Western Europe in economic power twenty-first century (Murray 1998; Khanna 2009).

It can be seen that very little can be gained from treating the terms 'West' and 'East', 'North' and 'South', and 'metropole' and 'periphery' as theoretical concepts with any meaningful explanatory content. The use of the Chinese concept of 'paradoxical integration' in the thesis title and the substantial treatment of the concept in chapter 7 indicate that notions of opposites such as East and West cannot be enduring dichotomies and mutually exclusive terms. It is much more useful to see that the relations between what is referred to by the terms East and West are interdependent, interconnected and interpenetrating, thus undermining the idea that they are alternate demarcated sets of ideas and practices that mutually exclude each other. The notion of significant exchange indicating the interpenetration of different

civilisations is powerfully indicated in Christian Gerlach's (2005) research, which shows that the intellectual foundation of Europe's first economic school of thought, Physiocracy, and the idea of a laissez-faire economy associated with it, is a direct import of the Chinese concept of state-economy relations in the concept wuwei (effortless action) self-consciously borrowed in the eighteenth-century construction of classical economics in Europe. The traffic has never been one-way. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese intellectuals embarked on a major project of selecting, integrating and synthesising ideas from Western intellectual sources into Chinese knowledge bases, as will be argued in chapter 3.

When terms such as 'Western', 'metropole' and so on are used in the thesis they are simply employed as a short-hand and without any intention to ignore the complexities and dynamics of culture. Nor do they imply that social and cultural traditions and forces can be reduced to singular, uniform, and unilinear entities constituted by a set of essential characteristics. The process of globalisation generates paradoxical interconnections which both challenge the veracity of such short-hand terminology and at the same time reinforces the need to recognise continuing differences summarised by them. Bryan Turner and Habibul Khondker (2010: 68) remind us that globalisation generates 'similarities or commonalities at the superficial level [that are] often accompanied by divisions in deeper structures'. Some of these divisions within global structures can be summarised through the short-hand terms discussed here.

### **Historical Phases of Globalisation**

While it is a truism that the world has become increasingly subject to processes of globalisation, there is no consensus concerning their historical origins.

Anthony Giddens (1994: 96) holds that ‘the first phase of globalisation was plainly governed primarily by the expansion of the West’. This is a view widely accepted, but there is disagreement about the historical dating of Western expansion, with Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) seeing it as a phenomenon with sixteenth and seventeenth century origins, and Kevin O’Rourke and Jeffrey Williamson (1999) regarding it as a result of nineteenth century colonial expansion. Andre Frank and Barry Gills (1993), on the other hand, argue that globalisation does not originate with Western expansion at all but involves a much earlier Asian and African development of long-distance trade and market exchange that has a history of several thousands of years, which contributed to Euro-Asian growth and was ultimately responsible for pre-mercantile European advancement.

While some regard globalisation as a modern strategy of power, Robbie Robertson (2003) sees globalisation as a consequence of human interconnections and their dynamism. Robertson examines the historical reach of globalisation in terms of three global waves of human interconnectedness: the first wave, after 1500, was one in which regional trade became globally linked; second, after 1800, globalisation gained impetus from industrialisation and the economic expansion that came with the enormous increase of output that resulted from it; the third wave derived from the organisation of a new world order after 1945. In Robertson’s (2003: 4) view, ‘each wave produced new interconnections and generated new synergies that in time led to its own transformation’. Each wave encompasses many peoples and no single region or society is alone responsible for the production of any one of the waves of globalisation, according to this argument.

Another and more comprehensive view holds that globalisation can be periodised in such a way as to indicate that during its course alternate Western and



non-Western centres of gravity predominated. Anthony Hopkins (2002: 21-36) divides the history of globalisation into four periods. The first of these is 'archaic' (or ancient, pre-state) globalisation, involving Asian, African and European empires and their trading diasporas in tributary and luxury commerce. 'Proto' globalisation is the second period Hopkins identifies, which he says occurs from approximately 1600 to 1800, in which early European colonisation and the associated slave and plantation economies encroached on the Americas and parts of Asia and Africa. The third phase, 'modern' globalisation, which occupies the period from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, is based on Western and especially West European and American industrialisation, involving economic inter-dependence and organisational inter-nationalisation. The final stage Hopkins identifies is 'post-colonial' globalisation, in which supra-national entities such as the World Bank play an increasingly important role and in which significant cultural processes sponsored by the Internet, the global media, and global popular culture play a significant role.

Associated with these latter elements of Hopkins's final or current phase of globalisation are significant global population movements and the trans-national networks of people defined through membership of diasporic communities. In terms of their employment and education such people occupy what are for them culturally dislocated or ambiguous spaces. It is in this context that unequal knowledge flows and the dominance of Western intellectual culture meets critical reactions from the economically and educationally privileged members of non-Western diasporas. Whereas in earlier periods of globalisation, especially during the colonial era in which non-Western populations were subject to Western political rule, asymmetric knowledge flows were typically accepted by subordinated peoples as a means of acquiring 'equal tools' through which they could both join and at the same time resist

foreign encroachment, a situation treated in chapter 3. In the current and most recent stage of globalisation, however, economically confident non-Western diasporas are more likely to contest Western intellectual and cultural hegemony and insist on the equal value and utility of their own concepts and categories of thought. While accepting aspects of Western technology, culture and education, it is likely that they will at the same time assert the salience and currency of their own ways of seeing the world and the concepts and intellectual or cognitive orientations in which they are contained. In these circumstances diasporic media and associated knowledge and information may challenge, disregard or appropriate and assimilate Western knowledge and information.

### **Elements of Globalisation**

An awareness of living not only in a community or a country but in a single world is taken here as a key element of cultural globalisation. In this vein globalisation is defined by Robertson (1994: 8), as we have seen, as ‘both ... the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole’. The intensification of this consciousness is largely a consequence of the fact that communication of information can be exchanged practically instantaneously across countries and continents. Giddens (1994: 4) emphasises this aspect of globalisation as a ‘transformation of space and time’. The increasing interconnectedness of globalisation in this sense renders cultural and cognitive isolation impossible. According to John Tomlinson (1999: 2) this becomes a definitional point when ‘globalisation refers to the rapidly developing and ever-densening network of interconnections and interdependences that characterise modern social life’. The instant global communication of information means that the

impact of local events on others may have universal effects. The Asia financial crisis of 1997, for instance, was precipitated by events in Thailand but almost instantaneously impacted on financial markets through most of Southeast Asia, Japan and China, causing world-wide fears of economic meltdown. While there is a tendency for authors to stress global economic interconnectedness, Turner and Khondker (2010: 20) on the other hand argue that ‘globalisation ... is a much more comprehensive and complex process’ which involves linked social, economic, political, and cultural factors.

Drawing on David Held (1995) and Rolland Robertson (1994), Robert Holton (2005: 14-15) offers a summary of globalisation which brings together the various threads set out above. He writes that globalisation must be seen as covering three distinct aspects: (a) intensified movement of goods, money, technology, information, people, ideas and cultural practices across political and cultural boundaries, (b) interdependence of social processes across the globe, such that all social activity is profoundly interconnected rather than separated off into different national and cultural spaces, and (c) consciousness of and identification with the world as a single place, as in forms of cosmopolitanism, religion or earth-focused environmentalism.

This statement implicitly indicates the significance of knowledge flows for globalisation and the tensions for the latter generated by asymmetric knowledge flows. Holton’s first characteristic of globalisation places an aspect of knowledge flow – ‘intensified movement of information’ – in a possibly contradictory relationship with his third characteristic through its link with the second. This is because globalised knowledge, his point (a), cannot be ‘separated off into different national and cultural spaces’, his point (b). If the content of such globalised knowledge, however, is alien to the cognitive formations of receiving ‘cultural

spaces' because of asymmetry in knowledge flows, then there is disruption of 'consciousness of and identification with the world as a single place', his point (c). The asymmetrical knowledge flows conveyed by globalisation supported by Western technical and educational dominance, provoke cultural and associated reactions which will ultimately be transformative of the consciousness Holton posits as necessary for globalisation.

Holton's idea of globalisation as intensification of movements of resources, people and ideas is anticipated by other writers. Appadurai (1996) says we live in 'a world of flows', and Ien Ang (2001: 75) refers to the 'increasing interconnectedness of disparate parts of the world through the intensification of transnational networks, relationships and flows'. While the concept of flows emphasises movement, the concept of networks gives stress to the connectedness between the things that move. David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton (2000: 55) propose a distinction between flows and networks by describing flows as 'the movements of physical artefacts, people, symbols, tokens and information across space and time' and networks as 'regularized or patterned interactions between independent agents, nodes of activity, or sites of power'. While the relevant 'flows' are intensified through globalisation, the direction of these flows is not proportionally dispersed, as indicated above, but asymmetrical, uneven and disjunctive.

The concept of 'knowledge flow', as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, refers to clusters of ideas, practices, modes of thinking, customs, agendas and routines which facilitate and expedite effects, outcomes, results and problem solving in other places and at other times (Moran and Keane 2010: 2). Knowledge flows can thus be part of what Arjun Appadurai (1990: 296) characterises as global cultural

flows, which he analyses in terms of five dimensions: (a) ethnoscapas; (b) mediascapas; (c) technoscapas; (d) finanscapas; and (e) ideoscapas. Appadurai indicates that the 'new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order, which cannot any longer be understood in terms of centre-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centres and peripheries)'. The suggestion here is that global flows are not one-dimensional but multi-dimensional and dynamic. Scott Lash and John Urry (1994: 4) indicate that the prevailing conception of the world is increasingly directed to de-centeredness. Although cultural flows include multi-centricity of flows, criss-crossing flows and counter-flows, Ulf Hannerz (1997: 6) argues that the representations of 'asymmetries of flow during the last century or so seem ... undeniable, involving for example the spread of some of those fundamental skills and central institutional forms which we refer to collectively as modernity; say, Western-origin types of basic and higher education, administrative practices, or biomedicine (even when these are adopted in forms which are not exact copies of the original)'.

It is important to acknowledge that the uneven knowledge flows referred to here are not the result of globalisation per se, although globalisation may exacerbate existing inequalities for reasons we shall consider. Holton (2005: 1) similarly notes that while many commentators have seen globalisation as a major cause of inequality, others argue that it is 'a way of addressing these social ills'. In recognising that globalisation opens access and facilitates international movement of students and scholars, Phillip Altbach (2004: 9) argues that 'in many respects, existing inequalities are only reinforced and new barriers erected' by globalisation. He says, for example, that 'multinational corporations, media conglomerates, and even a few leading universities, can be seen as the new neo-colonists – seeking to

dominate not for ideological or political reasons but rather for commercial gain' (Altbach 2004: 9). Other researchers caution that 'there is the dangerous possibility for globalization to be synonymous with Americanization and a weak form of internationalization of research, which would simply mean the inclusion of more people in the conversations of researchers without challenging their western, metropolitan forms' (Lingard 2006: 289).

It would be reasonable to conclude that while globalisation may not in itself be the cause of all those inequalities which can be found within globalised systems it certainly has not solved the world's problems of inequalities of wealth, power and information. Inequalities in these areas may have existed before the advent of current globalisation. The fact remains, though, that in globalised knowledge production and circulation Western or metropolitan forms tend to dominate research and dissemination. This is not simplistic 'Americanisation' and in fact it is always possible that non-Western cultural forms may have representation, but typically after passing through the lens of American, say, preferences and institutions. French philosophy and Zen Buddhist teachings, for instance, enter global circuits after they have been translated into English and published by American university or commercial presses. Shambhala Publications, whose head office is in Boston, is the single-most significant source of publications on Buddhism and other Eastern religions in the world today. Indeed, it has to be acknowledged that globalisation does not entail the disappearance of non-American or non-Western knowledge or culture. It is possible to agree with Turner and Khondker (2010: 32), that 'local culture does not surrender itself un-problematically to forces from outside; rather it absorbs as it valorises its own distinctiveness', while accepting that the inclusion of

local culture in globalised circuits is the result of forces outside such cultures and these outside forces select them for their own reasons and purposes.

### **Globalisation and Asymmetric Knowledge Flows**

While globalisation enhances opportunities for access to knowledge and cultural exchange, and arguably increases such opportunities, it remains true that the exchange in question continues to be unbalanced in ways we shall consider below. Globalisation has enhanced possibilities for the diffusion of knowledge from the East or the South or the periphery to the West as well as from the West to the rest. A spread of awareness of Chinese, Indian and Japanese ideas and texts in the United States and in Europe is at a much higher level today than it was fifty years ago. As one minor indication of this shift, the bookselling website Amazon.com, accessed 24 April 2011, listed 98 different English-language publications of the Chinese classic Daodejing (Tao Te Ching), 37 of them published since 2009. The ready availability of translations of the classics of Buddhism, Confucianism, Sufism and other non-Western texts testifies to a flow of knowledge from the East or South, and yet such a flow continues to be a very minor stream.

The flows of knowledge resources among nations, as Mary McMahon (1992) notes, are interconnected with global political, economic and cultural relationships. Due to the political and economic dominance of the metropole the institutions associated with it inevitably tend to dominate knowledge production and circulation, and while they may not do so completely their intellectual agendas are unavoidably stamped on any extraneous knowledge production. In a similar vein Manuel Castells (1996: 412) refers to the cosmopolitan global elites' dominance of the 'cultural world of flows' and Zygmunt Bauman (1998) notes the dichotomic tendency in which there

is globalisation for some and localisation for others. In similar terms, Hannerz (2008: 114) points to the way in which the 'distribution of culture within the world is affected by a structure of asymmetrical, centre/periphery, relationships'. Perhaps the strongest statement comes from Yoshitaka Miike (2006: 5), who holds that even in the post-colonial and post-modern age, Euro-centrism as a universalist ideology can still be seen to pervasively and extensively permeate all fields of study and spheres of life.

While globalisation promotes a decentring of knowledge production the institutional criteria for the globally dispersed organisations of academic knowledge remains uniformly Western. The Times Higher Education World University 2010 Rankings (Times Higher 2010) are based principally on three criteria: teaching environment (30 percent), research volume, income and reputation (30 percent) and citations as a measure of research influence (32.5 percent). On the basis of these criteria the top 5 universities in the world in 2010 were American (Harvard, California Institute of Technology, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford and Princeton), with the English universities Oxford and Cambridge in equal 6<sup>th</sup> place. The first non-American or non-British university to enter the list is the University of Hong Kong in the 21<sup>st</sup> place. Only 6 other Asian universities are included in the top 50, the University of Tokyo (26<sup>th</sup>), the South Korean Pohang University of Science and Technology (28<sup>th</sup>), the National University of Singapore (34<sup>th</sup>), China's Peking University (37<sup>th</sup>), the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (41<sup>st</sup>) and the Chinese University of Science and Technology (49<sup>th</sup>). Turkey enters the list with Bilkert University being ranked 112<sup>th</sup> in the top 200 and Egypt's Alexandria University comes in at the 147<sup>th</sup> position. No Indian university is represented. Two Australian universities are in the top 50, namely the University of



Melbourne (36<sup>th</sup>) and the Australian National University (43<sup>rd</sup>). The regional breakdown of the top 200 universities in 2010 is as follows: Europe (82 universities), North America (81), Asia (27), Australia (7) and New Zealand (1), and Africa (2).

A very similar picture of Western dominance emerges in the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2011. If anything this ranking shows signs of a strengthening of the position of Western universities in the top 200 range. According to this ranking the top 4 universities in the world in 2011 are American (Harvard, Stanford, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California, Berkeley), with the English university Cambridge in 5<sup>th</sup> place. The first non-American or non-British university to enter the list is the University of Tokyo in the 21<sup>st</sup> place. Only one other Asian university, Kyoto University, is included in the top 50, in 27<sup>th</sup> place. Osaka University enters the list in the 82<sup>nd</sup> place with Nagoya University being ranked 94<sup>th</sup> and Tohoku 97<sup>th</sup> in the top 100. Besides Hokkaido University, National Taiwan University, National University of Singapore and Seoul National University are the only non-Western universities to enter the 101 to 150 range. Two Australian universities are in the top 50, namely the University of Melbourne (60<sup>th</sup>) and the Australian National University (70<sup>th</sup>). The regional breakdown of the top 200 universities in the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2011 is as follows: Europe (71), North America (95), Asia (13), Australia (7) and Africa (1).

An article in The Australian Higher Education Supplement in August 2011 notes the continuing dominance of American universities in the international comparisons, with the number in the top 200 remaining constant since 2003 (Gallagher 2011). At the same time, however, the article claims that the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2011 reveals that

‘China’s performance has been meteoric’, referring to the fact that ‘23 mainland Chinese research universities now make the top 500, up from only nine in 2003’. This development is important, and reflects a remarkable achievement for Chinese universities. It would be an exaggeration to suggest, however, that the strengthening of China’s universities on international rankings indicates a meaningful shift in prevailing global patterns of knowledge production and knowledge flow. No Chinese mainland university is in the top 150 universities in 2011, according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Academic Ranking of World Universities. Only one Chinese university is represented in the 151 to 200 range, 6 in the 201 to 300 range (including Peking University, ranked 37<sup>th</sup> in the Times Higher rankings), 5 in the 301 to 400 range and the remaining 11 of the 23 Chinese universities that made the 2011 list are in the 401 to 500 range.

The idea that knowledge plays a fundamental role in economic prosperity and social advancement means that policy makers and university administrators may modify the institutions of knowledge production in order to promote economic goals. Indeed, traditional educational institutions and universities are more and more being transformed into entrepreneurial institutions. The change in university culture and aspirations is reflected in the way they are described in current discussions of the direction of university developments. The model on which universities are increasingly being led to shape themselves is described as the enterprise university (Marginson and Considine 2000), the service university (Tjeldvoll 1997), or the innovative university (Clark 1996). The focus on internationally evaluated research, which would provide a place on the competitive university rankings mentioned above, and on student recruitment as a means of generating revenue from their fees, are growing pressures on the organisation and mission of universities. The model of

the service oriented research university, as Eric Beerkens (2010: 374) points out, has become 'diffused throughout the world' and universities are caught between national needs and emerging global trends; they are under pressure to adopt this emerging form in fear of being left behind. This global model of the university, as Beerkens (2010: 375) suggests 'is commonly a contextualised model, frequently developed in the American [or] the UK context ... [which] become de-contextualised, becoming a one-size-fits-all solution applicable everywhere, at least in theory'. This situation is particularly problematic for the Malaysian and Indonesian universities Beerkens (2010) studied. These universities are subject to the cross-cutting pressures of their existing national circumstances and local contexts on the one hand, and the global service models to which they are drawn on the other. The problem is that the global models do not fit with local political, economic, social or institutional status quo in which these universities work. Beerkens' concern is with the inconsistencies, dissonance and tensions he found between the global models and local demands and needs of the Malaysia and Indonesia universities which adopt the service-orientated research model of their counterparts in the US, Australia and some European countries, with which they feel compelled to compete for international ranking.

While globalisation may open more doors to knowledge than previously, the costs attached to passing through those doors have also increased. This idea is articulated by Paul James and Douglas McQueen-Thomson (2002: 194) when they say: 'more information has become available than ever before, just as access is becoming increasingly exclusive, rationalised and commodified'. Commodified knowledge, of course, is subjected to the control of those with economic power. Centres of economic power necessarily have the capacity to determine the form, nature and content of the knowledge produced, to claim the ownership of knowledge

and to control its circulation. Academic institutions continue to provide leadership in research and knowledge production and dissemination. Such institutions, and especially leading universities, 'tend to be located in larger and wealthier countries', as noted by Altbach (2004: 7). Sub-Saharan countries, for instance, do not have economic resources to finance their education and therefore to a large extent depend on international assistance and as a consequence adopt international discourses. These countries tend to 'implement a predefined Western vision of development and education' (Nordtveit 2010: 329). Bjorn Nordtveit is concerned that in the South or developing world '[d]evelopment and education are politically informed and ideological systems that draw upon patterns of language and practice to define and validate the lives of people in the Western world ... and these systems are being expertly exported to the South by development and education workers'.

Information technology and especially the internet are key factors in the formation of the current phase of globalisation, which make it possible for people in any part of the world to cross barriers of space and time in receiving or transmitting information. Researchers increasingly rely on the internet as a source of information, through access to journals, books, documents of various types and raw data through on-line surveys and other means of information gathering. The internet is also an increasingly used means of intellectual and academic communication and dissemination through which knowledge is not only exchanged but created.

One frequently raised concern which arises out of this increasing dependence on the internet for knowledge transfer and creation is that of ownership of the internet. Ownership entails control and whoever owns the internet or its component parts is able to decide the forms, configurations and content of the information and knowledge it carries and the way in which such information circulates. A survey

conducted by Business Week in 1996 (Crystal 1997: 106) revealed that the majority of Internet hosts are in the United States (64 percent) and that a further 12.7 percent are in other English-speaking countries.

The associated issues of ownership, copyright and other intellectual property rights are discussed in a large specialist literature (e.g. Boldrin and Levine 2008; Dutfield and Suthersanen 2008; Lessig 2004). The International Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) is the most important multilateral instrument for the globalisation of intellectual property laws and applies to all members of the World Trade Organisation. It was initiated by the United States, endorsed by developed countries and negotiated with developing countries in 1994. While the agreement aims at universalising the standards of intellectual property right protection it more or less reinforces the asymmetries between the North and South. Northern countries generate most of the innovations and Southern countries to a great extent constitute the market for the resulting products and services. Anglo-American universities spend more than half of the world's total academic budgets for research and development (Altbach 1987: 66). The developing countries' share in world Research and Development expenditure was 6 percent in 1980 and dropped to 6 percent in 1990 (Correa 2000: 5). Ninety-five percent of 1,650,800 patents granted in the United States between 1977 and 1996 were conferred on applicants from ten industrialised countries and less than 2 percent from developing countries (Kumar: 1997: 5-9).

As well as ownership of the internet the language used on it is important for considerations of access and use. Altbach (2004: 20) makes this point when he says that the 'Internet and the databases on it are dominated by the major universities in the North [so that t]he Internet functions largely in English, and much of the material

carried on it is in English'. Ownership and language are just two factors which generate a globalised knowledge flow predominantly oriented to representing the frameworks of the 'North' or the more economically powerful metropole. While globalisation in principle allows a decentralisation of sites of production of material goods, for instance, the fact that economic and financial power is concentrated within the global metropole leads to the continuation of a more or less strong flow of knowledge production and circulation from the metropole to the periphery.

It was noted earlier that the theories and concepts employed in social and cultural research are predominantly produced in the universities and research institutions of the metropole from where they are 'transported' or disseminated, in the form of textbooks, monographs, journal articles, reports and research abstracts, through globalised circuits to the periphery. Appadurai (2001a: 4-5) summarises the confidence of modernisation theory of the 1960s in which '[t]heory and method were seen as naturally metropolitan, modern, and Western. The rest of the world was seen in the idiom of cases, events, examples, and test sites in relation to this stable location for the production or revision of theory', which arguably obtains still even though there is a growing awareness of the limitations of the view, as Appadurai (2001a: 5) indicates. Connell (2007: xi) is critical of the dominance of metropolitan theory continuing in present global processes: 'Metropolitan theory is distributed through a global network of institutions including universities, scientific organisations, journals and ... development institutions from the World Bank down'. Recent developments in social and scientific theories of emotion, which show that the traditional opposition of emotion and reason is unsound, fails to draw upon or even acknowledge the abundant and enduring appreciation of the non-opposition of

emotion and reason in the treatment, for example, of the Chinese concept of xin (heart-mind), as argued in chapter 6.

It should be noted that in the global processes of knowledge production and dissemination there are not only flows from the West to the East but also counter-flows and criss-cross flows from East to West, South to North or Periphery to North, although these are not as strong as and do not replace the dominant trend. Today the dominance of Western knowledge is much more likely to be challenged or even transformed and assimilated into local knowledge system. And yet within the global framework, asymmetric knowledge flows persist, indeed they are conveyed by globalisation even though globalisation may provide opportunities for this asymmetry to be addressed through various means. Before addressing these possibilities, however, it is necessary to indicate further the basis of asymmetric knowledge flows.

### **Globalised Institutions and Person Flows**

What has been called 'knowledge capitalism' is an aspect of globalisation and universities are a key driver towards the knowledge economy (Peters 2003). Universities, as Beerkens (2010: 370) notes, 'as central sites of knowledge production and dissemination therefore play a pivotal role in the knowledge economy and knowledge society'. The structure and content of research knowledge, as Rebecca Boden and Debbie Epstein (2006: 230) write, are shaped 'by universities, with their globalised standards, recruitment criteria and the shaping of journal editorial policies'. The prevailing pattern is for universities in Africa and Asia, as well as in Australia and New Zealand, to adopt British and American models of training and instruction and also the forms and practices of research that are

developed and popularised in them (Altbach 2004; Beerkens 2010: 375; Crossman and Devisch 2002: 97). The major research universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford in Britain and Harvard and Chicago in the United States, exercise a tremendous influence ‘on knowledge concentrations and flows’ (Marginson 2008: 311), through which a global configuration of the direction of research is generated. As Simon Marginson (2008: 305) puts it, these universities ‘concentrate knowledge power to themselves by housing most leading researchers ... and [the] global power of these institutions rest on the subordination of other institutions and nations’. There is certain inevitability in the process. The established universities in the economically dominant countries are able to attract resources – economic, technological and intellectual – which sustain their sovereign status. Students graduating from these universities enjoy the benefits of their institutional prestige and international networks and therefore have opportunities for appointment and promotion which at the same time reinforces the dominant positions of these universities.

One dimension of the direction of the flows of scholarly knowledge is the movement of students. According to Karine Tremblay (2005) the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and France are the top five countries which receive the largest numbers of foreign students. The United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Australia have adopted immigration policies to grant highly skilled foreign students permanent or temporary residence. France revised its restrictive policy in 1998 to ease visa provisions for highly skilled professionals including scientists and scholars. In 2004/2005 ‘almost one-third of the foreign students entering American doctoral universities were doctoral students [and] the American doctoral sector enrolled 102,084 foreign doctoral students’ (Marginson 2008: 310). By 2007, however, the number of international students seeking higher degrees in the



United States rose to 623,000 (Kim, Bankart and Isdell 2010: 2). The capacity of American universities especially to exercise international or globalised control of knowledge production is not necessarily through manipulation or enforcement but simply by virtue of sharing accumulated intellectual resources and practices with the bright foreign students who are fortunate enough to enrol in 'good' universities.

Many international students remain in the countries in which they acquired their degrees after graduation. Potential migration, according to Tremblay (2005: 208), seems 'particularly high for students from India, China, Argentina, Peru and Iran as well as some OECD member countries'. During the period 1978 to 1999 only a third of the Chinese students studying abroad returned to China and of those students who trained in the United States only one out of six returned to China (Tremblay 2005: 219). In an empirical analysis of student flows and migration Axel Dreher and Panu Poutvaara (2005: 17-18) demonstrate that there exists 'a close link between student flows and migration flows' and that from 'the perspective of origin countries, sending students abroad involves [a] brain drain' in so far as that 'part of the students remaining abroad, or later emigrating, is a cost these countries encounter in order to upgrade the human capital of their youth'.

Many developing countries implement policies to attract members of foreign research institutions and experts. Chinese universities offer salary, accommodation and special benefits to attract foreign experts and encourage Chinese academics with Western education to return China. Singapore, similarly, utilises a combination of immigration, academic and taxation policies to make itself attractive to members of foreign knowledge institutions and foreign experts (Ong 2005: 340). Singaporean universities organise special programs to attract students. There is 'a coordination of training programs between the National University of Singapore and American and

European universities’ and ‘the university curriculum has been changed to accommodate the American semester cycle and the schedules of expatriate professors. Students have the option to spend one semester at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts’ (Ong 2005: 341). Malaysia has recruited a considerable number of Indian software experts but the Indian expatriates consider it ‘as a “stepping stone” to America and other final Western destinations’ (Ong 2005: 348).

While globalisation allows both accesses of students from the periphery to the intellectual resources of the metropole and to institutions located in the metropole, and at the same time permits access to enormous amounts of information at great speed, the configuration and distribution of such intellectual and informational resources remain disjunctive and unbalanced. A particular framework of representations of the world which is the object of knowledge and of the conceptual and theoretical means of apprehending that world is reproduced through these training institutions or universities and the media of instruction and reports of research methods and findings which do not merely contribute to uneven knowledge flows but actually constitute them. This process can be summarised in terms of the flows of texts, of the students who read them, and the academics who produce them (who were previously the students who read them). Each of these factors will be dealt with in turn.

### **Globalised Production, Circulation and Uses of Texts**

A number of writers have referred to the significance of the limited sites of production of textbooks and other scholarly source material. Altbach (2004: 11) indicates that ‘textbooks written from a US or UK perspective are sold worldwide, influencing students and academics in many countries’. Similarly, Connell (2007:

50) observes that '[m]ost theoretical texts in the social sciences are written in the global North' so that with few exceptions 'mainstream social theory sees and speaks from the global North'. Such textbooks serve as conduits in the diffusion of theories and concepts which derive from the social experiences or institutional assumptions of a limited range of Western societies. In the hard sciences also 'not only the equipment and most of the books used in [African] laboratories and libraries are imported from the North, but moreover, the best laboratories, and the best and biggest libraries are located in the North' (Hountondji 2002: 32).

Altbach (1987: 45-81) provides an interesting case study of India in which he shows that there is a blend of features of East and West, periphery and metropole. Hindi is the national language, mother tongue of about 45 percent of population, but English continues to enjoy a leading role and remains as a major language of the elite, of intellectual and academic discourse in science and social sciences and of commerce. As a rising political and economic power India also has a serious problem of poverty and low levels of literacy. India is a major producer and distributor of knowledge in its own right and ranked eighth in the world as a publishing nation. It exports books to other Third World nations as well as to the West. While having a large and active academic system that produces research, journals, and textbooks of its own India is at the same time dependent on Western academic systems for basic research in many fields and looks to the West for major journals and books. While higher education has shifted in part to the regional language, English continues to dominate at the graduate level and a number of prestigious universities still offer all of their instruction in English.

The bulk of overseas sales of Indian published books is to academic libraries in North America, Britain, and Australia. Virtually all scholarly books published in

India are in English in order to facilitate overseas circulation. This means that the specific subject and focus of these books are determined to a great extent by the interests of foreign markets. In spite of its independent and productive publishing industry many Indian authors prefer to have their work published abroad for greater remuneration and more recognition. Scholarship is linked to the international knowledge network. Research results are communicated in Western journals, and many Indian academics prefer to have their work appear in major international journals, virtually all of which are published in the West.

While the movement of texts, equipment, and theories typically flows from the metropole to the periphery, there is a significant movement of people in the opposite direction which ironically perpetuates the same effect. In broad terms globalisation entails an increase in opportunities for people to move internationally. While significant numbers of students transfers are within the metropole (e.g. American students studying in Europe, and vice versa), or indeed within the periphery (e.g. African students studying in Cuba, and Korean and African students studying in China), there are significant movements of students from the periphery to the metropole. When they write that ‘the direction of travel is predominantly from the poorer to the richer countries’ Boden and Epstein (2006: 229) refer not to the movement of labour, although there is some of that, but of students. In an analysis of 64 countries, representing the largest number of international student exchanges, Tse-Mei Chen and George Barnett (2000) have demonstrated that an academic hegemony consistent with world economic and political performance persists. While East European and Asian countries have become a part of the global educational network, the United States and most Western industrialised countries maintained their position at the centre of the network and the African and Middle East countries

have stayed at the periphery (Chen and Barnett 2000: 436). The dominant stream of cross-border student mobility, as Mei Li and Mark Bray (2007: 791) put it, 'is from less developed and newly-industrialised countries to the western industrialised'. Similarly Altbach (2004: 12) states: 'The flow of academic talent at all levels is directed largely from South to North – from the developing countries to the large metropolitan academic systems. Perhaps 80 percent of the world's international students come from developing countries, and virtually all of them study in the North' (see also Lingard 2006: 289). This is a pattern in which Australia is implicated: 'Australia is the world's third largest provider of degrees for foreign students after the USA and UK' (Marginson and Sawir 2005: 293).

Based on a study of the external mobility of students from Taiwan, mainland China, India and Indonesia, Tim Mazzarol and Geoffery Soutar (2001: 57) found that four major motivating factors of mobility operated. These are: (i) a perception that an overseas course of study was better than a local one; (ii) the students' ability to gain entry to particular programmes; (iii) a desire to improve understanding of foreign societies, particularly Western ones; and (iv) an intention to migrate after graduation. International students receiving an education in the West are provided with theory, concepts and perspectives which they are highly likely to continue using if and when they return to their home countries. Thus channels of dissemination of Western frameworks, ideologies and assumptions are the backflows of international student movements.

The flow of people across national or cultural boundaries is one of the fundamental forces stimulating an international diffusion of knowledge (Dedijar 1964). The movement of academics from the periphery parallels that of international students. This is in the form of both short term visits for further training and research,

in which ‘Southern intellectuals travel to the metropole and humbly learn its concepts and techniques’ (Connell 2007: 167), and also more long-term academic migration. A study conducted by Dongbin Kim, Charles Bankart and Laura Isdell (2010) suggests that international doctorates from India had the largest predicted probability of staying in the United States (82 percent), followed by doctorates from China (76 percent), while individuals from places other than China or India had a predicted probability of staying in the United States of only 45 percent. Many academics and managers and nearly all university leaders in Malaysian and Indonesian universities, for instance, have been trained internationally and judge their own careers by comparing themselves with international benchmarks and rankings (Beekens 2010: 388).

According to Altbach (2004: 12) an ‘increasingly robust international migration of academic talent exists, predominantly from South to North; large numbers of the most talented academics from developing countries work in the North’. Indeed, there is a large Indian and also Chinese intellectual diaspora in the United States and lesser ones in Europe. The members of these intellectual diasporas hold positions in science, education and in professional institutions and universities. Data from China reveal that of the total of 1,076,000 scholars who had gone abroad for study over the period 1978–2006, only 275,000 had returned; however, it is necessary to note that included in the larger number is a significant component that had still not completed their studies (Welch and Zhen 2008: 520). Many of these academics maintain contacts with the development of research in their countries of origins through visits and collaborative work (Choi 1995; Welch and Zhen 2008). These intellectual diasporas can be characterised in a number of ways. They may be regarded as a source of Western knowledge which could be diffused to their

countries of origin. They may also be seen as serving as conduits of knowledge from the East to the West. National governments of origin typically see this academic movement and the intellectual diaspora it creates as a 'brain drain' that entails intellectual loss and enhanced academic augmentation of the already economically and intellectually powerful recipient nations.

There are, of course, academics who move from the United State, Europe or Australia to, Asian universities especially in Singapore or China, and also to African universities. While learning, absorbing, drawing on and possibly diffusing local culture and knowledge to their home countries they also bring with them Western theoretical and methodological tools which they disseminate to their students and colleagues, which they apply in their research: 'the flows of powerful people assist the flows of ... ideas' (Boden and Epstein 2006: 231).

The place of journals in asymmetrical knowledge flows also deserves mention. English language journals published by major American or British organisations are typically bench-mark sites of theory and method in academic practices (Altbach 2004: 8; Boden and Epstein 2006: 229). Academic career trajectories, in terms of job opportunities, promotion and recognition, are determined by the rates of publication and possibly more importantly the ranking of refereed journals in which such publications appear. Approximately 62 percent of the world's periodicals in the social sciences are published in the United States, Britain, and France while the prestigious scientific journals are virtually all published in the United States, Britain, France and to a lesser extent Germany (Altbach 1998: 28). Academic journal publishing is dominated by a small number of companies or firms. Glenn McGuigan and Robert Russell (2008) report that 3 companies dominate the

academic journal market, Reed Elsevier, Springer and Wiley, which are together responsible for approximately 42 percent of all journal articles published.

According to its corporate website, Reed Elsevier is a UK registered publishing and information business, formed in 1993 through the merger of Reed International, a UK company, and Elsevier, a Netherlands company. Springer Publishing Company was founded in the United States in 1950 and ran as a family business until 2004 when it was acquired by a New York conglomerate Mannheim Holdings. The Wiley publishing company, which began in the United States in the early nineteenth century, acquired the Oxford-based Blackwell Company in 2007 to form Wiley-Blackwell. Wiley-Blackwell, which has its corporate headquarters in the United States, publishes over 1,500 peer-reviewed journals annually. In addition to these three top publishers two others can be mentioned as major sources of academic journals. Taylor and Francis, a major British publishing conglomerate which since the 1990s has acquired a large number of British and European academic publishing houses, including Routledge, publishes over 1,000 peer-reviewed journals every year. Sage Publications, a major social science publisher which also publishes journals in the humanities and sciences, is the fifth largest journals publisher in the world with more than 630 peer-reviewed journals under its banner. Its corporate headquarters are in California.

In order to publish in the prestigious journals it is not surprising, in light of the pattern of corporate domination of peer-reviewed journals reported in the above paragraph, that scholars find that they are led to ‘address issues that are primarily of interest to the Western [academic] public’ (Hountondji 2002: 33). They must, therefore, ‘write in forms familiar to metropolitan editors: to use metropolitan concepts, address metropolitan literatures, and offer credible interventions in



metropolitan debates' (Connell 2007: 83). The fact that peer review of academic journal articles may include the participation of persons outside the American and British location of the journal's head office does not modify the structure of intellectual hegemony which dominates academic publishing. In chapter 2 of this thesis is a review of 214 journal articles published during an eleven-year period from 1999 to 2009 in which the concept *guanxi* operates as a key term. The majority of these 214 articles appeared in 6 journals. The overwhelming majority of editors of these 6 journals were either based in metropolitan universities or obtained PhDs from such universities. In this sense, then, the present structure of academic journal publishing is a major contributing factor in the tendency for the diffusion of Western theories and concepts flow to the rest of the world.

Language as a tool of communication is also a significant factor associated with uneven knowledge flows. David Crystal (1997: 53) succinctly summarises the two factors which lead to the world status of English: 'the expansion of British colonial power, which peaked towards the end of the nineteenth century, and the emergence of the United States as the leading economic power of the twentieth century'. Crystal goes on to stress that it is 'the latter factor which continues to explain the world position of the English language today'. Three-quarters of the world's mail is in English, about 80 percent of the world's electronically stored information is currently in English (Crystal 1997: 105). Data compiled by the Index Translationum show that 55 percent of all book translation is from English, compared with only 6.5 percent of translations into English (UNESCO 2009: 14).

English has become a global language, and a major language for research and cross-nation research organisations (Altbach 2004: 10). In any given country most academic journals with an international readership are published in English. It is

particularly interesting that even in a language-sensitive subject such as linguistics nearly 90 percent of the 1,500 papers listed in the journal *Linguistics Abstracts* in 1995 were in English (Crystal 1997: 85, 102). Research students in non-English speaking European countries are highly likely to submit theses in English to their university in Berlin, Geneva, Stockholm, and so on. As Marginson (2008: 303) notes, the advent of 'a single mainstream system of English-language publication of research knowledge' has the significant effect of 'marginalis[ing non-English] work [rather] than absorb[ing] it'. The dominance of English in research supports the other institutional and economic bases of the dominant position of Western theories and concepts. As a result universities in the South or periphery are increasingly led to adopt English as a medium of instruction.

The situation described above regarding a number of factors, organisational and economic, which contribute to a predominant pattern of asymmetric or unbalanced knowledge flows from the West to the East or the North to the South, is a clear manifestation of modern globalisation. Another aspect of current globalisation, however, mentioned in the Introduction and treated in various ways in chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7, is the notion that while asymmetric knowledge flows are an aspect of globalisation, globalisation presents opportunities for the introduction of non-Western ideas and concepts into knowledge emanating from the centres of Western concentrations of power and resources. Not only does globalisation compel persons from non-Western cultures to consider the position of their own knowledge-set in light of global asymmetries, it also provides an opportunity to challenge such asymmetries.

## **Conclusion**

Global processes today involve almost every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. Through globalisation there is enhancement of access to information and knowledge even though the direction of knowledge flows remains predominantly from the metropole to the periphery. Because of their economic and political power, the dominant Western countries are also centres of knowledge production and circulation. The theories, concepts and methodologies used by social and cultural researchers from Angola to Zanzibar are to a large degree generated in North America and Western Europe, from where they are disseminated to the rest of the world. In a review of the rebuilding of sociology in the People's Republic of China from the 1980s Dai Kejing (1993: 94) reports that 'most Chinese sociological research is currently still purely applied research, while the theory and methodology are mostly adopted from the West'. It will be argued in the following chapter that the concepts and theories drawn from the direct social experiences and legacies of the peripheral East and South to a great extent are unknown to, ignored by or unrecognised in the social sciences and social theory that is disseminated globally as universally relevant and applicable.

Universities with international impact, which are the major sources of knowledge that flows to all users of such knowledge, are predominantly situated in the metropole of economic and political power concentrations. These are the destinations which attract international students and researchers or scholars, who are effectively the human conduits of Western theory to their home region on graduation and through their standing at home as the 'brightest and the best'. The international influence of prestigious books, journals and textbooks, as knowledge carriers and transmitters, is more or less dominated by universities and similar institutions in the

metropole, which is a further contributor to the hegemonic position of Western theories.

## **Chapter 2**

# **A Case Study of Globalised Knowledge: Guanxi in Social Science and Management Theory**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provides a case study of the use and development of the Chinese concept of guanxi in social science and management literatures over the past decade. It reveals that there has been a strong interest on the part of academic writers to explore and apply the Chinese concept guanxi in discussion of Chinese business as well as social and cultural practices. It will be shown that this provides a clear case of a particular type of ‘passive’ incorporation of a Chinese concept in international research and theories of relationships involving key Chinese participants. It will also be shown that other possible types of incorporation, in which theory development through an integration of the Chinese concept in an explanatory schema is much less likely to occur. The chapter begins by reporting a review of 214 journal articles published during an eleven-year period from January 1999 to December 2009. It will be demonstrated that the concept of guanxi has predominantly been explained by theories which are simply applied to Chinese or Southeast Asian or East Asian contexts, without those theories being affected or transformed by the concept itself.

It is also shown in the chapter that aspects of the concept of guanxi have not only local Chinese resonance but also general relevance for understanding otherwise

neglected aspects of social and economic relationships that are not recognised and addressed by analogous terms current in social theory today, including those of social capital, trust, and related concepts. The chapter goes on to consider how the ways in which guanxi has been treated in the literature discussed here has overlooked the broader implication of the concept and therefore miss opportunities to expand the competence of existing theories not only in understanding Chinese social and business relations but such relations in global and therefore also non-Asian contexts.

In the previous chapter it was shown that in late modernity globalisation includes an international flow of concepts, theories and methodologies which are generated in the metropolitan core of the global system and transmitted to researchers and students in the periphery. One of the consequences of this situation is that local researchers in non-metropolitan regions come to question the relevance of theories with universal pretensions which fail to adequately grasp the particular nature of the relations or institutions to which they are applied. A typical response to this situation is to modify or adjust the dominant or received theory so that local characteristics can be accommodated within it or more adequately explained by it. Wenshan Jia (2001), in his social constructionist theory of face and Chinese character, finds that methodological assumptions of institutional dynamism and social interaction fail to appreciate the hierarchical nature of Chinese social relations or the power of norms of social harmony in them (Jia 2001: 97).

An obvious question arises out of this situation: can concepts or theories which are generated in the social and cultural relations of the periphery contribute to the development of the social sciences that have their origins in the metropole? If the application of globally dominant theories to analysis of subjects in the periphery are inadequate, misleading or generative of misunderstandings then the incorporation of

concepts drawn from more relevant social relations and culture may enhance the competence of the theories in question. For instance, contrary to Mark Granovetter's (1974) observation that weak ties play an important role in providing information about job opportunities, which relates to experiences that are typical in the United States, a network theory of job search applied to the Chinese case would have to operate with the concept of strong ties which is commensurate with practices in China and therefore which occur through very different types of social relations, as demonstrated by Yanjie Bian (1997).

Consideration in this chapter of the extensive discussion of the Chinese concept of *guanxi* in articles appearing in a large number of social science and management journals published in America and Europe is directed to these concerns. Current academic publications in business and management studies in particular display a broad-based interest in the Chinese concept *guanxi*, especially in so far as it relates to business and management in China and East and Southeast Asia in general, especially in relations between Chinese and foreign business partners. There is agreement in these sources that *guanxi* is an important concept for understanding Chinese relationships, including those of economic relevance both in business and management. The following discussion will show that while this literature engages with *guanxi* as an object of inquiry and a phenomenon to be explained in various ways, an overwhelming majority of researchers overlook the possibility that the concept of *guanxi* might refer to aspects of relationships in modifying or redirecting existing theories of economic, business or social relations in general that are not treated in existing social science or management approaches.

The concept of *guanxi* is extensively used in China and the Chinese-language areas of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore as well as in overseas Chinese

communities in Southeast Asia. It refers to long-term mutually reinforcing and reciprocal relations between individuals. Many commentators claim that it is particularly Chinese in nature. Instrumentally purposive relationships in particular draw upon guanxi irrespective of whether the relations are in business or politics or every-day life. Because of the economic rise of China since the 1980s and its growing importance in the international economy through joint-ventures and other forms of relations between ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese individuals and companies, the interest shown by social and managerial researchers in guanxi has grown proportionally and a large literature has been generated which continues to grow.

### **Guanxi and Concept-Theory Relations**

The academic discussion of guanxi is important to the present chapter because it allows us to examine the proposition set out in the previous chapter concerning the direction and nature of knowledge flows. As a Chinese concept, guanxi, has become a focus of analysis and theorising of relationships in a large literature published in predominantly American and European academic journals, and it is therefore possible to examine the degree to which the dominant theories applied in these studies have themselves been modified or changed through their attention to the Chinese concept. This is to ask whether the direction of 'knowledge flow' has or can be influenced by the application of existing theories to guanxi relations.

Through the EBSCO host I conducted an on-line search of all peer-review journals for the period from January 1999 to December 2009 in which guanxi appeared as a key term in published articles. The EBSCO host is the premium



international research database service and includes a broad range of full text and bibliographic databases designed for research. My search was limited to ‘scholarly (peer-reviewed) journals’ with ‘publication type’ limited to ‘academic journal’. The search was confined to English-language sources and provided a total number of 214 items. The literature mentioned here is almost wholly concerned to understand Chinese or Chinese-foreign business or management relationships in which guanxi plays a significant role. In that sense a Chinese concept becomes subjected to explanation through application of a Western or mainstream theory in so far as the concept guanxi refers to a particular subject matter which is dealt with by the theory in question. In this sense the concept affects the structure of the theory and its explanations in the most limited sense, and only in so far as it is necessary to specify a subject matter. For instance, a theory of economic inequality might be unaffected by whether the inequality it treats is measured in US dollars, British pounds, French francs or Chinese renminbi. Indeed, as we shall see, a large proportion of the discussion of guanxi in the literature discussed below generates no more theoretically significant appreciation of the nature of guanxi as a type of relationship in general than the dummy theory of inequality mentioned here distinguishes between currencies, and the explanatory form of the theories in the studies reported below is unaffected by their use of the concept of guanxi.

Against the wide-spread practice of treating guanxi as an exotic notion that is only to be treated as an object of study rather than a theoretically-significant concept with implications for theory development, an analysis of guanxi to follow will reveal that it functions in ways that reflect the manner in which the concepts of ‘social capital’ and ‘networks’ function, and in doing so suggests that guanxi potentially

carries significant theoretical weight beyond mere subject defining functions and relates more to what might be described as the interior of theories.

The concept of social capital relates to a range of concrete relationships in which larger questions of social solidarity, reciprocity and wellbeing outcomes shape the meaning of the concept and the way in which it operates in theories of organisation and societal development. To the degree that the concept of guanxi is seen as rounding out or providing a new perspective on social capital or networks in general then the concept of guanxi may be said to contribute to the development of the theory that incorporates it or at least key aspects of it. There is some limited evidence in the literature of this type of theory change through incorporation of the concept of guanxi. Nan Lin (2001), in drawing on an analysis of guanxi, made a contribution to the theory of social capital by distinguishing between social capital that occurs at the interpersonal level and social capital that arises at the societal level (Chu 2010).

There is a third possibility, although there is little evidence of it being achieved in the current literature which is that aspects of guanxi could be applied to existing theoretical concerns in a way that would transform them. A case in point is the fact that unlike the discussion of trust in the vast literature produced in the US and Europe, which tends to focus on trust relations in one-off, limited iterations or short-term contact, guanxi focuses on enduring long-term relations. In a discussion of pricing differences in manufacture-wholesaler relations in the United States Dennis Carlton (1989) shows that the duration and stability of the association is crucial in providing a more favourable price for the wholesaler. The factual situation Carlton describes is more or less equivalent to a guanxi relationship, and a theory of wholesale pricing could be strengthened by explicitly developing the relevant content

of the concept of guanxi which is absent in current discussion of this theme. In this instance the Chinese concept guanxi is not only incorporated into the interior of the theory but generates a transformation of existing theory in a new way that would not otherwise have occurred. This can be treated as an instance of knowledge flow from the periphery to the core. The three possibilities outlined here are summarised in Table 1.

<b>DIRECTION OF KNOWLEDGE FLOW</b> [M=Metropole ] [P=Periphery]	<b>CONCEPT-THEORY RELATION</b>	<b>PLACE OF GUANXI IN THE THEORY</b>	<b>SCOPE OF THE CONCEPT OF GUANXI</b>
M → P	External	Object of explanation (explanandum)	Local relevance only
M ↔ P	Internal (non-directing)	Secondary explanatory concept (explanans)	Partial general relevance
M ← P	Internal (directing)	Primary explanatory concept (explanans)	Universal relevance

Table 1: Knowledge Flow and Theory Development

### **Discussion of Guanxi in Academic Journals**

As noted above, the EBSCO search of peer-review journals for the period from January 1999 to December 2009 in which guanxi appeared as a key term yielded 214 English-language items. The all-language search yielded 215 items. This confirms the discussion in chapter 1 showing that English is the major language for international or global academic social science research and enjoys the predominant role in conveying and disseminating concepts, theories and ideas in globalised knowledge processes.

Articles concerned with the concept of guanxi identified in the EBSCO search are overwhelmingly published in American and West European journals. The journals in which more than four articles about guanxi appeared in the period under review include: Journal of Business Ethics, International Journal of Human Resource Management, Journal of International Business Studies, International Business Review, Journal of Business Research and Journal of World Business. The frequency with which guanxi-relevant articles appeared in these journals is summarised in Table 2.

<b>JOURNAL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF GUANXI-RELEVANT ARTICLES</b>
<b>Journal of Business Ethics</b>	25
International Journal of Human Resource Management	11
Journal of International Business Studies	8
International Business Review	4
Journal of Business Research	4
<b>Journal of World Business</b>	4

Table 2: Frequency of Guanxi-Relevant Articles in Premium Business and Management Journals, 1999-2009

All these journals are located in the metropole. The Journal of Business Ethics is published by Springer Science and Business Media. The International Journal of Human Resource Management is published by the Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group. The Journal of International Business Studies is published by Palgrave Macmillan. The International Business Review, Journal of Business Research and Journal of World Business are all published by Elsevier.

As well as identifying journals and their location I also identified the institutional affiliation of their editors. The majority of the editors of the bulk of the search-identified journals hold academic positions at American, Canadian and Western European universities, as summarised in Table 3. Again, this confirms the discussion in chapter 1 that internationally influential academic journals are based in or operated by universities in North America or Europe. It is through publications in internationally influential journals in English that the concept of guanxi receives attention in mainstream research and gains its importance.

JOURNAL	INSTITUTIONAL LOCATION OF EDITORS					
	USA	Canada	UK	Europe	Australia	Asia
<b>Journal of Business Ethics</b>	4	7	3	3 (Netherlands 1 and Spain 2)	1 (Australia)	
International Journal of Human Resource Management			1			
Journal of International Business Studies	7	1		3 (Denmark 1 and France 2)		1 (Singapore)
International Business Review			2	2 (Belgium 1 and Norway 1)		
Journal of Business Research	4	1	1			1 (Taiwan)
<b>Journal of World Business</b>	6		1	1 (Netherlands )	1 (Australia)	1 (Hong Kong )

Table 3: Frequency of Journal Editors by National Base of Institutional Membership

Among the 214 articles identified in the EBSCO search only 26 were published in journals which have the words 'Asia' or 'Asian' in their titles. The majority of these 26 articles appear in 4 journals. During the period 1999-2009 seven articles in the sample appeared in Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 4 in the Asia Pacific Business Review, and 3 each in Journal of Asian Business and Asia Case Research Journal. The Journal of Asian Business is in fact an American journal and not surprisingly its editors are all based in American universities. The publisher of Asia Pacific Business Review is Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group and all of its editors are scholars who work in UK universities. The most international of these journals is the Asia Pacific Journal of Management in so far as 10 of its editors are academics working in American, Canadian and British universities. The remaining 11 editors of this journal have institutional affiliation in Asian universities though 8 have PhDs from universities in the USA, one each from Canada, Australia and Japan.

Of those English-language journals which are wholly operated by an Asian university or organisations it is nevertheless typical that their editors have PhDs from universities in the metropole. The Asian Case Research Journal, which is hosted by the National University of Singapore, is edited by academics who undertook their PhD studies either in the United States or Canada. More than half of the academics on the journal's editorial advisory board are employed by American universities. The figures are summarised in Table 4. The significance of the American link for the journal is clearly signalled in its statement of 'aims and scope' when it reports that the 'Journal's Editorial Advisory Board is drawn from a distinguished, international panel of academics, including George Lodge (Harvard), William Naumes (University

of New Hampshire), and Pradeep Khandwalla'. This indicates that journals which deal with Asia-related issues are in fact publications of the metropole. Again, this confirms the proposition set out in chapter 1 that in discussion of issues relating to the periphery of the globalised world academics tend to write in a way that Western editors are familiar with and draw upon theories and concepts generated in the metropole.

<b>JOURNAL</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>CANADA</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>EUROPE</b>	<b>ASIA</b>
Journal of Asian Business	2					
Asia Pacific Business Review			4			
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	6	2	1	1		11 (8 PhDs from USA, one each from Canada, Australia and Japan)
Asian Case Research Journal						6 (3 PhDs from USA, 2 from Canada, 1 from Singapore. 1 does not have a PhD)

Table 4: Frequency of Journal Editors by National Base of Institutional Membership

Turning now to the articles themselves identified in the EBSCO search, we can begin with a brief comment on the methods they adopted. One-third of the 214 articles reviewed adopted survey methods, with a survey questionnaire sent to companies or managers. The next most popular method used was interviews, which were used in 15 percent of the 214 articles. Other methods adopted include literature review, content analysis, and case studies. These are all standard techniques of research developed in mainstream social science. It was noted above, in reference to Jia's research on face and Chinese character that there are inbuilt assumptions in these methods that may not be relevant to Chinese or Asian social research.

The 214 articles under consideration here predominantly discuss issues related to guanxi in mainland China. Only 18 percent of the articles treat issues related to guanxi in other regions including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. The tone and sometimes stated purpose of the majority of these articles indicate that they are written for a readership interested in the issues and problems of foreign or Western business ventures in the Chinese economy, and also for organisations which intend to enter Chinese markets or which have investment or joint venture projects in China. The anticipated readership is Western, predominantly academic but with a clear applied focus.

We shall now turn to the treatment of the concept of guanxi in the 214 articles identified in the EBSCO search. As indicated above, the articles predominantly discuss the concept in terms of operational business issues pertinent to Chinese-Western interactions, in which guanxi has drawn increasing attention for researchers and practitioners alike. Associated with this orientation, according to Xiao-ping Chen and Chao Chen (2004: 305), guanxi 'has recently gained status as a legitimate socio-cultural construct in Western mainstream literatures of cultural anthropology,



sociology, social psychology, political science, and business and management'. Indeed, the intellectual framework in which guanxi is discussed in the 214 articles is supported by a cultural anthropology literature which insists on the unique Chinese nature of guanxi (Yang 1994; Yan 1996). This view has been challenged in an important article by Douglas Guthrie (1998), who argues that guanxi can be viewed as 'an institutionally defined system – i.e. a system that depends on the institutional structure of society rather than on culture – that is changing in stride with the institutional changes of the reform era' (Guthrie 1998: 255). But before providing an analysis of the nature of guanxi as a social phenomenon it is necessary to consider how the concept is treated in the 214 articles.

The most frequent use of the Chinese concept of guanxi in these articles is simply to see it as referring to an empirical relationship or type of relationship that can be identified and possibly explained in terms of existing mainstream theory. The concept, then, deals with a particular subject matter that has no implication in the articles under review for concept refinement or theory development. For instance, guanxi is indicated as a type of relationship or style of interaction which is located in relations between supply and buyer, supplier and retailer, supervisor and subordinate, business establishment and development, new product development, business transactions, and so on. In this sense the concept has minimal presence in the structure of the theory used by researchers and its explanations, except in so far as it provides a specification of a subject matter which it does in a matter-of-fact way and without theoretical elaboration: guanxi is there to be seen and requires no theoretical apparatus for its identification.

Approximately 95 percent of the articles treat the concept of guanxi in the way described here. This is characterised in Table 1 by saying that the concept is

external to the theory which treats it, because it exists only as an object of explanation. It is regarded as referring to phenomena of only local relevance – ‘characteristically Chinese’ – and in terms of knowledge flow Chinese data is subordinate to Western imperatives of theory. Two other possibilities are identified in Table 1. It is possible that a Chinese concept might operate in an explanatory role as a result of an appreciation of its relevance beyond the instance of its immediate appearance. In this case the original theoretical apprehension of the concept leads to some change in the original theory. On this basis it can be said that knowledge flow is no longer uni-directional. This possibility can have a weak and a strong form, as indicated respectively in the second and third rows of Table 1. Examples of the weak form can be found in less than five percent of the articles in the EBSCO sample.

Morgan Geddie, Agnes DeFranco and Mary Geddie (2002), in their paper ‘From Guanxi to Customer Relationship Marketing’, discuss similarities between the Chinese construct of guanxi and the Western construct of ‘customer relationship marketing’. They show that guanxi relations incorporate four distinct constructs, namely trust, bonding, reciprocity and empathy. They argue, on the basis of this distinction, that the four constructs of guanxi are capable of enhancing ‘a better understanding of the importance of some of the basic concepts of customer relationship marketing that are too often ignored’ (Geddie, DeFranco and Geddie 2002: 21). Customer relationship marketing is concerned with the provision of personal attention and ‘relationship building’ as a method of increasing customer loyalty as a marketing technique. The analysis of guanxi and the resulting distinction of its elements by Geddie, DeFranco and Geddie allow them to re-specify the nature of customer relationship marketing through an articulation of their constructs of guanxi in the conception and execution of this form of marketing. While this is not

sophisticated theorising Geddie, DeFranco and Geddie's argument is an instance of the incorporation of a Chinese concept in transformation of an existing theory concerning marketing.

Another instance of this form of knowledge flow is in a paper by Stephen Standifird and R. Scott Marshall (2000), 'The Transaction Cost Advantage of Guanxi-Based Business Practices'. They argue that guanxi should be seen as 'about the cultivation of long-term personal relationships' and in that sense it 'does not appear to be unique [to Chinese culture], and in fact exists in some extent in every human society' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 22). All economies, they argue, entail transaction costs, costs incurred in 'running the system' which 'include such ex ante costs as drafting contracts and such ex post costs as monitoring and enforcing agreements and negotiating' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 25). The authors note that a limitation of transaction cost analysis is in its 'fail[ure] to recognise the importance of institutional environments' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 28-9). They go on to note that 'the guanxi network ... [constitutes] an independent structural alternative [to contract law]' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 29) and therefore provides a valid and viable qualification to existing transaction cost theory.

Standifird and Marshall (2000) show that guanxi-based business practices offer certain transaction cost advantages over existing structural alternatives identified in the theory. As well as showing that guanxi-based exchange deals with governance problems associated with bounded rationality and opportunism (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 37), the authors demonstrate the relevance of the Chinese concept of guanxi to non-Chinese cultures: 'guanxi-based business practices can be explained regardless of cultural embeddedness effects'. While in effect agreeing with Guthrie (1998: 255), that guanxi is best seen as 'an institutionally

defined system – i.e. a system that depends on the institutional structure of society rather than on culture’, Standifird and Marshall (2000: 40) argue that precisely because of this fact ‘guanxi-based business practices will not diminish in importance to the extent previously predicted’ because of the transaction cost advantages they offer. Particularly relevant for the present discussion is the fact that through their focus on guanxi Standifird and Marshall modify transaction cost theory itself.

### **The Concept of Guanxi**

Having now briefly explored the treatment of guanxi in the EBSCO sample, and in doing so confirmed the argument of the previous chapter concerning the direction and nature of knowledge flow, at least with regard to the way in which the extensive literature on guanxi treats that concept, we can now turn to the possibilities set out in the bottom row of Table 1. What follows will show how the concept of guanxi may be incorporated into mainstream theory in such a way as to transform the theory by enhancing its explanatory competency.

In written Chinese language the term guanxi is made up of two characters, guan and xi. While guan means joint, juncture or connection, the term obtains its full meaning from a number of linked connotations. These include the notion of ‘strategic pass’ which refers to a guarded military position the control of which permits control of a larger area to which it gives access. Another possibility for guanxi is ‘critical point’, a particular significant phase in a transition from one state of being to another, and especially a time of change in which difficulties may arise. Xi simply means both a connection or tie and also the act of connecting or tying. The combination of guan and xi as guanxi literally means ‘interdependent relationship’ or ‘having a concern

with something or someone' or 'having a bearing on something' according to the Modern Chinese Dictionary (DEGLRICSSA 1981: 401).

In the context of discussions of relations between individuals in friendship and political or economic relationships the term *guanxi* has taken on a theoretical value in indicating carefully constructed and maintained relations between persons which carry mutual obligations and benefits. There are a number of definitions of *guanxi* provided in the academic and scholarly literature which elaborate different aspects of it depending on the purpose of the particular study in question. It is sufficient here to provide three distinct and widely cited definitions to indicate the point. Irene Yeung and Rosalie Tung (1996: 55) emphasise individual transactions when they regard *guanxi* as 'the establishment of a connection between two interdependent individuals to enable a bilateral flow of personal or social transactions'. Steve Lovett, Lee Simmons and Raja Kali (1999: 231), on the other hand, focus on networks when they define *guanxi* as 'networks of informal relationships and exchanges of favours that dominate business activity throughout China and East Asia'. The subjective dimension of *guanxi* is highlighted by Chen and Chen (2004: 306) when they refer to *guanxi* as 'an informal, particularistic personal connection between two individuals who are bound by an implicit psychological contract to follow the social norm of *guanxi* such as maintaining a long-term relationship, mutual commitment, loyalty and obligation'. The articles in the EBSCO sample were focussed primarily on *guanxi* and business, and this is indeed a predominant concern of the discussion of *guanxi* in the English-language literature more broadly, indicating the way in which China's economic rise since the 1980s is responsible for the attention among Western researchers to the concept and the relations it refers to (Alston 1989; Gold 1985; Jacob 1982; Redding 1993). The

pivotal role of guanxi in Chinese business is undisputable, but guanxi is not confined to business relations and a number of writers have acknowledged its importance to not only economic relations but also to politics, social relations and everyday life in China (Gold, Guthrie, and Wank 2002: 3-20). Indeed, guanxi has been described as ‘the lifeblood of ... Chinese business ... politics and society’ (Davies, Leung, Luk and Wong 1995: 209). It is recognised as an important component of the social fabric in both traditional and emergent twenty-first century China (Chiao 1982), a view widely accepted and echoed by Seung Ho Park and Yadong Luo (2001: 455) when they describe guanxi as a major dynamic element that ‘has been pervasive for centuries in every aspect of Chinese social and organisational activities’.

Although there is no single definition of guanxi that operates in the diverse discussion of it, there are clear lines of agreement concerning the various component aspects of guanxi, including agreement that guanxi involves a personal connection between individuals in their formation and maintenance of an interdependent relationship which follows implicit social norms, especially those of face (mianzi), norms of interpersonal behaviour (renqing or ganqing), reciprocity, trust and obligation. These will be explored below, but it is first necessary to say more about guanxi in general.

### **Dual Ramifications of Guanxi: Notoriety and Nobility**

Because it provides particular not general access to resources and operates through personal relations rather than through formal structures some of the discussions of guanxi have associated it with such negative forces as corruption, bribery and malpractice. Yeung and Tung (1996: 54) have observed that Westerners ‘often regard guanxi as a sordid form of favouritism and nepotism’. Similarly

Thomas Gold (1985) believes that guanxi is the source and mechanism of widespread corruption in Chinese society. In a similarly negative vein Choo-sin Tseng, Paula Kwan and Fanny Cheung (1995) hold that guanxi is one of the key problems and the form of inappropriate practices in the distribution of resources in China. These views cannot to be simply disregarded as having no grounds. Katherine Xin and Jone Pearce (1996: 1645) note that guanxi stands in sharp contrast to ‘clear property rights, an independent judiciary, and predictable impersonal enforcement of regulations [which] provide institutional protection that does not depend on the particularistic knowledge of others’. This remark indicates that the problem may not derive directly from guanxi itself but with a context in which there is an absence of social and legal institutions of the type Xin and Pearce refer to.

There is agreement among all scholars and commentators that Chinese society is hierarchically organised and that an enduring feature of its political system, from imperial times to the present, is that a small elite has access to power and information unavailable to ordinary people. This system has a determining influence on the allocation of resources throughout society (Balazs 1996). Against this background the importance for people with less power to establish and maintain guanxi with people who have more power than they do becomes clear as a ‘natural’ way of achieving access to such necessities as securing a job or a promotion, or accessing information that would assist in such endeavours for themselves or family members. As indicated above, it is the absence of a comprehensive legal infrastructure that has generated the continuing reliance on guanxi relations in the distribution of variously valued resources in Chinese society and provided it with its broad significance that all commentators agree about.

While *guanxi* is neither synonymous with nor a cause of corruption, if corruption occurs it is probable that *guanxi* may be one of its mechanisms. *Guanxi* is ‘easily conflated with corruption and bribery’, as Mayfair Yang (2002: 461) observes. The difference is that the emphasis in *guanxi* is on relationships, whereas the emphasis in corruption is on unwarranted material gain achieved through inappropriate means. This difference is captured by Yang (1994) when she says that *guanxi* stresses *renqing*, long-term obligations and bonds of relationship while corruption stresses only material interest. This point is noted also by Andrew Kipnis (1997: 23-24) who says that ‘[i]n *guanxi* feeling and instrumentality are a totality’ because ‘the unity of economy and *ganqing* [in *guanxi*] implies that matters of the heart involve economic calculation as much as it implies that exchange has a moral dimension’. Alan Smart similarly illuminates the salience of relationships in *guanxi*:

The cultivation of *guanxi* involves more than the negotiation of a deal and the usage of customary forms to disguise what might otherwise be recognised as a corrupt and illegal exchange. Instead, the exchanges are used to cultivate and strengthen relationships that are expected to continue. In the process, not only advantages and obligations are achieved, but also some degree of trust (Smart 1993: 400).

*Guanxi*, therefore, is ‘no more equivalent to corruption than social drinking is to drunkenness’ (Ambler 1994: 75).

Perhaps one of the reasons that *guanxi* on the one hand and bribery and corruption on the other are often seen as equivalents may be due to the manner in which *guanxi* is initiated and established. Personal *guanxi*, as Nancy Chen and Dean Tjosvold (2007: 173) put it, is ‘usually developed through social occasions, such as lunches, dinners, and gift giving’. Symbolic gift exchange and a provision of



convivial meals generate a sense of closeness between persons and give rise to expectations of reciprocity. These not only lubricate various types of relations but also facilitate business transactions without the added cost of a negotiated contract, as noted above. Expensive gifts and meals can also be the currency of bribery. The ‘instrumentality’ inherent in gifts and meals, to borrow the word used by Yunxiang Yan (1996: 219) in his discussion of gift transactions, can be utilised as a means to cultivate personal relations which are reciprocated by instrumentalised returns in the form of goods, favour and service.

In all societies, though, friendship and social connections are valued as essential to a person’s well being. Chinese society is no exception. Guanxi operates on the basis of long-term relationships which are sustained through trust, mutual obligation and reciprocity. This entails that individuals bonded through guanxi are obliged to help each other, especially in circumstances of need or difficulty. This supportive aspect of guanxi is emphasised by Eric Tsang (1998: 66) when he notes that ‘trust and credibility sometimes play a more salient role than legal contracts among overseas Chinese businessmen’. Trust in a sense provides a vouch of the character of a person with whom a person deals and starts and conducts business with, and the possibility of fraud between them is therefore minimised. This aspect of guanxi is captured by Tong Chee Kiong and Yong Pit Kee (1998: 84) when they note: ‘the principle of guanxi and differential power relations in the market intervene to vary the cogency of social relations in containing fraud’.

A guanxi relation between employer and employee is typically seen to be initiated by an employee to gain promotion, say, or a favourable job assignment and other benefits. Given the necessarily personalised nature of the relationship it is difficult to distinguish between such guanxi, from which non-institutionalised

benefits derive, and nepotism or unfairness. Yet this perception, which assumes the ready identity of guanxi and nepotism, misses the fact that guanxi is just as likely to be initiated by an employer to provide assurance to and gain the trust of his/her more able employees for the development of the organisation or company (Redding 1993: 107, 133-134). The essence of guanxi lies primarily in the 'relationship' and not its benefits, and its effective use is to strengthen the relationship of an employer and employees and improve the communication and interaction between them. That guanxi is an instrument of investment in human capital and not necessarily a corrupt device of nepotism is captured in the summary of their research findings when Chen and Tjosvold (2007: 183) report that 'guanxi can develop the communication and understanding between managers and employees that in turn lead managers to have the confidence and knowledge to assign employees jobs and promotions'. That the relationship is informal rather than formal is a function of the broader context in which it operates (Burt 1992; Parnell 2005; Su et al 2009; Uzzi 1996). In being informal it carries the additional advantage of the informal structure of work relations, which are identified by Elton Mayo (1975), in that it encourages employees to speak their minds and provide additional opportunities for an employer to benefit from their employees perceptions and work experiences.

It was alluded to above that there is a difference between researchers on the question of whether the significance of guanxi is diminishing during the current period of economic transition in China and into the future. The issue arises from expectations among some researchers that a market economy is necessarily subject to legal regulation, especially concerning property rights and contract, which will be increasingly required through the Chinese economy's fuller integration into the globalised international economy. A number of scholars, including Guthrie (1998),

hold that China is moving toward a rule-based legal system and this has the effect of diminishing the importance of *guanxi*. On the basis of 155 in-depth interviews conducted with Chinese officials and industrial managers in 1995 Guthrie (1998: 282) concludes that *guanxi* is likely to ‘occupy a diminishing role in China’s urban industrial economy as the economic transition progresses’. But this view is strongly contested. I Chun Chen and Mark Easterby-Smith (2008), in a later study, investigated multinational companies originating from Taiwan. Taiwan has had the benefit of legal institutions for a relatively long period as a result of its earlier integration into the international economy through extensive US and Japanese investment. The conclusion of Chen and Easterby-Smith’s study is that *guanxi* remains crucial to Taiwanese multi-national corporations even as they are increasingly internationalised and managing employees in host countries. In a similar conclusion Scott Hammond and Lowell Glenn (2004: 29) find that it ‘is a naïve perspective’ to suppose that ‘forces of globalization will eliminate the need for *guanxi*’. It is not the intention of this chapter to arbitrate in this dispute concerning the likely future of *guanxi*. At best it can be said that the evidence currently available does not clearly support the idea that *guanxi*’s future is limited. Certainly, as legal forms predominate the uses of *guanxi* in corrupt practices and bribery will no doubt decline. However, the significance of *guanxi* in gaining and maintaining trust, providing transaction cost advantages, and offering mutual help among those who share reciprocal relations will no doubt remain, as similar relations are universally practiced as informal facilitations of the formal processes of business, politics and society everywhere.

## **Integration of Guanxi into Social Theory in the West**

There is no doubt that guanxi is an indigenous Chinese concept. It is not accepted here, however, that the phenomena to which the concept refers are confined to Chinese culture both in the People's Republic of China and among overseas Chinese communities in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and elsewhere, as some writers contend (Kiong and Kee 1998; Triandis 1995; Yan 1996; Yang 1994). Rather, the position accepted here follows Tsang (1998: 65) when he says: 'Guanxi is not a unique feature of Chinese society; it exists to some extent in every human society'. A similar view has been expressed by Park and Luo (2001: 474) and Anne Tsui and Jiing-Lih Farh (1997: 75) indicating that guanxi is a Chinese word for a universal phenomenon, while acknowledging that the types of particularistic ties and the intensity of their application may vary between societies. Indeed, various aspects of guanxi are seen by many scholars to be represented in non-Chinese experience and discussed in Western theory and research. For example, Tim Ambler, Chris Styles and Wang Xiucun (1999: 84) observe that '[t]he Chinese concept of guanxi has similarities with Western relational business thinking'. Howard Davies, Thomas Leung, Sherriff Luk and Yiu-hing Wong (1995: 210) note that the 'Western concept of networking ... includes the notion of continuing reciprocal obligation that is so firmly inherent in the Chinese concept of guanxi'.

While guanxi, as a set of Chinese cultural practices, operates in terms that are distinctively Chinese, the structure and content of guanxi relationships can be understood in terms of more general properties of interaction between persons, in which relationships are initiated and built over a period of time through reciprocal engagements. In abstracting guanxi from its Chinese context it is necessary to identify both the Chinese cultural elements and the general properties of guanxi that

are more universally relevant. In Chinese society *guanxi* is a widely prevalent and an overtly explicit form of relationship. It was mentioned previously that the context in which *guanxi* operates in China includes an absence of institutionalised forms of assurance such as law and the practices of civil society that have been developed in Europe, say, since the eighteenth century. It is this context which is largely responsible for the widely prevalent and overtly explicit form of *guanxi* in China. Also, in its Chinese expression, *guanxi* may operate through the ritual provision of typically but not necessarily small gifts that would have little value or significance in a modern Western society, in which a long history of mass production robs such objects of the value they may still possess in a society in which ‘things’ are crafted and convey a continuing material significance which provides them with symbolic value.

The gift-giving aspects of *guanxi* are possibly the most culturally identifiable and distinct. Yan (1996: 211) observes that all ‘anthropological theories of the gift are based on case studies of particular ethnic groups’. These include, to mention the most obvious, Bronislaw Malinowski’s (1984) research on Melanesian trade exchange, Meyer Fortes’s (1959) on the Tallensi, Helen Codere’s (1950) on the Kwakiutl Indians, Marcel Mauss’s (2000) on the Polynesians, and Paul Bohannan’s (1955) on the African Tiv. Based on the spiritual significance of the *hau* of the gift among the Maori Mauss, perhaps the best known of them all, develops his theory of the spirit of gift. Raymond Firth (1959) and Marshall Sahlins (1972) challenged Mauss’s theory and argue instead for the essentiality of reciprocity in the exchange of gifts. Jonathan Parry’s (1986) research indicates that while the Maori requires the reciprocity of every gift received, an ethnographic fact used to support the idea of the universality of reciprocity, Hindu exchange on the contrary rejects the idea of

reciprocity. Yan's (1996) study of Xiajia village in China confirms the principle of reciprocity but he argues that the sentimental aspect of gift giving, manifest in renqing, has been neglected in the anthropology literature. Yan (1996) points out that in the exchange of gifts within guanxi relations there is a reciprocity of giving, receiving and returning which operates within the framework of renqing. The concept of renqing refers to social norms and moral obligations infused with emotional feelings (Yan 1996: 122-146). The role of gifts in the construction of guanxi is captured by Yan's (1996: 226) finding that 'gift giving is one of the key means by which villagers maintain and expand their guanxi networks'. Kipnis (1997: 24) provides a nuanced reading of gift giving 'as transcending Western bourgeois opposition of amoral commodity exchange and moral kinship'. He goes on to state in his study of Fengjia, a village in northern China, that guanxi 'can be seen as unifying what Western bourgeois relationships separate: material exchange and affectionate feelings' (Kipnis 1997: 24). A similar view is expressed by Smart (1993: 403) when he indicates that a 'critical social capital of trust, not just obligation, is created through the repeated exchange of gifts and favours'. Outside of the Chinese cultural area 'gifts' relevant to building and maintaining continuing relationships may take a quite different form.

Chinese concepts which are associated with the operation of guanxi do not necessarily carry an exclusively Chinese cultural association. For instance, guanxi is commonly understood in terms of xinyong, which readily translates into English as 'trust'; renqing, which means 'norms of interpersonal behaviour'; mianzi, which translates literally as 'face' and means 'how one is seen by others' as in Charles Horton Cooley's (1964) concept of 'looking-glass self' which can be seen as 'an image of self possessed by a person through their interest in how they are regarded or

judged by others' (Qi 2011: 287); and *huibao*, meaning 'interdependent return' or 'obligatory reciprocity'. Moving from simple associated concepts to more complex and analytic terms, it is often noted that *guanxi* functions as a form of social capital, in which resources derived from interpersonal relationships have values that are available to the participants. Pierre Bourdieu (1986: 249-250) defines social capital as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

The idea here of a credential for credit, which Bourdieu sees as essential for social capital, is explicitly conveyed in the notion of instrumental *guanxi*.

The idea that instrumental *guanxi* is another term for social capital raises questions concerning the generality of both the concepts of instrumental *guanxi* and social capital. Bourdieu (1986) focuses on social capital as a collective asset which is exclusively shared between an individual and the group of which he or she is a member. Through the mutual acknowledgements and obligations internal to instrumental social relations which are maintained and reinforced through social exchanges, a collective social capital is affirmed, and so is each member's share of that capital. While it has effect on both the individual and the group social capital principally provides members of a group with benefits and privileges. Lin (2001: 24) characterises the social capital discussed by Bourdieu as class (privilege) goods because it produces, maintains and reproduces the dominant class in a society. While

James Coleman and Robert Putnam each also treat social capital as a collective asset they emphasise that it is a public but not a private good (Coleman 1990: 315-318; Putnam 1993: 170). Coleman (1988: 98) defines social capital as a variety of entities with two elements in common: 'they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors – whether persons or corporate actors – within the structure'. As a collective asset social capital is not confined to a certain privileged group but is available to all members within the structure regardless of whether an individual 'owns' a share of the capital. Coleman (1998: S99-100) provides an example in which a mother of six children moved from Detroit to Jerusalem because she could feel safe in letting her eight year old take the six year old across town to school on the city bus and in allowing her children playing in a city park without supervision. Such kind of social capital is provided by the structure in Jerusalem which is not available to her in Detroit.

In a similar vein Putnam (1993: 167) emphasises the function of social structure by saying that '[s]ocial capital ... refers to features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action'. With reference to social capital as a collective asset both Coleman and Putnam point to its reliance on social norms, trust and obligations. It is these that are necessary for maintaining and enhancing social capital as a collective good. Instead of stressing the function of structure, Lin conceptualises social capital as an aggregation of resources that are embedded in social networks. He argues that social capital 'must be distinguished from collective assets and goods such as culture, norms, trust, and so on' (Lin 2001: 26). In referring to social capital as a means of 'investment in social relations by individuals through which they gain access to embedded resources to enhance expected returns of instrumental or



expressive actions', Lin (2001: 29) highlights the essence of social relationships in networks. It is through the relations in one's networks that an individual may access, mobilise or manipulate embedded resources including information, influence or credentials.

Guanxi is a type of relational social capital in the form that Lin illuminates. The instrumental dimension of guanxi, which is identified in the literature (Gold 1985; Hwang 1987), has the particular property of transferability. It is the way in which this transferability functions in guanxi networks which shows how Bourdieu's 'credential for credit' operates in a general sense and in doing so adds to the theory of social capital. If a person A, say, needs the help or favour of person B with whom there is no prior acquaintance, then A may ask a person C, who both knows B and with whom A has a (guanxi) relation, to introduce him, A, to B. Through such exchanges A benefits from C's existing guanxi with B; through A's guanxi with C, C's guanxi with B is transferred to A. To extend this brief analysis further, C's introduction of B to A functions as a type of voucher for B and also provides assurance that A's (new) relationship with B will not be misused. This is because in his dealings with B, A is restrained from behaving inappropriately because of his guanxi with C, which is the basis of the link A has with B. More significantly, the mutually reciprocal relations which now operate between A, B, and C means that if any of them defaults then not only is one person's relation with another particular single person affected, but their relation with the entire guanxi network itself will be affected. This interdependent network then comes to function as an (informal) institution of assurance that keeps all participants from defecting, through fraud, exploitation of the other or similar betrayal of trust. In a guanxi network 'the cost of

opportunism is the potential loss of exchange opportunities with all members of the network' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 24).

This discussion of transferable guanxi provides a suitable background to indicate the way in which its associated concepts have relevance beyond the Chinese context in which they are culturally located. An individual's xinyong or trustworthiness is proven through their transactions or dealings with others (Yeung and Tung 1996: 63; Lee and Dawes 2005: 48-52). When starting a new guanxi relationship a person may use borrowed xinyong, vouched for by a third person or demonstrated in their relations with a third person. This is a case of guanxi-provided credit made available in advance. This is neither the 'face-work commitments' that characterise a familiar local community in traditional societies nor the 'faceless commitments' that characterise abstract systems of trust in modern societies that Anthony Giddens (1990) describes. A term, 'borrowed face commitments', can be coined to describe this type of trust that arises in guanxi relations as described here. The uncertainty and risk that trust-givers typically face, which Jack Barbalet (2009: 372) describes in terms of the asymmetry of dependence of the trust giver on a trustee, and the absence of pertinent knowledge concerning the other's future actions, are minimised in the type of trust, xinyong, that arises through guanxi networks. An individual may thus build up their own xinyong through (guanxi) transactions or dealings with others. What is described here accords with the idea of social capital as 'connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam 2000: 19). The point about xinyong or trustworthiness that arises through guanxi relations is that it is implicit and not based on a focussed negotiation. While in terms of the norms of a legalistic society this may appear to be an inferior form of trustworthiness it is in fact highly reliable, and

in a general manner and not merely in a Chinese cultural context. Laboratory experiments show that trust is more likely to develop between partners when exchange occurs without explicit negotiations or binding agreements. Indeed, as Linda Molm, Nobuyuki Takahashi and Gretchen Peterson (2000: 1396) show, experimental results demonstrate that ‘reciprocal exchange produces strong trust and affective commitment to the relationship than would negotiated exchange’. The reason for this arises from the assurance provided through guanxi networks indicated in the previous paragraph, a finding that is not otherwise apparent.

Another concept associated with guanxi is renqing, as seen above, in which interpersonal behaviour has an important normative dimension of obligation in giving and returning favours. This ‘mutual exchange of favours’, according to Martin Parnell (2005: 30), is ‘the dynamic [force] behind guanxi’. Kwang-kuo Hwang (1987a: 953-954) identifies three separate aspects of renqing: the ‘emotional responses of an individual’ to their situations; second, a ‘resource that an individual can present to another person as a gift in the course of social exchange’; and finally, ‘social norms by which one has to abide in order to get along well with other people’. It is of interest that the first two aspects have universal application while the third is peculiar to Chinese culture. A person who receives a favour or assistance from another thereby has a sense of indebtedness to the assisting person (Bian 1994: 972). In such a situation it is not necessary that the favour be immediately returned (Michailova and Worm 2003: 512). At some future time, when a need arises, the debt in question may be called in. In this sense a mutual exchange of favours (renqing) entails obligatory reciprocity (huibao). In guanxi relations, then, renqing and huibao operate as mechanisms which regulate social and business exchanges and can function as emotional and instrumental resources in the sense of debt and pay return.

Thus the operation of renqing and huibao provide input for future guanxi exchanges and constitute the outcome of preceding guanxi interactions. It can be seen that all of these relations are mutually enforcing: the development of renqing may initiate a guanxi relation; the quality of the renqing exchange and degree of huibao together determine the strength of future guanxi relations.

A further aspect of guanxi which points to its relevance for understanding general aspects of social-capital type relations is *guanxi's* flexibility. No matter how detailed they are, legally binding paper contracts are incapable of anticipating all of the requirements of an agreement and of foreseeing future uncertainties, as widely recognised in the economics and industrial relations literatures (Williamson 1985; Smart and Smart 2000: 259). The implicit and informal contract of guanxi relations, on the other hand, precisely because it is not specified in a document external to the relation but entirely dependent upon the symbolic exchanges between persons within an enduring relationship, including those in renqing and huibao, introduces assurances otherwise not available. In such cases trust between persons hinges on an inference they can make about an agreement, say, on the basis of a person's personal characteristics and intentions. These always occur within a relational context of network constraints and expectations of future exchanges which limit the likelihood of opportunistic actions between guanxi participants (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 24).

Rather than a set of limited requirements typical of a legal contract, the implicit guanxi contract provides for the satisfaction of needs in a relationship as they arise organically within an ongoing set of connected exchanges (Montgomery 1998). Implicit guanxi contracts therefore tend to reduce uncertainty. They do this in part by 'permit[ing] members of a guanxi network to deal with unforeseen

contingencies arising after agreements are reached' (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 30). Informal or implicit contracts of this type also reduce transaction costs associated with uncertainties in the organisational and market environment, such as formally communicating, negotiating and coordinating transactions, as well as dealing with the contingencies of mal-adaptation or a failure to adapt (Standifird and Marshall 2000: 30), a finding supported by Park and Luo's (2001: 459, 473) research which reports that business operated through guanxi incur low bureaucratic and transaction costs.

The discussion so far has indicated various ways in which the concept of guanxi supports and strengthens the concept of social capital which is widely used in social, economic and cultural theory. But guanxi is relevant to areas in which the ideas central to it have not been explicitly applied. In economics and economic sociology the level and stability of prices are typically explained in terms of competition and market power, with very little predictive force. An approach which emphasises the length of time buyers and sellers deal with each other, and their buying patterns over time has shown, though, that prices of industrial goods will be lower and more stable when buyers and sellers remain in contact with each other over long periods of time (Carlton 1989). The relations that Carlton describes can be characterised as those constitutive of guanxi, and a self-conscious application of the concept in economic sociology would open a new field of sociological price theory.

Indeed, marketing theory has increasingly recognised the importance of relationships and networks in business at all levels, including production and distribution, for both material goods and services (Andersson 1992; Dwyer, Schurr and Oh 1987; Ellis 2000; Hitt, Lee and Yucel 2002; Morgan and Hunt 1994). At a mundane level it is widely recognised that personal relationships, guanxi, are

important in shaping economic outcomes in inter-organisational exchanges in various contexts (Weitz and Jap 1995). It was mentioned above that reductions of various costs, including legal and other costs of contract, the general facilitation of transactions, and the retention of customers, are all achievable through a move in the direction of 'trust-based agreements and long-term networks of relationships', which Lovett, Simmons and Kali (1998: 243) believe, 'will increasingly out-compete those using traditional contracting methods'. The applied concerns of Lovett, Simmons and Kali (1998: 245), that 'guanxi-type systems, despite having evolved under different circumstances and being based on different ethical principles, can be legitimate alternatives to ... Western market systems', resonate with the theoretical concerns of the present chapter.

Examination of the Chinese concept of guanxi can provide basic material for the augmentation and transformation of theories in the fields of economics, business and management as well as sociology, as indicated in earlier discussion. And yet an element of guanxi that seems to imply that it retains a characteristic Chinese quality and is therefore unsuitable as a concept that can be applied to analyses of Western societies is its apparent anti-individualistic and collectivist form. This issue has been critically assessed in a recent paper by a German economist and sinologist. Carsten Hermann-Pillath's (2009) discussion of the notion of guanxi leads to a 'need to reconfigure a fundamental concept in social psychology and economics, namely the notion of collectivism' (Hermann-Pillath 2009: 341). Individualism is classically and still prevalently contrasted with collectivism in the comparison of cultural differences between societies. Social scientists, as Daphna Oyserman, Heather Coon and Markus Kimmelmeier (2002: 3) point out, 'assume that individualism is more prevalent in industrialised Western societies than in other societies, especially more

traditional societies in developing countries'. In a study of more than 117,000 IBM employees in 66 countries, Geert Hofstede (1980) found that the United States, Canada, and Western European countries were high on individualism while Asian countries were high on collectivism. There is a wide consensus that American people, for instance, can be classified as individualistic while Chinese people must be classified as collectivistic (Chan 1994; Hui 1988; Leung 1988).

In discussing the networks that make up Chinese society, the eminent Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1991: 67) emphasises that 'there is always a self at the centre of each web' and that the role of the self in network transactions 'amounts to egocentrism'. While individuals are interrelated to others in Chinese society and shaped by their social spheres they are not passively controlled or confined by the ensuing interdependence, according to Fei. The self who is situated at the centre of a pattern of social relations has autonomy in organising and managing those relations. In this sense, the self is not made by the relationships in which they are involved but more importantly they are the architects of their *guanxi* relations. Ambrose King (1991: 79) characterises *guanxi* in this vein when he describes it as 'an ego-centred social engineering of relation building'. Through his emphasis on 'the continuing work of human actors' in the 'production and reproduction of *guanxi*' Kipnis (1997: 7, 8) succinctly indicates that when people 're-create their networks of relationships, they also recreate themselves'. In his study of the concept and practice of *guanxi*, Hermann-Pillath (2009) ingeniously revises the classical distinction between individualism and collectivism into a threefold classification in which a distinction is made between 'individualism', 'relational collectivism' and 'categorical collectivism'. Relational collectivism, according to Hermann-Pillath (2009: 340), 'builds on evolving networks between individuals, in which the individuals take heed

of the interests of others, and in which the individual self is seen as dependent on the relations with others'. In categorical collectivism, on the other hand, an abstract group interest over-rides the interests of individuals in the determination of social action. Guanxi is such 'an ideal-typical case of relational collectivism' that Hermann-Pillath (2009: 340) suggests that the theory of guanxi should be described as 'a theory about relational collectivism'. The collectivist element of guanxi is in the constraint on individual action, but the actions themselves are individualistic. Hermann-Pillath (2009: 341) says that guanxi relations 'are a web of constraints and a web of individual opportunities at the same time, and their instrumentalism is an expression of achievement orientation in managing social connections'. But all action is subject to contextual constraint. In the Chinese context such constraint includes face, referred to above and to be treated more fully in chapter 5. Indeed, Hermann-Pillath (2009: 337-338) says that guanxi 'is not simply a dyadic structure, but a triadic one, which includes the observer ... most evident in the relation between [guanxi participants] and face'. The triadic nature of relationships between participants in exchange is universal, however, because all relations include an audience, which may be a social gaze, a public or a legal scrutiny (Caplow 1968). This fact, then, the triadic nature of guanxi, adds to the general relevance of the concept of guanxi for understanding associations and transactions, it does not detract from it.

## **Conclusion**

The review conducted in this chapter of 214 refereed journal articles published during the period 1999 to 2009 has shown that guanxi as a non-English-language concept gains recognition in social science, business and management



theory through English-language journals. These journals are predominantly organs of North American and British or European universities or associations. Even those English-language journals published from Asian universities or associations, such as the Asian Case Research Journal, are likely to be managed by people who have North American, British or West European PhDs. The discussion of the Chinese concept of guanxi in the papers reviewed here is primarily concerned with issues related to China, extending to Chinese culture in Southeast and East Asia. A majority of the papers reviewed focus on various aspects of business and management and provide insight and advice to foreign or Western businesses conducting or intending to conduct business in China. It was shown that approximately 95 percent of the papers reviewed treated guanxi as a particular subject to be explained by standard Western theories which remained unaffected by their application to this material. The small number of the remaining papers did indicate theoretical modification as a result of integrating the concept of guanxi, no matter how slightly, into their explanations. These findings confirm the conclusion of the previous chapter concerning the dominance of North American, British and Western European researchers in the production and circulation of concepts, theories and methodologies in a knowledge flow which is directed from the metropole to the periphery, a situation which continues under processes of intensified globalisation.

The chapter also provides a detailed discussion of the concept of guanxi in its Chinese cultural context in order to indicate its component parts that have relevance beyond the particularly Chinese case. It was shown that guanxi can be characterised in terms of long-term relationships which operate through trust, mutual obligation and reciprocity. These are general not specifically Chinese attributes of associations and activities and can be incorporated into social and cultural explanatory accounts

which are not necessarily concerned with Chinese subjects at all. And yet the inclination of Chinese practitioners of guanxi to explicitly operate through and refer to nuanced distinctions which are used in their characterisation and representation of guanxi has value for the refinement and development of the concept of human capital, for instance, which is a staple of established social theory, as indicated above.

The purpose of this chapter has been to substantiate the conclusion of the previous chapter concerning asymmetric knowledge flows, through a discussion of the ways in which the concept of guanxi is treated in social science and management journals. It has also been shown that the concept of guanxi has much to offer the theory of social capital, widely used in Western social theory and research. Another purpose of the chapter, then, has been to show that the asymmetric knowledge flow to which the concept of guanxi is subjected in the journal literature discussed in the chapter is not intellectually justified.

These conclusions raise a number of issues that shall be dealt with in the chapters which follow. One issue is the social practice of knowledge flow itself. This is the question of the diffusion of knowledge from one society or culture to another. The institutional levers of knowledge flow were indicated in the first chapter and the present one but the 'street level' practices of diffusion require a different focus than operated in the discussion of these chapters. The social practice of knowledge flow is dealt with in the following chapter in which the role of what I shall call 'intellectual entrepreneurs' is identified and discussed in terms of the case of the introduction of Western ideas into Imperial China during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The appropriation and incorporation of selected Western knowledge by Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs did not lead to the Westernisation of Chinese

society and culture. Indeed, many Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs of the period believed that the appropriation of Western knowledge and the incorporation of it into a Chinese framework involved a Chinese domestication or sinicisation of the foreign ideas and practices in question. This raises the issue of what is meant by the idea of a continuing intellectual heritage when so much of its content has alien origins. This question is treated in chapter 4 in which the paradigmatic nature of intellectual heritage is developed in order to show that such continuity is to be found in the means of incorporating alien concepts, a phenomenon which occurs in all societies which have a history of contact with other societies.

Finally, it might reasonably be asked whether the positive intellectual contribution to the theory of social capital provided by incorporation into it of the concept *guanxi* is an unrepresentative case. This concern is addressed in chapters 5, 6 and 7 through a discussion of three quite different Chinese concepts which address respectively different areas of social theory. Before we begin to do in these chapters what has been attempted in the latter part of the present one, namely the strengthening of mainstream theory through the incorporation of selected Chinese concepts, it is necessary to indicate the social mechanism through which such intellectual practices can be conducted and also the social agent – the intellectual entrepreneur – who might perform such tasks of theory transformation. This is the subject of the following chapter, to be treated through the lens of the historic introduction of Western ideas into late Imperial China.

## **Chapter 3**

# **Western Thought in China: An Historical Case of Knowledge Flow**

### **Introduction**

The theme of this thesis, that asymmetric global knowledge flows indicate both inequalities between concepts, theories and methodologies drawn from different cultural backgrounds and also opportunities for the assimilation of foreign concepts into dominant theories, is continued in the present chapter through a discussion of ways in which ‘modern thought’ was introduced into Imperial and post-Imperial China from the nineteenth century through the agency of intellectual entrepreneurs, a concept that will be developed in this chapter. In the first chapter the phenomenon of global knowledge flows as they are treated in the globalisation literature was discussed. It was demonstrated that the flows and mobility of knowledge and its organisational and cultural apparatuses tend to be structured in a manner that tends to preserve inequalities commensurate with the idea of Western dominance or hegemony.

In continuing the discussion of knowledge flows between different societies this chapter examines the ways in which members of the Chinese political elite and urban intellectuals appropriated and assimilated Western ideas at a time when China

experienced historical subordination to Western political, economic and military dominance from the middle of the nineteenth century. A theoretical model of knowledge flow in terms of 'diffusion' and 'intellectual entrepreneurship' is developed in the chapter to account for the way in which European concepts and theories were selected, adapted and assimilated into the cultural and intellectual milieu of the Chinese elite and educated urban youth at the time. This relatively recent period of Chinese history provides the context of a very appropriate case of knowledge flows because as well as being a situation of profound asymmetry based on political and economic inequalities backed by the military might of Western powers it is also a time of careful selection of alien concepts and theories by Chinese innovators which became assimilated into an environment that was both hostile to Western thought in general and accommodating of elements of Western thought, especially those elements that were conceived to strengthen Chinese capacities for independence and advancement in the emerging involvement in a world dominated by foreign powers.

China's national subordination to Western powers, principally Britain but also Germany, France and the United States, resulted from defeat in the Opium Wars in the 1840s and the 1860s. Whereas subjection to Western imperialism in the nineteenth century typically resulted in colonisation, as in Africa and much of Southeast Asia, for instance, in China the domination of populations was not total and the direct control by foreign powers was geographically limited to particular coastal locations even though a number of general concessions were extracted from China. But Chinese culture was not so wholly subverted by an overwhelming knowledge flow as occurred in African colonies. Pitika Ntuli (2002: 54) graphically describes how 'Christianity, education and culture were used as instruments of

control, until they reached a hegemonic stage where the natives believed that what they were taught was the truth, the only truth, and nothing but the truth ... Centuries of Eurocentric indoctrination has resulted in many of Africa's "intellectuals" believing that there is only one way to think, act and express themselves, and that way is the Western way' (Ntuli 2002: 54). According to Ntuli (2002: 65-66) colonisation generated an African acceptance of 'the colonisers' entire system of values, attitudes, morality and institutions'.

The overwhelming knowledge flow from coloniser to colonised that occurred in some African cases was unlike the Chinese experience in which indigenous intellectuals and activists were compelled to select from Western sources the concepts and theories that they felt would be useful for the independent development of China as a country. The flows of Western knowledge into China at this time were mediated by Chinese preferences and not subject to alien and external compulsion. Indeed, this is an enduring theme of Chinese intellectual contact with external forces, of selective apprehension and adaptation (Keane 2010: 116), of simultaneously appropriating and transforming ideas from foreign sources (Chan 2002: 201). This is a well developed pattern in Chinese history, from the sinicisation of Buddhism from 200 BC (Hsu 2001; Lusthaus 1998c: G002SECT11; Tang 1999) to the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century and the two-hundred-and-fifty year period of Manchu reign from the seventeenth century. What is particular about the period after the Opium Wars, however, is that the managed knowledge flows into China were principally overseen by politically engaged thinkers and officials who intentionally directed their efforts to the development of counter-Western strategies.

The resilience of traditional Chinese culture and the durability of its concepts and theories even as Western ideas and practices were introduced into its domain

have to be understood in terms of a number of factors. One aspect of this relatively stable pattern is in the fact that China's defeat through the Opium wars did not lead to the direct overthrow of the Qing dynasty or the Imperial structure of China. The political elite was shaken but not vanquished by events and the literati whose power rested on the Confucian system and its symbiotic dependence on rural lineage and folk religions remained intact. Thus the Chinese intellectual world, dominated by the gentry-literati, was able to remain aloof from Western learning so that 'for almost half a century after the 1840s', as Hao Chang (1971: 4-5) put it, 'conscious intellectual interaction between Chinese tradition and Western learning remained isolated and superficial'. This situation contrasts with nineteenth-century Japan, for instance, where the Western impact led Japanese intellectuals to almost immediately engage Western ideas (Chang 1971: 4). Another factor is the structure of political power in China which maintained a relative separation of spheres between central government and local affairs, captured in the aphorism that 'the mountain is high and the Emperor is far away'. In such a system it is enough for the Imperial state to achieve symbolic integration of China while leaving the meaning of core symbols to local authorities (Herrmann-Pillath 2000: 185-186). The consequences of this arrangement are that orthopraxy (correct behaviour and ritual) rather than orthodoxy (correct belief) governs the cultural domain and that, to quote another Chinese peasant saying, 'customs change every 10 li' (Eastman 1988: vii). In this context Christian missionary activity in China, for instance, encouraged by Western success in the Opium wars, was productive of very little effect on the Chinese population, especially in comparison with the success of missionary activity in Africa, say, and the Pacific.

Western thought was never merely transplanted to Chinese soil, as John Clarke (1997: 29) notes, but rather China ‘assimilated and responded creatively to Western ideas in various ways’. Rather than being Westernised China – or rather, particular individuals in China – selected specific Western ideas which were then cautiously diffused into the existing ferment to better understand them, with Chinese thinkers and activists critically appraising their relevance for China’s self-improvement. This process was conducted mainly to self-consciously resist and deflect foreign influence, and in the process strengthen China so that it did not imitate or become a ‘copy’ of the West. Through this process of selection, absorption and transformation the original Western concepts typically became part of an expanded and developing Chinese knowledge base, indeed become seemingly thoroughly assimilated elements of Chinese thought. Before indicating the particular details of this process as it relates to China’s interface with Western thought, it is necessary to do two things. The first section will provide a theoretical framework for understanding the process in which the flow of Western knowledge into China was negotiated and managed by modernising Chinese elite. The following section will provide a summary of the historical background to China’s subordination to the West in the nineteenth century. After this, the chapter will detail the historical context, issues and actors responsible for the Chinese apprehension and assimilation of Western ideas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the processes of knowledge flows through which this history was enacted.

### **The Diffusion of Knowledge and Intellectual Entrepreneurs**

The problem of how to understand the transfer of concepts and theories from one culture to another, either in the form of single ideas or ideational systems such as



religions or technologies and associated techniques, has been a concern of anthropologists, historians and geographers since the period of European colonisation during the nineteenth century. The mechanism most generally referred to in explaining such knowledge flows is 'diffusion'. There are a number of issues surrounding this concept and how it is used in this context. One problem is precisely its association with Western colonisation and the subsequent claim that the term and its application are eurocentric. A strong advocate of this view is the geographer James Blaut (1977; 1987; 1993). In a book, with the transparent title *The Colonizer's Model of the Model: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, Blaut (1993: 14-17) argues that classical diffusionism holds that the world comprises two sectors, one of these is Europe, where invention, innovation and change naturally occurs, and the other – non-Europe – is stagnant, unchanging, traditional and backward. The movement of ideas or products in which ideas are embedded is from Europe to non-Europe in the form of diffusion, and in compensation for this diffusion of civilising ideas non-Europe provides raw materials and labour to Europe. While Blaut (1993: 26-30) acknowledges that modern diffusionist theory differs from classical diffusionism in many respects he insists that its basic propositions remain more or less identical.

Blaut's critique is an important caution against such influential social theorists as Max Weber (1960; 1964), whose argument concerning the 'uniqueness' of the West, or what he calls the Occident, is premised on the idea that rationality is exclusively located in the historical experience of European institutional and religious development and denied to the historical experience of China, India and other Oriental societies. This idea has been ably shown to be fundamentally flawed by the British anthropologist Jack Goody (1996; 2004), among others (see Blue

1999). But Blaut's concerns about the theory of cultural diffusion ignore the fact that its major social scientific statement, by the American anthropologist Alfred Kroeber (1940), is not based on the Eurocentricism that Blaut sees as its defining characteristic. Kroeber provides a number of examples of cultural diffusion, the first one he mentions is the 'stimulus' of Chinese porcelain on eighteenth century European technology and he goes on to discuss ancient Phoenician and Egyptian contact, early Chinese-Japanese diffusion and many other cases in which European culture is not an issue. This is not to say that Kroeber ignores the diffusion of European ideas and technologies into non-European contexts, as in his discussion of the development of a Cherokee alphabet. But Kroeber's wide ranging examples tend to support William McNeill's (1988: 75) statement that 'diffusion of skill and knowledge from one community to its neighbours and neighbours' neighbours constitutes the central process of human history'. Given the ubiquity of diffusion it is necessary to know how it operates and in particular what mechanisms it employs.

Kroeber's account of mechanisms is sketchy and suggestive rather than precise. Nevertheless he describes some relevant aspects of the process of diffusion that are important background considerations. First, Kroeber (1940: 1) notes that diffused cultural material is frequently only a fragment of a larger complex or system and these fragments may be placed in a context in the receiving culture that is quite unlike their original context. This makes the process of diffusion not simply one of transfer but transformation. A connected idea which Kroeber (1940: 19) mentions is that diffusion does not operate automatically, the inference being that particular creative efforts are required on the part of those in the receiving culture who select and appropriate alien ideas and in doing so create something that did not previously

exist. In Kroeber's (1940: 20) words: in diffusion there 'is historical connection and dependence, but there is also originality'.

The notion of originality through diffusion implicitly connects the process of cultural transfer with the process of social change. This connection is made explicit in Everett Rogers' communication theory, in which Rogers (2003: 5) deals with 'a special type of communication, in that the messages are concerned with new ideas'. Diffusion in this sense is described by Rogers (2003: 5) as 'the process in which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system'. The new ideas involving the process of diffusion usually stimulate, trigger or propel change whether the ideas are partially or totally accepted or even rejected. Diffusion, therefore, according to Rogers (2003: 6), 'is a kind of social change, defined as the process by which alteration occurs in the structure and function of a social system'. In discussing diffusion channels Rogers (2003: 36) holds that '[m]ass media channels are more effective in creating knowledge of innovations, whereas interpersonal channels are more effective in forming and changing attitudes toward a new idea'. The relevance of this very general statement to the purposes of the present discussion is the distinction between the different kinds of channels of communication associated with different kinds of knowledge. The diffusion of alien concepts and theories to a sharply contrasting cultural context requires not simply an open conduit, such as a mass media channel, but attitudinal change requiring 'interpersonal channels'.

In a discussion of transnational diffusion between social movements Sean Chabot and Jan Duyvendak (2002: 706) make the point that among the assumptions of classical diffusion theorists is the idea that diffusion simply spreads within a social system, the suggestion being that introduced ideas have an internal energy through

which they spread by virtue of their own efforts. Chabot and Duyvendak (2002: 706), on the other hand, argue that ‘diffusion items’ are taken up by ‘critical communities’ or ‘networks of excluded citizens who identify new social problems, formulate new modes of thinking and feeling, and develop new political and cultural solutions’. The point to take from their discussion is that diffusion is not a process involving only cultural artefacts. Diffusion depends on social agents of ‘diffusion items’ in the form of individuals or collectives who not only select and sponsor alien concepts, theories or practices but in doing so generate a culturally novel product. This perspective, then, introduces a need to understand the social location of such individuals or collectives, which can be defined simultaneously in terms of their relationship with the diffusion items on the one hand and the social system into which they attempt to assimilate such items on the other.

The social role of an intermediary, standing between the diffusion item and the social or cultural system into which that item is creatively introduced, is indicated in the important distinction between ‘diffusion’ and ‘brokerage’. In their book *Dynamics of Contention* Doug McAdam, Sydney Tarrow and Charles Tilly (2001: 333, 335) differentiate diffusion and brokerage as distinct social processes by arguing that ‘[d]iffusion involves the transfer of information along established lines of interaction while brokerage entails the linking of two or more currently unconnected social sites ... [D]iffusion requires a much lower investment of time, entrepreneurship and frame transformation than brokerage’. The concept of brokerage here is an important addition to the theory of diffusion in explaining the means through which cultural objects are translated from one society to another. But it is not sufficient to say that brokerage is merely ‘the formation of new links (or the consolidation of old ones) among transmitters and receivers’ (Chabot and

Duyvendak 2002: 708). Such an account of brokerage emphasises the linking role at the expense of the creating role required of the translation of alien concepts and theories into an entirely new context. The problem is that 'brokerage' literally means no more than being a link or agent for another. But McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's point is that the distinction they wish to make is between a linkage requiring little facilitation and one demanding, in their words 'entrepreneurship and frame transformation'. Entrepreneurship and frame transformation, however, are rather more than brokerage. They are terms which refer to complex social mechanisms of cultural diffusion. Such mechanisms are context dependent and require careful elaboration.

The diffusion of cultural forms to be discussed below, within the context of Chinese history after the Opium wars, did not involve a passive reception within China of foreign theories but an active and innovative diffusion initiated by Chinese intellectuals and activists. These people are indeed intellectual and cultural entrepreneurs who located Western ideas, carefully selecting the ones that they thought would benefit and advance China, de-contextualising them from their foreign origin and reorganising, reformulating and transforming them and, finally, re-contextualising them into a Chinese cultural framework. This is the type of activity required to achieve the diffusion Kroeber (1940: 20) calls 'stimulus-diffusion', which involves, as noted above, 'historical connection and dependence, but ... also originality'. In a discussion of what he calls the 'global ecumene' Ulf Hannerz (2008:111) refers to those agents who 'mastered the alien cultural forms, taking them apart to investigate their potentialities in terms of symbolic modes, genres, and organisations of performance' and refashioned and integrated them with what exists of locally rooted resources and infused into the stock of their own cultural system.

This statement summarises the activities of the Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs to be discussed below.

The entrepreneurial role is usually located in the world of business, markets and economic action. But the qualities of entrepreneurship identified by the leading theorist of the economic entrepreneur, Joseph Schumpeter, are precisely those that facilitate the cultural transfers of diffusion. In his classic statement of entrepreneurial activity in *The Theory of Economic Development* Schumpeter (2008: 66, 78-83) distinguishes the entrepreneurial function from the functions of the capitalist, the inventor and the manager. The particular nature of the entrepreneur's activities and approach is in their introduction of 'new combinations' into the economy. The general possibilities of the operations of entrepreneurship in this sense, from the economy to the broader cultural arena, are clear in Schumpeter's (2008: 84-86) discussion of the relationship between tradition and entrepreneurial activity. Established knowledge, Schumpeter (2008: 84) says, 'does not need to be continually renewed and consciously reproduced ... [as it] is normally transmitted almost without friction by inheritance, teaching, upbringing, [and] pressure of [the] environment'. The introduction of 'new combinations', however, which displace or change established knowledge, requires 'a new and another kind of effort of will', which Schumpeter (2008: 86) says must perform two tasks: it must 'wrest amidst the work and care of the daily round' a conception and realisation of 'the new combination', and secondly, it must do this against 'the reaction of the social environment against one who wishes to do something new'. The 'characteristic task' of the entrepreneur, according to Schumpeter (2008: 92) 'consists precisely in breaking up old, and creating new, tradition'.

The notion of intellectual entrepreneur outlined here and borrowed from Schumpeter bears no relationship with a similar sounding term, 'moral entrepreneur', used by Howard Becker (1991) in his development of sociology of deviance. Becker's argument is that 'deviance is the product of enterprise' (Becker 1991: 162) but the moral entrepreneur who generates deviance is actually two distinct types operating in different ways in different arenas. The 'rule creator' is the crusading reformer who forms and is active in such things as temperance movements and movements for sexual prohibitions of various forms who generate deviance by proposing rules of moral conduct that define improper or deviant behavior (Becker 1991: 147-48). The 'rule enforcer', on the other hand, is a bureaucratic worker such as a police officer or welfare official (Becker 1991: 155-56) who enforces the rules that arise from the activities of 'rule creators'. Becker (1991: 147-48) argues that rule enforcers 'create outsiders' by 'enforc[ing] rules ... in a selective way'. Becker's concept of moral entrepreneur is an umbrella term for two separate types of activity that in quite different ways generate deviance. The concept of intellectual entrepreneur, on the other hand, is a unitary concept that relates to each aspect or phase of the selection, appropriation, transformation and assimilation of alien concepts into a framework that is modified and made to accept the newly formed combinations through which this framework is transformed. Also, the notions of deviance and conceptual transformation refer to quite different types of processes. Deviance relates to processes of social control within a given society whereas conceptual transformation and the process of diffusion it amplifies are concerned with expanding intellectual and cultural possibilities that arise through the contact between different societies.

The conveyance or diffusion of concepts and theories from one cultural setting to another requires not merely a communications medium but an active agent who selects and organises alien ideas in a new combination and then finds ways of assimilating them into the existing and established intellectual and cultural milieu and at the same time deal with the inevitable resistance of the receiving society. This agent is an intellectual entrepreneur. In his account of the entrepreneur Schumpeter emphasises the activities and qualities that are required for intellectual translation from one culture to another as much as he shows how new combinations of products or techniques are introduced into an economy. It will be shown in the discussion to follow that the apprehension and assimilation of European ideas into the Chinese intellectual and cultural arena was achieved through a diffusion in which intellectual entrepreneurs are the active agents.

The activity of intellectual entrepreneurs, as mentioned above, includes the selection and appropriation of alien concepts as well as their transformation and assimilation into a framework that they modify so that it can accept the newly formed combinations. The concept of 'appropriation' has drawn attention in cultural studies and cultural sociology over the last couple of decades or so to refer to the taking of a cultural form from another group in generating a self definition or identity (Coombe 1997). When appropriation is referred in the present discussion, however, it has no such meaning or connotation. The appropriation of alien concepts by intellectual entrepreneurs is not part of a project of self definition and the term appropriation in this context simply means laying hold or taking possession of something, in this case alien concepts, that in the practice of intellectual entrepreneurship rapidly become transformed. Self definition or identity is not the purpose of intellectual entrepreneurship although a secondary consequence of such



activity may affect the identity of the practitioner. But this is not a special property of intellectual entrepreneurship. The intellectual entrepreneur, in order to transform the ideas and practices of their milieu, appropriates alien concepts. How this occurs is discussed in what follows.

### **Opium Wars: Balance of Trade and Imbalance of Knowledge**

Before discussing the activities of Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs who introduced alien concepts and theories into the Chinese intellectual and cultural frame it is important to establish the historical conditions in which cultural diffusion occurred. Prior to the significant development of intellectual entrepreneurship in late nineteenth-century China the relationship of European and Chinese knowledge systems was fairly represented by the trade balances between the two. Until the early nineteenth century, China enjoyed a favourable foreign-trade balance with European countries due to its low demand for European goods and the high demand in Europe for Chinese goods, especially tea, silk and rhubarb (Hsu 2000: 150). This was not a situation that would remain unchanged, however.

During the eighteenth century British merchants began smuggling opium from India into China. This was in spite of the Qing government's 1729 ban on opium imports. Nevertheless, not simply as a result of its addictive qualities but through the continuing efforts of British merchants opium imports to China quickly became established in a strong and growing market. This new-found Chinese market and the opium revenues that emerged through it played a critical part in Britain's international balance-of-payments strategy (Spence 1990: 141). During the early nineteenth century the upsurge in opium imports into China was so large that the earlier trading deficit was reversed. By 1810 325,000 kilograms of opium per year

were imported into Canton (now called Guangzhou), and rising annually (Gernet 1996: 536). As a result of the growth of the opium trade, China's trade disadvantage led to a disastrous depletion of silver. Jacques Gernet (1996: 538) reports that in the twenty-year period from 1800 to 1820 ten million liang of silver entered China, while in the two-year period 1831 to 1833 ten million liang left the country. In addition to the opium-led trade deficit, a growing number of Chinese officials and intellectuals were concerned with the health and social problems created by addiction to opium.

In March 1839 Lin Zexu (1785-1850), a high Qing government official appointed to the rank of Commissioner for the purpose of putting an end to the opium trade, arrived in the south-eastern trading port of Canton. He imposed a trade embargo on the British and under pressure the British Superintendent of Trade ordered the surrender to Lin of opium held by British merchants (Spence 1990: 153-154). China's official position at this time was that Britain-China trade was to resume on the condition that Britain cease smuggling opium to China. The British, however, refused to sign a bond promising that there would be no further dealings in opium. In response Lin had the confiscated opium destroyed in public and the British, in turn, accused Lin of ravaging their merchants' property. The situation quickly deteriorated with the British authorities refusing to turn over suspected opium importers to Lin and Lin countered with the breaking off of all trade and the expulsion of British merchants and officials (de Bary, Chan and Tan 1964: 5). Shortly afterwards, in June 1840, Britain sent a well-equipped army to Canton and by doing so began the First Opium War. The Chinese military was no match for British steam-powered ships and superior firepower. In 1842 China was forced to sign the first of a number of 'unequal treaties' with Britain, France and America. This

constituted the beginning of China's subordination to explicit Western imperialist domination and exploitation.

Britain, now joined by France, recognised China's weakness and appreciated the opportunities available to them through it. Wolfgang Franke (1967: 69) summarises the situation when he says that these European powers 'used – and perhaps intentionally provoked – insignificant squabbles as an excuse for fresh military interventions, in order to obtain fresh advantages and profits'. These continuing squabbles led to the second Opium War, which lasted from 1856 to 1860. Subdued by the superior weapons and tactics of the allied Western forces, China in defeat was forced to sign a number of 'unequal treaties' which benefited Britain, France, Russia and the United States. These unequal treaties allowed a number of significant concessions to be made by China to Western powers, including the extraterritoriality and consular jurisdiction of foreigners in China, effectively removing foreigners from the sanction of Chinese authority, restriction of the level of customs duties paid by foreigners, the provision of foreign settlements, concessions and leased territories within China, provision of freedom of movement for foreign ships in Chinese inland and territorial waters, legalisation of the opium trade, freedom of religion and therefore missionary activities in China, and other concessions too numerous to mention (Spence 1999: 180-183).

China's subordination to Western powers through defeat in the Opium Wars provided foreigners with access to China's economic resources but did not grant them political or cultural control over China. China was not formally colonised by Western powers as occurred during this period in Africa, say, the Pacific or South East Asia. The response to these foreign threats, encroachments and incursions took various forms. The official Chinese response was resigned capitulation reflecting

political incapacity, entrenched conservatism and intellectual malaise. Young urban Chinese, on the other hand, affronted by European incursion and embarrassed if not dismayed by official Chinese ineptitude and weakness began looking for intellectual and political solutions. One means of reasserting Chinese prerogative which was accepted both in certain official quarters and also among China's youth was to carefully select elements of Western knowledge that might be useful for a new development of China with the purpose of integrating and effectively localising such knowledge into existing patterns of Chinese thought and culture. There was a widespread hostility to Western powers among all classes of Chinese people, and a strong desire to not capitulate to or appropriate wholesale Western concepts, theories or practices. At the same time there was a growing recognition from the late nineteenth century that the best defense China had against Western power was the careful appropriation of those ideas and practices that were responsible for Western strength. In Chinese hands these would hold at bay the Western humiliation of China. The task of selecting and shaping Western concepts for Chinese development was executed by China's young intellectual entrepreneurs. But before the younger generation took the lead in China's renewal the entrenched Qing elite attempted a process of government led self-strengthening.

### **The First Phase of Chinese Appropriation of Western Knowledge: The Self-Strengthening Movement**

Immediately after the second military defeat at British hands and the subsequent unequal treaties and concessions there was a sense of urgency in China to reverse the humiliation imposed by Western powers. A number of initiatives were developed during the period, from 1861 to 1895, that became known as the Self-

Strengthening Movement. This movement, endorsed by the Qing government, was conducted by a group of government officials and intellectuals close to the centres of power. It was directed toward acquiring scientific and technological knowledge. The sense and direction of the movement is summarised in a contemporary slogan, ‘Zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong’, which means ‘Chinese learning for substance, Western learning for function’. This slogan summarises the approach developed by the influential scholar and Qing official Zhang Zhidong (Chang Chih-tung) (1837-1909). Chang (1964: 86) makes it clear in his book *Exhortation to Learn*, published in 1898, that ‘[t]he old learning [Chinese learning] is to be the substance; the new learning [Western learning] is to be for application. Neither one should be neglected’. Zhang (Chang 1964: 82) says that he derived the terms *ti* (substance) and *yong* (function or application) from ‘the philosophical lexicon of Sung metaphysics, in which they stood for the ontological and functional aspects of the same reality’. Implicit in its slogan and confirmed by Zhang’s elaboration of the idea is the fact that the Self-Strengthening Movement was opposed to the proposition that China should adopt Western political systems, for instance, or ethical and religious beliefs. Instead the movement was directed to strengthening the capacities of the Qing dynasty in order to preserve the character of a China dominated by the traditional political structures of the Qing Imperial regime and the existing social arrangements of Confucian conservatism. The Western ideas that were of interest to the Self-Strengthening Movement were principally technical.

The Self-Strengthening Movement was not so much an intellectual movement as a phase of institutional reform largely directed to the transfer of modern military technology to China through the building of ship yards and arsenals. Indeed, China’s first modern arsenals were set up during the 1860s in Anqing, Shanghai and Nanjing,

and during the same period a modern naval shipyard was built in Fuzhou (Wright 2000: 22). In addition to its essential military dimension Self-Strengthening required the establishment of state-directed profit-oriented industries that would both ensure technological transfer to China and also generate economic wealth required for national strength through the promotion of Chinese industrial and commercial activities. This aspect of the Self-Strengthening Movement led to the introduction of modern rail and telegraph installations in China as well as the development of modern mining and manufacturing, including cotton mills in Shanghai (Feuerwerker 1958), all of which were important in China's later modern industrial development. The reforms that accompanied the Self-Strengthening Movement were administrative as well as technological. Political and social reforms were not a part of this movement. Neither was general intellectual development conceived as necessary by the promoters of China's Self-Strengthening except in the narrowest sense. The Qing government employed foreign advisers to train Chinese workers and manufacturers in modern production techniques. Cultural diffusion, then, was confined to material technologies and it is possible to refer to intellectual entrepreneurs in this context therefore in the most limited sense as they too were imported, as foreign technical advisers.

The Self-Strengthening Movement did not provide a framework for the reforms which are typically associated with cultural and social change that accompanies knowledge transfer. Nevertheless, a key background factor for such changes emerged at the time of the Self-Strengthening Movement through the educational reforms it promoted. These reforms helped to establish an unintended and eventually uncontrollable appetite for foreign intellectual and cultural products that enlarged the scope of political possibilities for China. The Qing government

introduced two educational reforms at this time that had lasting consequences. The first of these was the sponsoring of Chinese students for overseas study, especially in science and technology, and secondly, the establishment of modern schools in China, which began in the 1860s (Cleverley 1991: 34). Tongwen Guan was the first of these government schools, founded in Beijing in 1862 (Chen 1997: 153). Initially the new developments in the school's curriculum included the teaching of foreign languages, namely English, French, German, Russian and Japanese. The curriculum was later expanded, however, to include chemistry, machine-making, astronomy, mathematics, geography and international law. Similar institutions opened soon afterwards in Canton and Shanghai. A further innovation undertaken by Tongwen Guan which was to have significant consequences was the publication of translations of influential Western works in order to provide Western knowledge to its students and to a broader readership in China (Chen 1997: 153).

These developments constituted a radical departure from the traditional educational system in which only Chinese classics and official doctrine were taught. The expansion of the curriculum to include foreign languages and scientific subjects not only added new material for students to study but effectively changed the nature and meaning of Chinese education itself. The publication and distribution of translations of foreign texts similarly had consequences not anticipated by those who introduced this development. Not only did it lead to the generation of a new readership of foreign texts among a growing number of articulate young people and introduce world views to them that would challenge and could never be harmonious with the Confucian requirements of traditional fundamentalism, obedience to authority and established ritual. It also generated a new intellectual class of translators who in varying degrees would perform the transforming function of

intellectual entrepreneurs. Ironically, the consequences of such intellectual entrepreneurship the Qing government largely wished to avoid.

While the intellectual entrepreneurs of the early twentieth century in China, who will be introduced below, were explicit in addressing questions of the social and political transformation of China, the movement of translating foreign works – especially technical works – had already begun from the middle of the nineteenth century. The problem these translators faced, of selecting foreign ideas and assimilating them into a Chinese framework, prefigure the one that later generations faced although in a different specific form. The motive of strengthening China was common to both of these generations; they differed, though, on how far they wished to change the context of social institutions and cultural practices in which foreign ideas were to be introduced. By differing in their understanding of their political role these sequential generations differed on how they conceived the sinicisation of foreign concepts and theories. Leading early intellectual entrepreneurs will be introduced here, and the scope of their combinations of new ideas and transformation of the old culture will be considered.

The first to mention in this context is Lin Zexu, referred to above in discussion of the first Opium War. He was a leading Qing official and regarded as one of the first intellectuals to take an initiative in diffusing Western knowledge into China in order to not merely understand the West but to defeat its purposes. Lin was responsible for initiating and organising the regular translation of an English-language publication, the *Gazetteer of the Four Continents* (*Sizhou Zhi*), as well as foreign geographic journals and a work by the Swiss lawyer Emerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations* (Shen 1996: 298). In his provision of information about the West Lin's intention was not to promote Western hegemony but on the contrary to provide



in China a widened perspective in order to promote China's better understanding of itself and the outside world.

Lin Zexu's endeavours effectively encouraged others to explore and disseminate Western knowledge. Based on Lin's pioneering work, Wei Yuan (1794-1857), a classicist and historian who was also a government official, wrote a landmark work of enormous scope, *Hai Guo Tu Zhi* (Illustrated Gazetteer of the Maritime Countries), which he first completed in 1842. The work went through later editions and by 1852 it had expanded to a 100 volume work (Teng and Fairbank 1954: 29). This book provided to Chinese readers encyclopaedic information about foreign countries, including among other things their history, geography, politics, science and technology, education and culture. In the preface to this work, Wei (1964: 13) states that the purpose of the book is to 'use barbarians to fight barbarians ... and [learn] how to employ the techniques of the barbarians in order to bring the barbarians under control'. Wei proposed that China should obtain the 'intelligence of the enemy – of his strengths and weaknesses ... [and] to match these strengths and exploit the weaknesses' (de Bary, Chan and Tan 1964: 11). Wei's statements here are reminiscent of the military strategy set out in the classic *Sunzi Art of War*. There it is proposed that in order to defeat an enemy it is necessary to acquire their strengths and learn what their weaknesses are (Sunzi 2003: 30-43).

By introducing knowledge about the West Lin Zexu and Wei Yuan hoped to initiate a re-examination of the course of China's recent past and reappraise the direction of its future prospects. After its defeat in the Opium Wars it was clear to these thinkers that China could no longer regard itself as the centre of the world, as it was previously assumed, and that China needed to re-orient itself to and learn from the strengths of the West in order to subdue the Western invaders on Chinese soil. It

has been shown above that the Self-Strengthening Movement selected primarily military and technological knowledge for this purpose and at this time a group of pioneering Chinese scientists actively sought to assimilate Western science and its ethos in order to build China's power and prosperity which had been lost as a result of military defeat. They introduced into China advanced knowledge of major disciplines of modern Western science, including mathematics, physics, astronomy, biology and botany, thus laying 'a solid theoretical scientific foundation for the development of modern Chinese science' (Wang 1996: 356). The major contributors to China's adoption of Western science through translation – often in cooperation with Western missionaries – and dissemination included Li Shanlan, Xu Shou, Xu Jianyin, Hua Hengfang and Zhao Yuanyi.

These early translators of European scientific texts into Chinese were animated by a sense of China's weakness through military defeat which they believed could be redressed by making available what they saw were important elements of the West's advantage which China lacked, namely scientific and technical knowledge. The knowledge transfer which they achieved seemed to be simple and direct, namely the translations of scientific texts, concepts and theories to be thereby made available to Chinese teachers and practitioners of these sciences. It is interesting that while the Self-Strengthening Movement transferred foreign technologies by employing foreign experts, the translators of scientific texts worked with foreign missionaries. This is not to denigrate the efforts of these early Chinese translators but to acknowledge the fact that the diffusion of knowledge they undertook was understood to be primarily 'mechanical'. The scientific transfer they achieved was largely thought of as an addition to an existing and otherwise unchanged stock of knowledge. This was a view these scientists seemed to hold

themselves and one suggested by later commentators. The problem of assimilation and sinicisation of alien concepts into Chinese intellectual culture was conceived by these early scientific translators as primarily mechanical and one of merely linguistic translation. And yet the work they performed was genuinely that of intellectual entrepreneurs. These scientific thinkers did address the substantive transformation of the 'receiving' culture through the introduction of alien concepts and theories.

Hua Hengfang's translation of Lyell's *Principle of Geology*, which he translated as *Dixue Qianshi*, not only introduced Lyell's principles of geological analysis to Chinese intellectuals, but helped establish a climate of enquiry about natural history essential for the Chinese reception of Darwin's theory of evolution which was to become so crucial in later Chinese cultural and social movements as we shall see below. The translation of chemical terms by Xu Shou was also a remarkable exercise of intellectual entrepreneurship. Xu ingeniously adopted the first sound of the English name of a chemical element and combined with a Chinese character. Nickel, for instance, is given the name *nie*, the left radical of the character meaning 'metal' and the right part having a sound representing the first syllable of the English word 'nickel'. According to Shen Fuwei (1996: 304) it 'was because of Xu Shou's translation of the most essential works of chemical science of the late nineteenth century that chemistry became an independent discipline in China'.

Later generations of translators and intellectual entrepreneurs, whose practice of knowledge transfer was more challenging to the mores and assumptions of the receiving cultural and social arenas, are more generally acknowledged to affect the intellectual framework of Chinese thought. It is to these we now turn.

## **From Technology to Culture**

In addition to the educational and scientific developments that emerged in the wake of the Self-Strengthening Movement an entirely different development began in the mid 1910s, known as the New Culture Movement. This movement aimed to revitalise China through transformation of the traditional Chinese world view and a self-conscious endeavor was made to reconstruct the traditional Chinese mentality. The character of this movement has been summarised by Lin Yu-sheng (1979: 26) when he described it as employing a ‘cultural-intellectualistic’ approach which stresses the priority of intellectual and cultural change over political, social and economic change. But the ferment of the New Culture Movement was in a sense the culmination of earlier developments which grew out of and essentially continued the ethos of the Self-Strengthening Movement but went beyond its merely technological focus. Before treating the New Culture Movement it is necessary therefore to discuss here the historically prior cultural ideas that are associated with the Self-Strengthening Movement and were a direct consequence of it.

The Chinese intellectuals who participated in these new developments were drawn from a wider social base than the Qing elite strata that engineered Self-Strengthening. In that sense they were closer to the Western and modern notion of intellectuals described by Alvin Gouldner (1979: 48) as a social type whose ‘interests are primarily critical, emancipatory, hermeneutic and hence often political’ who ‘often contribute to revolutionary leadership’. The critical and hermeneutic aspect of the intellectual’s practice is stressed by Hannerz (1990: 246) when he identifies the ability of intellectuals to both de-contextualise and re-contextualise knowledge. The dual process of de-contextualising and re-contextualising European cultural ideas to best suit China’s needs was the task which principally identifies these later

developments. It must be noted, however, that the cultural-intellectualistic approach employed did not itself derive from Western cultural forms. It was, rather, as Lin (1979: 49) says, 'primarily molded by a deep-seated Chinese cultural predisposition as embodied in a monistic and intellectual mode of postclassical Confucian thinking'. One of the most important aspects of Confucianism lay in its emphasis on the primary function of intellectual experience. Although the doctrines of Confucianism were strongly attacked by a number of reforming intellectuals at this time, these reformers were nevertheless influenced by the values and form of Confucianism which emphasised learning, cultivation of mind and an ethical orientation in relations with others. Lin (1979: 50) explains that 'the intellectualistic climate of opinion of Confucian culture was so pervasive and deeply embedded that a category of analysis of the Chinese intelligentsia was decisively molded by it without their being aware of the fact'.

It would be naïve to claim that there was unanimous agreement among these Chinese intellectuals and officials about how Western knowledge should be treated. There were adherents to versions of each of the three logically possible positions: first, repudiation of Western ideas and preservation of China's traditional thought; second, wholesale Westernisation and abandonment of Chinese traditional thought; and third, transformation and integration of Western knowledge into a reformed Chinese culture. The position which attracted the most adherents and was most influential on Chinese developments was the last of these. This is to acknowledge that among different groups of intellectuals there was both the continuing appeal of Chinese tradition and also the compelling attraction of Western thought.

Some intellectuals found the broad pattern of Western ideas and intellectual culture repugnant. Although appreciative of the power of 'scientific method' and

‘democracy’ in Western culture Liang Shuming (1893-1988) attacked what he saw as Western ‘ruthlessness’ in its orientation toward conquest and the utilisation of the environment for self-interested purposes and the associated attitude to fellow humans, as means to ends. Liang argued that ‘The Westerners’ life attitude brought about a great fissure between individual and individual, as well as between individuals and nature ... profoundly alienating individuals from each other and from nature’ (Liang 2000: 181) . Liang continued this criticism when he wrote that the ‘forward path of the West has been entirely devoted to the search for the external, completely casting aside the self and destroying the spirit, so that while the external life is rich and beautiful, the internal life is empty to the point of zero’. Liang (2000: 214) urged revitalisation of Confucianism: ‘The attitude I want to put forth is the “resoluteness” [Kang] of Confucius... Only this sort of dynamism can make up for the former Chinese shortcomings, save the Chinese from their present afflictions, avoid the faults of the Westerners, and enable the Chinese to cope with the needs of the World’. Liang (2000: 179-182), therefore, recommended that China should take a different path from the West and boldly predicted that at some future time world civilisation would reflect the spirit of Chinese culture, replacing Western instrumentalism and intellectualisation.

While Liang believed that Western civilisation was doomed because it was founded on flawed principles he was also convinced that if China was to survive then a reform of Chinese culture was necessary. Therefore while ‘advocating what he had set out to oppose [namely] the blending of Chinese and Western cultures’, Liang, as Guy Allitto (1986: 123) insightfully notes, ‘has tried to describe and establish an attitude that would embody “the original Chinese spirit” and enable the Chinese to avoid the pitfalls of the Western road, but which at the same time would allow them

to get what they truly need from the Western culture'. Liang's position must therefore be contrasted with that of those of who were thoroughgoing conservatives. This latter group is perhaps best represented by the editor of the Shanghai journal *Eastern Miscellany*, Du Yaquan (1873-1933) (Fung 2010: 35). Du (2003) emphasised what he saw as the irreconcilable dichotomous differences between the West and China in terms of language, race, natural environment, historical development, philosophical background and social and economic characteristics, among others, and argued that there was no soil between them for cross-cultural fertilisation (see Fung 2010: 35).

Total Westernisers, on the other hand, advocated an equally unrealisable position which included completely discarding traditional thought. Wu Zihui (Wu Chih-hui) (1865-1953) vehemently attacked Confucianism and is best remembered for his famous declaration: 'All thread-bound [old-style] books should be dumped in the lavatory' (quoted in de Bary, Chan and Tan 1964: 178). The linguist Qian Xuantong (1887-1939) was another ultra-Westerniser. He claimed that Chinese ideographic script no longer suits the need of modern China and should be replaced by Esperanto. Qian called for a fundamental and total break with the Confucian ideology which had dominated Chinese life for more than two thousand years, and offered a solution of his own: 'If you want to abolish Confucianism, you must first abolish the Chinese script' (quoted in DeFrancis 1972: 68). According to Qian, as John DeFrancis (1972: 68) puts it, 'there was little of value in Chinese literature, 99.9 per cent of which he dismissed as merely transmitting Confucian ideology and Taoist mythology'.

It would be wrong to say that the majority of Chinese scholars and intellectuals involved in these movements merely sought to transport Western ideas

into Chinese consciousness and simply replace traditional Chinese ideas with Western ones. Indeed, these intellectuals were in fact highly suspicious of the dominant established Western cultural values, which they identified as competitive individualism, materialism, profit seeking and utilitarianism (Furth 2002: 44). Rather they selected those Western ideas which they identified as unequivocally progressive and which they believed would be useful in providing Chinese leaders with resilience against imperialism and inculcating capacities for Chinese independence. Not surprisingly, perhaps, these ideas included, for example, Newtonian cosmology and Darwinian evolutionism. In Europe and America at this time these ideas resonated with cultural and political understandings of the need for socially engineered constitutional and cultural reforms and national vitality and were subversive of traditional Western world views, especially religious but also establishment social and cultural views. In China the New Culture Movement and others sought to adapt and transform these ideas drawn from Newton and Darwin to serve China's purpose as they conceived it.

As well as seeking inspiration and guidance from Western thought these cultural movements attacked the conventional Chinese ideas which they believed restrained people's minds and impeded China's progress. In particular, the conventional Confucian patriarchal order was singled out for strong negative attention. But while there were forceful attacks on atavistic elements of traditional Chinese culture it is too frequently forgotten that often the same intellectual who opposed conservative social arrangements, which were supported by Confucian ideology, would creatively lodge the Western ideas they had appropriated in order to promote reform and change into a traditional, and frequently Confucian framework. In assimilating Western concepts into a Chinese context these intellectual



entrepreneurs would therefore at the same time also identify, strengthen and promote established or traditional concepts which were thought to be useful in a reconstructed national identity. It will be shown here that the appropriation of European ideas by Chinese intellectuals at this time was therefore frequently in the context of an intellectual assimilation that paradoxically reinforced key aspects of the local elite culture through the sinicisation of an alien concept.

Although there was widespread agreement concerning the enormous differences between the Western and Chinese intellectual traditions some Chinese intellectuals began by discovering functional equivalents of Western ideas in China's intellectual heritage. In the adaptation and assimilation of a Western concept, then, the concept in question was given a place in a Chinese intellectual context. Through this translation the alien concept was transformed by being sinicised and the framework of the diffused ideas was provided with a vitality it may have previously lacked. For instance, Western individualism was seen by some as having a parallel form in the Lu-Wang tradition of Neo-Confucianism and the libertarian and anti-authoritarian strands of Daoism. Similarly, the pragmatic and utilitarian approach to statecraft was seen to have Chinese precursors in the work of Mozi and the legalists (Furth 2002: 15-16). The nineteenth-century reformers Yan Fu (Yen Fu) and Liang Qichao (Liang Chi-chao) were able to locate germs of ancient democracy in Mencius' idea that a ruler who failed to take note of popular opinion should be overturned (Mencius 2004a: 121). More broadly, the Mandate of Heaven, which is not a doctrine of divine right but rather included the idea that rulership had to be merited by performance, and therefore implied a contingent right of rebellion, was seen to be reminiscent of the idea in John Locke's liberalism that the relationship between government and governed is one of trusteeship and that a breach of this trust

justifies rebellion (Locke 1963: 348-350; 459-462). Even the idea of science as regulated observation of nature that developed in Europe was seen by some Chinese reformers as parallel to elements in Daoist naturalism, a position that resonates with Joseph Needham's identification of the Daoist basis of traditional Chinese science (Needham 1956).

In discussing the general matter of the sinicisation of Western thought it is important to identify the particular contributions of historical individuals involved in these cultural transformations. Chief among the ideas that exemplify the diffusional process of sinicisation indicated here is that of evolution. The sinicisation of Darwinian and Social Darwinian evolutionism was achieved by the reformer Kang Youwei (Kang Yu-wei) (1858-1927) who developed the idea of datong (Grand Unity), in which evolutionary notions were seen to resonate with aspects of Chinese traditional thought.

Inspired by Darwinism thought Kang developed a theory of progress that drew also upon a Confucian framework. In the Three Ages, Kang (1964: 69-71) writes:

The meaning of the Spring and Autumn Annals consists in the evolution of the Three Ages: the Age of Disorder, the Age of Order, and the Age of Great Peace... Confucius was born in the Age of Disorder. Now that communications extend through the great earth and changes have taken place in Europe and America, the world is evolving toward the Age of Order. There will be a day when everything throughout the earth, large or small, far or near, will be like one [datong].

From the idea of an evolution of historical formations, through the interaction between organism and environment, Kang developed the proto-socialist idea of a

common sharing. He believed that the evolutionary process which led to the formation of new species through an organism's adaptation to changing environments also led to a growth of interdependence in human society which is productive of increasingly common sharing of environmental resources, including material wealth. This is a conclusion quite opposite to the one drawn by the Social Darwinism that developed in Europe and America. Kang's elaboration of evolutionary thought into economic equalitarianism is seen by Charlotte Furth (2002: 20) as a development of Mencius' idea of an extension of benevolence. It is just as likely, however, that Kang's (1958) evolutionism drew upon similar ideas in philosophical Daoism as expressed in Daodejing, for example, in chapters 67 and 79. In any event, not only does the sinicisation of Social Darwinism lead to a conclusion which is contrary to the conclusion of its original form, it imbues the traditional Chinese concepts in the context of which it now operates with a new relevance and meaning.

Kang Youwei and another active campaigner for reform at this time, Tan Sitong (T'an Ssu-T'ung) (1865-1898), who campaigned to change imperial rule to a constitutional monarchy, both drew 'most deeply upon native roots for their philosophical synthesis' (Furth 2002: 19). The process of change in China, which these two writers conceived as part of the process of evolution, they saw in terms of intellectual inspiration and moral guidance that they believed could be provided by Confucianism. In particular, the Confucian idea of ren (benevolence, humanity) was seen as a moral principle for a utopian future (Furth 2002: 19). As China's prospects changed so these intellectual entrepreneurs saw new meanings in traditional Chinese concepts. By adopting the Darwinian concept of evolution in order to justify an orientation to social change, and by placing this alien concept in the familiar

framework of Confucianism, Kang was able to mobilise the modified – evolved – Confucianism as an intellectual foundation for institutional change. He held that by reorienting and reformulating Confucianism in this way through his introduction of the European concept of evolution, then the transformed Confucianism would not only justify but also encourage and promote change in China (Lin 1979: 33).

Tan similarly adapted the Western idea of evolution to a traditional Chinese framework. Tan's chief work, *The Study of Humanity* (Ren Xue, 1898), sometimes translated as *On Humanitarianism*, offers an eclectic philosophy with elements drawn ostensibly from Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity (Chang: 1987: 77-89). Tan's (1964: 88) call for change in China draws on the earlier example of Confucius: 'When Confucius first set forth his teachings, he discarded the ancient learning, reformed existing institutions, rejected monarchism, advocated republicanism, and transformed inequality into equality'. In order to bring about the changes he saw Confucius legitimating Tan introduced a concept of 'psychic energy' to the evolutionary scheme which worked with the energies of the cosmos to change the world. The psychic energy which people draw upon in the performance of tasks was stimulated by resistance from opposing forces (Furth 2002: 25). The concept of psychic energy in Tan is close to the classical Chinese notion of qi, inner vital force. Tan believed that change in people's mentality was required before there could be institutional change. He argued that a change of mentality would be based on changes in conventional understandings of Confucian ideas and he called for a positive reconstruction of traditional Confucianism (Lin 1979: 35).

The evolutionary thread that connects these thinkers is also present in the work of the highly significant intellectual entrepreneur Yan Fu (1854-1921), who translated and introduced Thomas Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, published in 1898.

This translation had a significant impact on Chinese thinkers at the time (Schwartz 1969: 98-112). As we have already seen Chinese intellectuals and young people during this period were inspired by the ideas of Darwinian natural selection and Herbert Spencer's notion of the 'survival of the fittest'. These ideas formed an ideological framework for major political, educational and cultural reforms in China. Yan Fu continued his efforts to diffuse into China Western philosophical, economic, social science and political ideas through further translations, including those of such major texts as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* and Herbert Spencer's *Study of Sociology*. Strongly influenced by Adam Smith's social theory, Yan Fu came to represent those who advocated the development of capitalist economy in China (Shwartz 2002: 103-105). What is of particular interest in this context, though, is that after completing the translation of Mill's *Logic* Yan almost immediately went on, in 1903, to publish a series of marginal commentaries on a new edition of Lao-tzu's *Tao te ching*. This was not only because, as Yan writes, that 'only the views of Lao-tzu are compatible with the views of Darwin, Montesquieu, and Spencer' (quoted in Schwartz 1969: 198) but also because, as Benjamin Schwartz (1969: 197) puts it, 'Yen Fu's universe had never been neatly divided into the two incommunicable spheres of "Chinese tradition" and "modern West"'.

Yan Fu represented those thinkers who saw the necessity of adopting ideas from the West to be used in China's best interest while also maintaining cultural nationalism, or ethno-nationalism. Ethno-nationalism is distinguished from civic nationalism by virtue of its connection with the ascribed cultural and historical characteristics of a people (or ethne), rather than with rights-based notions of national citizenship which are indifferent to cultural backgrounds (Connor 1994). Since ethno-nationalism conceives itself as an organic expression of popular

consciousness, it is regarded as rooted in nature as well as history. Metaphors of awakening are thus understood by partisan nationalisms as the people resuming their natural dispositions (Holton 2005: 117).

Even though a conduit and active agent for the diffusion of modernising Western texts in China it is not at all contradictory for Yan to sign a petition in 1913 circulated by the ‘Society for Confucianism’, supporting the idea that Confucianism could act as a stabilising common faith in China (Schwartz 2002: 111). Yan made use of the resources of the classical Chinese philosophical vocabulary and in doing so provided an original interpretation of Western thought. Although he was inspired by Spencer’s Social Darwinism, his view that intellectual change in China should be accomplished through education, as Schwartz points out, did not derive from Spencer. This idea can be sourced, rather, in Confucius’s ideal of the role of education in self-cultivation and especially Xunzi’s approach to education as underpinning moral development. Yan saw the value of Western thought for the modernisation and revitalisation of China, but his inspiration was rooted in the intellectual heritage of classical Chinese thought. Yan embraced Laozi’s skepticism and his acceptance of evolutionary necessity was deeply informed by Laozi’s anti-anthropomorphic naturalism (Furth 2002: 28; Tillman 1990: 64). For him, Laozi was the ‘antique source of a democratic spirit of personal independence and social “yielding”’ (Furth 2002: 36).

Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was another translator and interpreter of Western political and social theorists who through them saw the renewed potency of Chinese traditional thought. He concentrated on the works of Enlightenment writers such as Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, Hume and Bentham. He opposed blind admiration of the West and called on his readers to see in the contrast with it the excellence of Chinese

thought. In his *Travel Impressions of Europe*, Liang (1964b: 186) remarks that the embrace in pragmatism and evolutionism of ideal and practical, of mind and matter, is 'precisely the line of development in [China's] ancient systems of thought ... Confucius, Lao Tzu, and Mo Tzu'. Liang's thesis is in the ironic idea that China can build on its best cultural elements by drawing on the intellectual strengths of the West. In *A People Made New*, Liang writes:

We must have some special characteristics which are grand, noble, and perfect, and distinctly different from those of other races. We should preserve these characteristics and not let them be lost ... If we wish to make our nation strong, we must investigate extensively the methods followed by other nations in becoming independent. We should select their superior points and appropriate them to make up our own shortcomings (Liang 1964a: 94-95).

Liang (1964b: 187) shows how this can be achieved:

I ... hope that our dear young people will, first of all, have a sincere purpose of respecting and protecting our civilization; secondly, that they will apply Western methods to the study of our civilization and discover its true character; thirdly, that they will put our own civilization in order and supplement it with others' so that it will be transformed and become a new civilization; and fourthly, that they will extend this new civilization to the outside world so that it can benefit the whole human race.

Liang was one of those forward-thinking reformers who believed that the Qing Empire needed more than 'self-strengthening' and advocated major institutional and ideological change. He came to see 'wealth and power' as the only salvation for China under threat of Japanese and Western states and believed that the source of Western wealth and power lay in democracy (Schell 1989). Liang (1964a:

96-97) notes: 'Economic competition is one of the big problems of the world today. It is the method whereby the powers attempt to conquer us. It is also the method whereby we should fight for our existence'. Liang published articles and books on principles of democracy, republicanism and sovereignty in China. Together with Kang Youwei he endeavoured to engineer political reform. Perhaps his best known achievement in this area was to convince the emperor to convert his rule to a constitutional monarchy, a scheme that operated for one hundred and four days before it collapsed, hence the 'One Hundred Days' Reform'. Although the reform itself failed it was accompanied by a growing sense of national consciousness among China's upper class and greater political participation among young people (Grasso, Corrin and Kort 1991: 58-60).

The best known and most important political leader of this period, Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), was dedicated to toppling the Qing Empire and transforming the society over which it ruled. It is for this reason that he is renowned as the 'father of Chinese democracy'. Sun's understanding of democracy was through the lens of another leading Western idea of the time, evolutionism. After completing his schooling in America Sun returned to China at the age of seventeen and in 1885 went to Hong Kong to study medicine. The influence of contemporary Western science on his thought, therefore, is not surprising: as Harold Schiffrin (1970: 332) notes, Sun believed that 'the world was governed by the "survival of the fittest"'. Sun developed a theory of three phases of world evolution which corresponds to three stages of revolution, namely military government, political tutelage and constitutional government. These ideas are summarised in his *The Three Phases of National Reconstruction* (Sun 1964: 117-119). It is important to notice that in the evolutionary phases marked by political revolutionary forms set out by Sun that democracy or



constitutional government is not a mere replication of Western political experience but follows ‘political tutelage’ which is based on China’s specific situation. The notion of political tutelage, as a contemporary commentator notes (quoted in de Bary, Chan and Tan 1964:117), ‘represents perhaps the first conscious advocacy of “guided democracy” among the leaders of Asian nationalism’.

Sun’s Western education did not remove his commitment to a revitalisation of Chinese traditional values. Y. C. Wang (1966: 357) says that Sun ‘clearly stated that China should revive Confucian values while assimilating Western Technology’. Sun’s political outlook was influenced by elements of the American progressive movement and he found inspiration in Abraham Lincoln’s view of ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’. Sun’s political philosophy is summarised in the ‘Three People’s Principles’, namely the principles of nationalism, democracy and people’s livelihood. The idea that the best principles are the ones which combine the best elements from China and the West is expressed in Sun’s speech concerning Nationalism and Traditional Morality, in which he says:

If in the past our people have survived despite the fall of the state, and not only survived themselves but been able to assimilate these foreign conquerors, it is because of the high level of our traditional morality. Therefore, if we go to the root of the matter, besides arousing a sense of national solidarity uniting all our people, we must recover and restore our characteristic, traditional morality (Sun 1964: 109).

In publicising the Principle of Democracy, Sun proposes a similar assimilation of foreign and Chinese principles. In the Five-Power Constitution Sun (1964: 113) writes: ‘If we now want to combine the best from China and the best from other countries and guard against all kinds of abuse, we must take the three Western

governmental powers – the executive, legislative and judicial – add to them the Chinese powers of examination and censorate and make a perfect government of five powers’. In discussing the Principle of Livelihood, Sun (1964: 117) clearly rejects Marx’s idea of class struggle by saying ‘in China, where industry is not yet developed, Marx’s class war and dictatorship of the proletariat are impracticable’. Three People’s Principles were elevated by Sun as guiding principles to make China a free, prosperous, and powerful nation. Sun believed that modern China needed a mixed economy including, a capitalist component, but stressed that China must avoid class conflict and inequality and instead build upon Chinese traditions of social harmony.

The educational reforms initiated by Qing government officials and the subsequent translations of Western texts introducing alien ideas into Chinese world views helped realise the collapse of Qing Imperial rule that these official had attempted to prevent. On October 10, 1911 China’s first modern political revolution erupted in Wuchang, an event that led to Sun Yat-sen’s elevation to the position of Provisional President of the new Chinese Republic in 1912. The Chinese Republic lasted only until 1914 and consequently China deteriorated to a state of continuous power struggle between warlords. While China’s political transformation was in this sense interrupted and failed to properly continue because of war lordism, and later war with Japan and civil war, the knowledge flow and intellectual ferment it promoted continued. Intellectual entrepreneurs in China grew in number and importance during this period from 1912 until 1949 with the establishment of the People’s Republic of China.

## **Modernist Movements in Post-Qing China**

Disillusionment with the Chinese Republic and the subsequent period of war-lordism gave rise to a campaign which became known as the New Culture Movement, led by a group of scholars and intellectual entrepreneurs including Chen Duxiu (Chen Tu-hsiu), Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao and Hu Shi (Hu Shih). This can be seen as a precursor to the subsequent May Fourth Movement, which will also be discussed below. Chen, Cai, Li, Hu and others like them shared the common experience of being educated in the modern school system established fifty years earlier. Their education therefore included familiarity with leading Western ideas that were promoted at the time. They represented the first generation of human forces educated with the purpose of bringing vast changes to China (Grasso, Corrin and Kort 1991: 83). These leading intellectual entrepreneurs endeavoured to enlighten their fellow Chinese with a novel world vision which included the creation of the 'new citizen' so that China could be part of a modern world.

A defining feature of the New Culture Movement included acceptance of the Darwinian premise of natural selection and Spencer's idea of the 'survival of the fittest'. According to the view expressed in the New Culture Movement, in order to survive in the modern world the Chinese citizen was required to be 'the fittest'. How this fitness was to be achieved required transformation of the typical Western understanding of the evolutionary principle through two qualifications that were essentially Chinese in character. First, the 'new citizen' was not an individualised entity of the type located in Western thought but imbued with the Chinese quality of connectedness. The idea of connectedness in this sense was drawn from both the Confucian tradition, in which individuals did not operate in terms of narrowly conceived self-interest but saw their individuality in terms of incontestable moral

responsibilities to others, and the Daoist conception of natural interconnectedness of persons through the unavoidable effect on all of the actions of any one person. The 'new citizen', then, while not collective was not an isolated self sufficient individual, as in Western liberal theory. The traditional Chinese notions of interconnectedness and relationality were in this new conceptualisation disconnected with the Confucian ideas of filiality in which moral responsibility is principally in familial relations of obligation of son to father. In this new and refashioned conception of the moral relations between persons, individuals are conceived in their necessary relations not to family members but to the Chinese nation.

This loosening of the traditional Chinese conception of the connectedness of individuals from the Confucian idea of filiality and locating it in the modernist notion of 'nation' provides the context for the second qualification of the typical Western understanding of the evolutionary principle developed by the new Culture Movement. In this Movement the 'new citizen' was characterised as dynamic, self-assertive and able, qualities which the New Culture Movement saw as the basis of Western power and ability. However, these were qualities conceived by the Movement as not primarily a description of capacities applied to individual persons. Rather, this characterisation of the 'new citizen' was intended to be a mobilising force in creating a new collective Chinese self-image, directed against the conventional stereotype of Chinese passivity and resignation which was not only ascribed to Chinese by unsympathetic foreigners but at this time had come to form an element of the Chinese self-image, reflecting not only China's defeat at the hand of Western powers but the inability of Chinese political leaders, Republican as well as Imperial, to re-assert China's prerogatives in its relations with foreign powers or provide security to Chinese citizens at home.

The New Culture Movement was therefore neither a movement of wholesale adoption of Western ideas and repudiation of Chinese traditions, nor a movement simply dedicated to preserving Chinese mores and conceptualisations of behaviour and social forms. It was a movement, which as Yu Ying-shih (2001: 313) observes, promoted ‘simultaneously the importation of Western thought and scholarship on the one hand and the “systematic reorganization of national heritage” on the other’. In their employment of Western thought the Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs associated with the New Culture Movement carefully selected concepts and theories they saw as useful to China which they then creatively transformed through a synthesis with traditional Chinese categories and approaches, thus assimilating them into existing patterns of Chinese concepts and theories. What has been seen here, though, is that not all Chinese concepts and theories were equally thought to be an appropriate base for the amalgam of ideas that was to form Chinese modernism. In the sincisation of Western ideas there is associated modification of the ‘receiving’ Chinese framework. As we have seen in every previous instance of the transformation and incorporation of an alien concept the resulting framework of the local receiving thought is itself adjusted, modified and transformed. The creative reconstitution of old traditions which is the result of the endeavours of intellectual entrepreneurs is continuous with the formation of new combinations which is their primary objective. The emerging new traditions are no less Chinese as the alien concepts incorporated into them are without doubt sinicised in the process. But the work of the intellectual entrepreneurs and the products they provide to others in their milieu cannot be described as mere translations.

During this period of the second decade of the twentieth century there was an incredibly energetic outpouring of activities through which literary forums were

organised and literary societies founded. From these and other sources journals were produced and publishing houses established. These activities, groupings and publications became conduits through which Western literary and philosophical thought were spread through China among young educated and urbanized men and women. In particular, the work of Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer and Friedrich Nietzsche became widely read. Living writers, especially John Dewey and Bertrand Russell, attracted large audiences and much attention when they travelled to China and discussed their theories at countless venues. Dewey and Russell in particular brought modern scientific thinking to China in a form that was entirely sympathetic to the aspirations of a new China, democratic and progressive. Russell was in China from October 1920 to July 1921. John Dewey stayed for two years, from 1919 to 1921, giving lectures and engaged in discussions directed toward assimilating philosophical pragmatism with programs for China's advancement. As Shen (1996: 361) reports: 'The introduction of [Dewey's] principles to China had resulted in the emergence [in China] of a new school of philosophy, which was marked by the merging of pragmatism, experimentalism and positivism'.

A new generation of Chinese scientists, overseas-trained and actively involved in the campaign of 'Saving the Nation with Science', aimed to modernise China with knowledge of Western science, technology and democratic ideas. Science magazine was produced in Shanghai from 1917 to introduce Western science to a non-technically trained Chinese readership. The Western-educated Chinese scientists became leading members of Chinese universities and played a significant role in modernising the Chinese educational system. They were responsible for the opening of new university departments of meteorology, anthropology, plant pathology, shipbuilding, soil fertilisation, entomology, agricultural machinery and aviation

engineering. My own grandfather, who earned his PhD degree from Munich University in forestry during the early 1930s, was part of this movement. Under Cai Yuanpei's (1868-1940) leadership, the Central Research Academy recruited many staff with Western education backgrounds, which according to Shen (1996: 373), led to successful breakthroughs in 'astronomical, physical, electrical, geological, biological and mathematical research' in China at this time.

The slogan which summarises the trends of the period and their focus was created by Chen Duxiu (1880-1942) when he referred to China's embrace of 'Mr Science and Mr Democracy', with Evolutionism and Social Darwinism being the exemplars of modern science, and the French and American Revolutions of the eighteenth century and their legacy as a model of modern democracy. Chen founded the journal *New Youth*, which became a leading forum for political and cultural debates. Although reputed to be a total Westerniser, Chen's world view was not as far removed from inherited Chinese beliefs and mores as he may have led his readers to believe (Furth 2002: 89). In his *True Meaning of Life*, Chen (1964: 168) demonstrates that he neither accepts Western ideas totally nor wholly abandons Chinese traditions when he says '[s]ince God's existence or nonexistence cannot be proved, the Christian philosophy of life cannot be completely believed in. The rectification of the heart, cultivation of the person, family harmony, national order, and world peace that Confucius and Mencius talked about are but some activities and enterprises in life and cannot cover the total meaning of life'. While Social Darwinism stimulated his desire for change the decisive motivational factor in his thought was Chinese nationalism, supported by years of traditional education.

Although Chen expressed an attitude of total anti-traditionalism, his rejection of Confucianism did not preclude recognition of positive values in the Confucian

tradition. He wrote: 'My anti-Confucianism does not imply that the [Confucian] virtues of cordiality, uprightness, courtesy, temperance, deference, faithfulness, righteousness, honest, sense of shame, and the [Confucian] way of consciousness and reciprocity are worthless' (quoted in Lin 1979: 80). Chen was able to entertain both a rejection of Confucianism and an endorsement of its elements by regarding the latter as 'common to all practical moral systems of the world'. Whether or not these elements of Confucianism are universal, as Chen believed, his supposition that they were justified for him the idea that 'we should not take pride in the fact that Confucianism has them' (quoted in Lin 1979: 80).

Another intellectual entrepreneur of this period, Hu Shi (Hu Shih) (1891-1962), was educated in the United States. On his return to China in 1917 he immediately became involved in the ongoing intellectual revolution. Although Hu was influenced by Western ideas and rejected Chinese tradition vigorously his support for the Westernisation of China, for which he is known, is qualified in fundamental ways. Hu believed in breathing new life, drawn from Western thinking, into the old civilisation of China. The task he set himself is summarised in his question: 'How can we best assimilate modern civilization in such a manner as to make it congenial and congruous and continuous with the civilization of our own making?' (Hu 1963: 7). Dewey's experimentalist philosophy reinforced Hu's early belief in the importance of intellectual engagement. Hu (1963: 7) asks: 'Where can we find a congenial stock with which we may organically link the thought-systems of modern Europe and America, so that we may further build up our own science and philosophy on the new foundation of an internal assimilation of the old and the new?' Hu's (1963: 8) answer is that while Confucianism may be unhelpful to this purpose, Chinese intellectual traditions are not all Confucian and many stands of



Chinese tradition have existed in strong contestation with Confucianism, for he believed that ‘the revival of the non-Confucian schools is absolutely necessary because it is in these schools that we may hope to find the congenial soil in which to transplant the best products of occidental philosophy and science’.

In appropriating Western science Hu (1963) revitalises the logical theory and method which he locates in the classical Chinese heritage of Mohists, Daoists, Xunzi and Legalists. Hu thus found similarities between and continuities with Western and Chinese scientific thinking, which he believed are the basis of the possibility of an organic assimilation or integration of Western and Chinese ideas. Hu, not only argued for the generic similarity of modern civilisation in the West and elements of traditional Chinese civilisation but was able to do this because he also asserted that the scientific spirit and enquiry were to be found in distinctive aspects of the Chinese tradition (Hu 1963: 9). Hu’s anti-Confucianism, which commentators most frequently refer to, was not a blanket rejection of all Chinese traditions and teachings. As we have seen, Hu’s rejection of Confucianism coexists with his rediscovery and elevation of non-Confucian strands of Chinese traditional thought through which he endorses ‘Mr Science’ for China. Hu’s advocacy of ‘Mr Democracy’ indicates an even more complex relationship with Chinese ideas that he entertained. Although he strongly attacked Confucianism Hu argued that Confucius and Mencius had both planted seeds for democracy through the Confucian idea of equality in education and the Mencian advocacy of the right of rebellion against tyrannical government (Lin 1979: 101). The path through which democracy might be introduced into China was laid by Confucius and Mencius, according to this view.

Hu’s advocacy of evolutionism was not only an endorsement of scientific thinking. He creatively applied the concept of evolution in pursuing the reform of

Chinese literature, an application made possible by his belief that ‘literature develops and matures and dies, like a living organism’ (Lee 2001: 46). He depicted vernacular language (baihua) as being alive and the language of traditional forms (wenyan) as dead (Lee 2001: 46). By arguing that ‘a living language’, in providing the linguistic tools of thought, was the prerequisite of modern intellectual movements, Hu campaigned for literary reform. He compared the phenomenon of Chinese writing developing into a vernacular literature of the spoken language, which he promoted, to Italian literature since Dante, English literature since Chaucer and German literature since Luther (Lee 2002: 158). Hu firmly believed that ‘the affective power of literature provided a most powerful vehicle for communicating new ideas’ (Schwartz 2002: 116). Hu urged that people should engage in writing truthfully and to use everyday language instead of drawing upon classical Chinese, which was only accessible to the elite.

Chinese literature, according to Hu (1928: 16), goes by ‘two different roads: one [is] the road of the imitative, immobile, and lifeless literature in classical language, the other [is] the road of the spontaneous, vivacious, and full-of-life literature in vernacular language’. While Hu appeared to reject Chinese classical literature he did in fact recognise that the vernacular strain he distinguishes from ‘classical literature’ was in fact present in the literature of the past; what he specifically opposed was the decadent, formalistic classical literature of the elite. In his Preliminary Discussion of Literary Reform, Hu (1964: 158) writes:

Thought does not necessarily depend on literature for transmission but literature becomes more valuable if it contains thought, and thought is more valuable if it possesses literary value. This is the reason why the essays of Chuang Tzu, the poems of T’ao Ch’ien [365-427], Li Po [689-762], and Tu

Fu [712-770], the *tz'u of Hsin Chia*-hsuan [1140-1270], and the novel of Shih Nai-an [that is, the *Shui-hu chuan* or *Water Margin*] are matchless for all times ... In recent years literary men have satisfied themselves with tones, rhythm, words, and phrases, and have had neither lofty thoughts nor genuine feeling. This is the chief cause of the deterioration of literature.

Hu, then, advocated not the adoption of Western language but the reform of Chinese language to meet the needs of Chinese writers and readers in the modern world. The history of traditional Chinese literature, according to Hu, contains a record of the vitality of vernacular language in shaping the evolution of literary forms and hence literary revolution consisted not in rejecting this prevailing trend of the past but in further developing it (Lin 1979: 101).

The New Culture Movement, as we have seen, grew out of the failure of the Chinese Republic to provide a real alternative to the political dissolution, warlordism and the general malaise that afflicted post-Qing China. With the collapse of the Republic in 1912 China was then ruled by a series of military regimes, known as the Beiyang government. Through this government Chinese troops were committed in 1917 to the allies against Germany in the European war of 1914-1918 on the condition that the German concession on the Shandong peninsula would be returned to China. In spite of this agreement the Treaty of Versailles, which concluded the war on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1919 transferred control of Shandong from Germany to Japan, in spite of China's ineffectual protests. China's incapacities at Versailles not only revealed its weakness to the world but more importantly in this context, to Chinese citizens. In response to the failure of the Chinese government there were student demonstrations in Beijing. These demonstrations triggered national protests which included the participation of workers through strikes and merchants through

withdrawal of tax payments. All classes of Chinese society were swept up in a growing wave of nationalism and patriotism. The ensuing movement of political involvement transcended the intellectual elite and encompassed a broad spectrum of Chinese society. It called for a re-evaluation of Chinese traditions (Chow 1960: 173).

While the May Fourth Movement was unable to secure the return of Shandong to China it was not without consequence. Its major results were twofold. Firstly, it led to the disillusionment of a number of intellectuals with Western democracy, given the failure of Britain and France to support China's cause and the inability of America to act on its principles. Secondly, Chinese intellectuals began to search for alternatives to those offered by European and American ideas in seeking a model on which to fashion China's future. An obvious possibility at this time, as Russia was pulling itself out of the mire of war abroad and feudalism at home through the October revolution, was Marxism. Large numbers of Chinese intellectuals were now both distrustful of Western powers because of their betrayal at Versailles and radicalised by the May Fourth Movement. In their continuing search for a new future for China many of them now 'gravitated to Marxism as the answer for China' (Grasso, Corrin and Kort 1991: 88). The function Marxism was to serve those recruited to it through the May Fourth Movement was the same as the function the preceding generation gave to their appropriation of western democracy, namely the 'salvation of China from its foreign enemies and the strengthening of the country through modernization' (Munro 1998a: G005).

The Chinese Communist Party was founded in 1921 by Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Li Dazhao (1888-1927). Again this was no simple transplant of a European idea or political form to Chinese soil. By transforming Marxism's premise of an industrial proletarian force as the vanguard of revolution, Li saw a broader

category of the 'labouring masses', including the rural workforce of peasants and poor farmers, as the motive force of social progress in China (Furth 2002: 95). Additionally, the Confucian idea of the mutual aid of a moral community was seen by Li as a necessary complement to the more orthodox Marxist idea of class struggle as a key element of the Chinese revolution. Li Dazhao and certain other Chinese Marxists selectively chose elements from German Marxism and Russian Communism and rejected those aspects which they thought would hinder their Chinese goals. They accepted the need for class struggle but 'eliminated those parts that comprised the materialist conception of history, as well as the notion that historical stages are of long duration and that classes are to be defined solely in economic terms' (Munro 1998b: G005SECT1). Instead of waiting for the full development of capitalism in China which would take a long time they proposed that human force rather than economic conditions would be the decisive factor for history making. Influenced by non-Marxist intellectual currents in China, including anarchism, they took the position that 'human consciousness or the minds of right-thinking, strong-willed persons can determine the future' (Munro 1998b: G005SECT1). The sincisation of Western Marxism follows the now familiar pattern of knowledge flow and the cultural diffusion of alien concepts and theories into a Chinese intellectual context, to which we shall now briefly turn.

Political developments in China subsequent to the May Fourth Movement can be readily summarised. Out of the morass of war-lordism a nationalist Government under the leadership of the Guomintang (Kuomintang) was formed in 1928. In 1937 Japan invaded China and both the Nationalist and Communist forces fought a war of resistance that concluded with Japan's defeat in 1945. A civil war between the Nationalists and Communists then ensued until 1949, when the victorious Chinese

Communist Party succeeded in founding the People's Republic of China as an independent state. This was the first time since 1840 that China was free of subordination to Western hegemony. During this turbulent period of warfare and national distress the most significant intellectual developments taking place in China were the formation of the strategy and theory of the Chinese communist revolution. This too presents issues concerning the introduction of Western concepts and theory to China which are never directly taken into the Chinese consciousness but transformed in terms of pre-given Chinese intellectual traditions and in which foreign ideas become thoroughly sinicised.

These developments and the relevant processes of the sinicisation of Western Marxism can best be appreciated by considering the formation and development of Mao Zedong (Tse-tung) thought. Mao Zedong (1893-1976) was the principal theoretician and political leader of the Chinese Communist Party. Mao's pre-Marxist orientation was patriotic, nationalist and martial. Chinese Marxism, often referred as Mao Zedong Thought, according to one commentator, is 'a mixture of elements from Confucianism, German Marxism, Soviet Leninism and China's own guerrilla experience' (Munro 1998a: G005). Stuart Schram (2002a: 269) similarly finds evidence in Mao's early writing of the influence of Confucius, the Confucian realist Xunzi, the Daoist Zhangzi as well as Laozi, among others. He goes on to say that: 'the traditional roots of [Mao's] thinking remained important to the end of his life' (Schram 2002b: 437). These traditional influences were crucial in Mao's development of Marxism to suit Chinese conditions and purposes. In his apprehension and development of Marxist concepts and theories Mao operates as a Chinese intellectual entrepreneur in the manner we have now seen through each phase of China's encounter with Western thought since the middle of the nineteenth

century. This pattern is now well established through preceding discussion in this chapter and it will be necessary here to only briefly indicate Mao's conformity to the method that has already been demonstrated, of appropriation and transformation of both alien concepts and the local framework in which they are incorporated. It is not possible here to fully treat Mao's sinicisation of Marxism but two crucial areas, class struggle and dialectics, can be mentioned.

In classical Marxism there is emphasis on what is regarded as a necessary role for an urban and industrial proletariat in both development of the capitalist economic system and the socialist revolution that is to overthrow it (Marx 1992: 927-30). To the chagrin of many European Marxists (Dunayevskaya 2000: 288-309) Mao transformed the basic axiom of Marxist revolutionary thought by giving priority to the peasantry as the major and decisive force in China's revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party. By modifying Marxism in this way Mao developed an essentially Chinese form of revolution which followed neither a Western Marxist nor a Soviet approach, both of which mistrusted the peasantry (Mitrany 1951). Through an analysis of the specific circumstances in China at the time, which he described in terms of 'unevenness in China's economic development (not a unified capitalist economy)', 'immensity of China's territory (which gives the revolutionary forces sufficient room to manoeuvre in)', and 'disunity inside China's counter-revolutionary camp', Mao (1964: 220) developed a unique approach which is constituted in 'the protracted revolutionary struggle conducted in such revolutionary base areas [which] is chiefly a peasant guerrilla war led by the Chinese Communist Party'. Mao successfully accomplished what he endeavoured to achieve, namely to 'fully and properly unite the universal truth of Marxism with the specific practice of the Chinese revolution' (Mao 1964: 227). A strategic and not merely

tactical reliance on the peasantry led Mao's military strategy to be not only rurally based – 'encircle the cities' – but also amenable to development through drawing upon Sunzi's Art of War, an ancient Chinese text of Daoist persuasion. Indeed, Mao developed his conception of warfare and his tactics and strategy of guerrilla warfare through an application of Sunzi's text to the circumstances of mid-twentieth century China.

Another clear example of Mao's drawing upon classical Chinese thought in the development of Marxism is his philosophical excursions into dialectics. The first instance of this can be found in Mao's pamphlet, *On Contradiction*, published in 1937. Schram (2002a: 317) shows that Mao's 'understanding of dialectics was strongly marked by Taoism and other currents in traditional Chinese thought'. Although ostensibly following Lenin's view of the unity of opposites as the kernel of dialects Mao drew upon his Chinese background when he elaborated the concepts of 'principal contradiction' and 'principal aspect of contradiction' (Mao 1966: 51-78). For classical Marxism the basic contradiction is simply that between the classes of capital and labour, or between the forces and relations of production. In China, on the other hand, neither the internal dynamism of social groups nor of economic forces were stable and the question arises of which contradiction is principal and which is non-principal, a question which Schram (2002a: 320) says is not only intellectually compelling but a 'pressing tactical necessity' (see Mao 1966: 59). Mao continues his sinicisation of Marxist philosophy in 1957 when he attacked Stalin's treatment of Marxism in which the struggle of opposites is highlighted without mentioning their unity. Mao did not accept Stalin's argument that opposites such as war and peace, life and death are mutually exclusive and entirely unconnected (Mao 1977: 367-396). Mao, on the other hand, held that war and peace, life and death were in constant



struggle and that each was transformed into the other in their interaction. Mao's interpretation was derived from a close familiarity with philosophical Daoism, which held that opposites are mutually interdependent and that events and things are ever subject to unfolding change and thereby likely to undergo transformation in their relationships with other events and entities. This aspect of Daoist thought will be discussed in detail in chapter 7 of this thesis.

Until the 1980s the only Western political influence accessible to the Chinese people was Marxist-Leninist doctrine. But as suggested here Mao assimilated Marxism and Leninism to elements of classical Chinese thought. It has to be added, though, that Confucianism especially was singled out for unceasing condemnation as representative of Chinese feudal thinking, which sanctioned inequality, the oppression of women and traditional values. These were opposed by the Communist government and in opposing them the concepts not only of European and Russian Marxism but also of Chinese traditional thought were drawn upon.

## **Conclusion**

Some of the leading Chinese thinkers and intellectuals of the period 1842 to 1949, when China suffered domination from Western imperialism, who introduced elements of Western knowledge into China, have been identified in this chapter. The activities of these individuals, as intellectual entrepreneurs, have been outlined in order to indicate the processes through which alien concepts and theories are diffused into a receiving culture. It has been shown that Western intellectual sources did not simply pass into Chinese culture and consciousness but rather particular ideas were self consciously selected by intellectual entrepreneurs on the basis of how these ideas might contribute to China's strengthening and development. Intellectual

entrepreneurship, it was shown, requires not only the appropriation of a particular alien concept or idea but also the selection of a local set of concepts with which the alien concept may be combined. In this process the intellectual entrepreneur effectively transforms both the foreign and the local ideas which in being newly combined form a novel set of ideas distinct from both the alien and local ideas which contributed to their formation. European ideas were not simply transplanted to Chinese soil, therefore, but instead were integrated into and synthesised with elements of the Chinese intellectual heritage. Through such processes of transformation and sinicisation, selected foreign ideas became a part of a newly transformed Chinese knowledge base. They may be no longer recognised as merely foreign ideas.

In response to the encroachments and imperial incursions of the Western powers, as a result of Opium Wars, Chinese officials initiated a campaign of Chinese reassertion, the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895), which was endorsed by the Qing government. This movement aimed to invigorate and rejuvenate China through appropriations of Western military, technological, and scientific expertise. The principle of this Movement was to maintain a Chinese 'essence' which in the context of official support meant that the Chinese state was not prepared to adopt Western political or religious systems. During this period Western technical ideas in particular were transplanted, assimilated and sinicised into existing Chinese intellectual resources. And yet the educational reforms introduced as part of the Self-Strengthening movement gave rise to an appetite for new ideas and the questioning of old or established ideas that provided a social framework of encouragement for changes that the government reforms neither anticipated nor welcomed.

The fact remains, though, that in China during this period the predominant use of Western knowledge was to counter Western influence. The movements from the 1890s up to the foundation of the People's Republic of China included the continuing selection, appropriation and assimilation of alien ideas, concepts and theories into an existing but ever changing framework of knowledge adaptation. The New Culture Movement, for example, in which intellectual and cultural change was given priority over political, social and economic change, aimed to achieve the invigoration of China through transformation of the traditional Chinese world view and reformation towards achieving a modern Chinese mentality. While Western ideas were incorporated into Chinese thought there was no consequent Westernisation of China or a wholesale abandonment of or disengagement from significant elements of the Chinese intellectual heritage. Indeed, a feature of the intellectual entrepreneurship practiced during this period has been highlighted in the discussion above. In assimilating alien concepts into a Chinese context it was necessary that the intellectual entrepreneur amalgamate them with established local concepts and ideas. Through this process traditional local notions and theories are frequently energised and provided with a new significance or relevance. This was a frequent occurrence noted in the account of this chapter. Knowledge diffusion does not imply, therefore, that Western knowledge is simply re-established in a Chinese context. Rather, its assimilation with Chinese intellectual resources transforms both sides of the equation.

It has been shown in this chapter that knowledge flow through the diffusion of concepts and theories from one culture or society to another requires the active engagement of a category of agents identified in the discussion as intellectual entrepreneurs. Intellectual entrepreneurs do not simply translate or transfer externally

sourced ideas into an established context. Rather, they select elements from not one but two contexts, from the body of foreign ideas from which ‘useful’ notions are appropriated and from the local established traditions into which these ideas or concepts are ostensibly placed. By combining elements from these two contexts the intellectual entrepreneur makes something quite new that had not previously existed and which can operate as a newly introduced knowledge only if the resistance of the established culture can be overcome. In this way knowledge is transferred or diffused from one culture to another. But it is no longer the original knowledge nor is the receiving context the same as it was before and unchanged. This general or abstract statement of diffusion has an added political dimension in the case of China from the mid-nineteenth century.

Throughout China’s recent history, the knowledge flow from the West has occurred on the basis of a selection by Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs of what they felt were the most appropriate means to secure China’s eventual liberation from Western domination. It has been shown that Western theories and ideas were studied by Chinese thinkers to critically re-examine, re-appraise and renew Chinese intellectual, cultural and political assumptions, activities and institutions so that China could improve its capacities to counter Western economic and cultural influence. In the face of national humiliation Chinese individuals and movements of resistance believed that they could learn from the West in order to counter Western power. The foreign knowledge and ideas that were adopted for this purpose were not merely transferred from Europe or America to China but instead creatively transformed into something suitable for absorption into and synthesis with China’s intellectual resources, to effectively become fully integrated as Chinese knowledge.

## **Chapter 4**

### **China's Intellectual Heritage: Paradigms as Frameworks**

#### **Introduction**

The preceding three chapters have considered questions of asymmetrical knowledge flows in different empirical and theoretical contexts. The following three chapters will engage in what might be described as a 'corrective reversal', in which it shall be demonstrated how concepts drawn from China's intellectual heritage can be incorporated in and add to the explanatory capacity of cultural and social theory that has its origins in European and American historical experiences. The present chapter, then, functions as a bridge between the earlier group of chapters and those to follow. Something of the nature of Chinese thought is indicated in the preceding discussion, especially in the treatment of the concept of *guanxi* in chapter 2 and aspects of traditional thought in chapter 3. The present chapter, however, indicates key elements of China's intellectual heritage in order to provide some understanding of the characteristic qualities of the concepts that shall be discussed more fully in the three chapters to follow.

The representation of a distinctive Chinese intellectual heritage in this chapter is not premised on a notion of an enduring cultural essence that has an independent existence influential in preserving a 'core' of Chinese being. Indeed, as the term

‘heritage’ indicates, the focus here is on the consequences of past developments in an historical context. These are concrete and complex phenomena revealed in the changes that occur through time. But these changes are located within a set of frameworks which make the elements of the heritage under consideration distinctive. It will be shown that the significant frameworks of the Chinese intellectual heritage are geographic, social and linguistic.

To claim that China’s intellectual heritage is distinctive is not to assert that it is unitary, homogeneous or changeless. On the contrary, as intellectual heritage is not simply an endowment but a process then complexity, divergence and change are unavoidable. The intellectual historian of ancient China, Benjamin Schwartz (1985a: 3-4), says that even if we postulate ‘dominant ... [or] persistent orientations’ in Chinese philosophical history this does not ‘preclude the emergence within the given culture of countertendencies’. The following section will show how the interplay and transformation of dominant orientations and countertendencies operated in the case of the introduction of Buddhism to China and its ultimate sinicisation. Through this major historical instance of knowledge flow and conceptual diffusion there occurred both the insertion of an alien set of teachings into China and a domestication of these teachings so that over a period of time and through various deliberations and activities of contemporary intellectual entrepreneurs these teachings became distinctively Chinese.

To say that Buddhism, which originated in India, became transformed in such a way as to conform with Chinese mores and prerogatives, raises questions concerning the distinctiveness of China’s intellectual heritage. That this heritage is subject to change is acknowledged by indicating that the sinicisation of Buddhism occurred as an historical process within it. While this heritage has enduring and

recognisable qualities in spite of these and similar changes, suggested by the meaningfulness of the reference to the sinicisation of Buddhism, it raises important questions about the distinctive character and content of that tradition. It will be argued below that while there are different strands within Chinese philosophy, most notably Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, they share not merely a group of assumptions but an intellectual framework within which not only agreements but also disputations may take place. While there may be common elements of concern between aspects of Chinese and European philosophies in general terms they constitute contrasting sets of intellectual practices.

It is true that there has been some engagement with Chinese philosophy by Europeans, such as the seventeenth-century encounter of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz with neo-Confucianism (Leibniz 1977). But the social and linguistic differences between China and European countries, explored later in this chapter, have meant that the philosophical preoccupations, styles and resolutions of each are quite different. This does not prevent occasional parallel formulations, especially between the phenomenological and post-structural critiques of dominant strands of European positivist philosophy on the one hand and aspects of Chinese philosophy on the other. The best known instance of this is perhaps in the work of the twentieth-century German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, whose closeness to Chinese philosophy, especially Daoist, has been carefully documented by Reinhard May (1996). But this has not prevented the criticism, ‘from a perspective that takes full account of the differences between languages with phonetic and non-phonetic scripts’, that Heidegger’s thinking is ‘too “logocentric” and therefore still enmeshed in the Western metaphysical tradition’ (Parkes 1990a: 2). Philosophical thinking takes place in a social context on which it draws and is expressed in language though

which its categories are shaped. The distinctive qualities of Chinese social structure, based on individual relations of obligation governed by moral precept rather than law, and a non-alphabetical script which expresses meaning rather than sound, together ensure that the Chinese philosophical tradition has distinctive qualities.

### **Indian Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism**

Buddhism was the first major ideological and religious import into China. It came from India during the medieval period. Only after a series of transformations and local developments of accommodation did Buddhism eventually gain prominence in China and become assimilated into a modified Chinese intellectual heritage. According to Cho-Yun Hsu (2001: 441) Buddhism was brought to China through the silk route in the second and first centuries BC. The earliest recorded evidence of Buddhism in China dates from the first half of the first century (Wright 1959: 21-22; Yu 1980: 68-77). During its early years in China Buddhism was simply regarded as a foreign discourse; it thrived only among the missionaries who attempted to proselytise to a largely uninterested Chinese population. During this period Buddhism neither had much influence on the lives of the majority of the people in China, nor was it given serious consideration by Chinese scholars and officials (Lai 2008: 235; Wright 1959: 22). The political and social environment in China at this time was not conducive for Buddhism to take root, proliferate and thrive. Indeed, during the Han period (206 BC-220 AD) Confucianism, which had intellectually enriched itself by integrating elements from other schools of thought into its own system, especially from Daoism and other critical perspectives including Legalism, enjoyed the status of an institutional state orthodoxy (Wright 1959: 15). As a minor alien belief system Buddhism drew no intellectual attention from the



Confucian literati. Buddhism, as Arthur Wright (1959: 22) indicates 'had not yet gone through the preliminary process of adaption which would make it accessible and intelligible to the Chinese'.

It should not be concluded from the above remarks that the adaptation of a system of thought as a state ideology is sufficient for it to have a pervasive social presence, as Confucianism did. Indeed, there was an historical period in a northern Chinese state when Buddhism became the state ideology, but this in itself did not translate into its integration into the broader compass of intellectual, social or religious life. Around 317 AD the Tuoba people established themselves as political rulers in the northern Wei dynasty (386-534 AD). The Tuoba had a strong sense of their own ethnic identity and way of living which set them apart from the majority ethnic Han population against whom they had a sense of distance and even hostility that was occasionally manifest in conflict. Given the strong antipathy between the Tuoba and the Han it was unthinkable for the Tuoba rulers of the northern Wei to adopt Confucianism as a state ideology because they saw it as thoroughly Han. Buddhism, as a foreign – that is non-Han – discourse had an obvious appeal to the Tuoba, which was re-enforced by what they saw as the magical and superhuman elements of Buddhism, close to their own thought system (Wright 1959: 55-57). And yet, the upholding of Buddhism by some Tuoba leaders did not provide Buddhism with the prominence it later acquired in China through quite different mechanisms.

While state sponsorship was not sufficient for the domestic acceptance of Buddhism in China, neither was it dependent on an increase in the numbers of foreign missionaries active in China. Indeed, it was when the propagation and proselytising of Buddhism was transferred from foreign missionaries to local intellectual entrepreneurs that the meaningful diffusion of Buddhism in China begins

to occur. The local Chinese acceptance of Buddhist doctrine was not generated by the quantity or authenticity of Indian Buddhist scriptures translated into Chinese but by the way they were explained through local categories and beliefs. According to Dan Lusthaus (1998a: G002SECT1):

even though missionaries continued to arrive in China and new translations continued to be produced through the thirteenth century, none of the significant developments in Indian Buddhism (such as Buddhist syllogistic logic) from the seventh century onwards had any lasting impact on Chinese Buddhism, and many important texts and thinkers (for example, Dharmakirti, Candrakirti, Santaraksita) remained virtually unknown in East Asia until modern times.

The Buddhist doctrines which had an enduring presence and influence in China are those which were incorporated into and synthesised with existing Chinese teachings and thereby transformed from Indian into Chinese Buddhism. For this to occur there were first required particular developments in Chinese thought and ritual practices, especially Daoism, which effectively functioned as conduits for the sinicisation of Buddhism.

While the distinction between philosophical Daoism, understood as the body of ideas in the ancient texts *Daodejing* (Tao te-ching) and *Zhuangzi* (Chuang Tzu), on the one hand, and religious or ritual Daoism on the other, is defended by some scholars (Creel 1977; Fung 1966), others argue that it is untenable as religious beliefs infused the early texts (Kirkland 2004). In any event, there is agreement that during the second century, toward the end of the Han dynasty and subsequent to it immortality cults developed throughout China, but especially in the south, which adopted the Daoist name although the majority of their sacred texts were more recent

than Daodejing and Zhuangzi and their doctrines were eclectic amalgams of local folk religions. The practitioners of these cultic religions ‘were particularly desirous of knowing whether Buddhism could add to their knowledge of elixirs and practices that would contribute to longevity, levitation, and other superhuman achievements’ (de Bary, Chan and Watson 1960: 273). The interest of Daoist aspirant immortals in the possibilities provided by early Buddhist rituals, breathing and gymnastic exercises, dietary management, charms and talismans provided an opportunity for missionaries to disseminate these and related aspects of Buddhism and engage in translating those scriptures and developing those practices which enhanced intuitive faculties.

By the third century there occurred a number of developments that converged in providing a place for Buddhism in Chinese culture. With the breakdown of the Han dynasty the influence of Confucianism declined and the appeal of Daoism grew during this period. There was also, as a consequence of these political and religious changes, a widespread sense of general social and intellectual discontent. Together these trends generated a climate which provided the possibility for new ideas and attitudes to be accepted (Wright 1959: 21-41). At the same time, no doubt because of the growing saliency of religious Buddhism, Chinese intellectuals became interested in metaphysical and philosophical Buddhism. It was during this period and in these circumstances that the active mechanisms of intellectual diffusion outlined in the preceding chapter took root. People who might be described as missionary entrepreneurs of Buddhism capitalised on ‘the local pre-existing systems of ideas and beliefs as a carrier or medium of transfusion’ (Chan 2002: 198). The ideas of Buddhism, which had prior to this time been seen only as a foreign ideology, were now articulated in a local Chinese vocabulary and cosmology. As Karyn Lai (2008:

235) puts it, Buddhism is now promoted ‘in terms of existing concepts in Chinese philosophies, especially those of religious Daoism’. Against the earlier dissemination of Buddhism as a set of doctrines that not only originated in India but which were expressed in a South Asian idiom by the third century in China the form of Buddhism that prevailed was interpreted in Neo-Daoist terms (de Bary, Chan and Watson 1960: 273). Indeed, it was so tightly wrapped in Daoist robes that ‘it was common to regard Taoist and Buddhist scholars as belonging to a single intellectual trend’, as noted by Fung Yu-lan (1953: 240).

In popularising and domesticating Buddhism in China early local converts who were effectively intellectual entrepreneurs borrowed extensively from Daoism in their translations of Buddhist notions and concepts. The Chinese concept of wuwei (effortless action), for example, while not exclusively Daoist – it has a single appearance in Confucius’ *Analects* (Confucius 1979: 132) – has a significant role in Daoist thought, to be discussed in chapter 7, which is carried across into the sinicised Buddhism that emerged in the third century. The Buddhist concept of *asamskrta*, which signifies an uncaused or unconditioned state or existence, is translated as wuwei (Lusthaus 1998b: G002SECT2). Wuwei was also used for the Buddhist term *nirvana* (freedom from human suffering) although later replaced by a transliteration of *nirvana* as *niepan*. In the sinicisation of Buddhism, in order to show that it is compatible with and not contradictory to Chinese traditions, ‘some passages and expressions deemed offensive to Confucian morality were bowdlerized or omitted’ (Wright 1959: 36). For instance, instead of literally conveying the Indian Buddhist message that ‘the wife comforts the husband’, which appears to place a woman in a position of marital control, in the Chinese form of Buddhism the phrase becomes ‘the

wife reveres her husband' in order to ensure its conformity with Confucianism's notion of wifely subservience in the five fundamental relationships.

The first Buddhist text to be written in the Chinese language, *The Disposition of Error*, composed by Mou Tzu in the late second century, characteristically addresses a series of questions which arise from concerns regarding the foreign origins of Buddhism. If the way of Buddha is the greatest and most venerable way, Mou Tzu asks, then why was it not mentioned in the *Classics of the Sages* and why did Confucius not practice it? Questions of this sort are posed and answered in order to dispel any concern that there may be a contradiction between Buddhism and Chinese traditions. In answering the questions regarding the possibility of a Chinese adherence to the originally foreign doctrines of Buddhism Mou Tzu draws on Confucian and Daoist thought in expounding a version of Buddhism that can be seen to be compatible with and not challenging accepted Chinese beliefs and understandings. Practices which are distasteful to Chinese mores, such as the Buddhist monks' practice of shaving their head, which contravenes filial piety by injuring a body endowed by one's parents, are rationalised by Mou Tzu (1960: 275) in an argument that 'Confucius has said, "He with whom one may follow a course is not necessarily he with whom one may weigh its merits"'. Similarly, in defending Buddhism's rejection of wealth, position and pleasures, Mou Tzu (1960: 278) drew on Daoism: 'Lao Tzu has said, "The five colours make men's eyes blind, the five sounds make men's ears deaf, the five flavours dull the palate, chasing about and hunting make men's minds mad, possessions difficult to acquire bring men's conduct to an impasse"'. By drawing on Confucianism and Daoism in this way Mou Tzu was able to demonstrate that while Buddhism may have foreign origins its acceptance in China was not contrary to or disruptive of the Chinese intellectual heritage.

While numerous schools of Indian Buddhism were imported to China over a period of more than three hundred years only those which were synthesised with Chinese thought endured. Indeed, by the eighth century Buddhism in China had become indigenised and had no meaningful contact with the Indian sources or interpretations from which it originally arose. According to Dan Lusthaus (1998a: G002SECT1), by this time the Chinese had ‘lost interest in Indian commentaries and treaties and instead turned their attention toward Chinese commentaries on the Buddhist scriptures – such as the Lotus (Tiantai) Sutra and Huayan Sutra – that had assumed importance for Chinese Buddhist traditions’. From the tenth century Chan Buddhism was ‘essentially a Chinese product’, as Hsu (2001: 445) puts it, and from this time was established as one of the dominant teachings in China, along with Confucianism and Daoism. It is this school of Buddhism which later spread to Japan, where it is known as Zen Buddhism, and became one of the most influential forms of Buddhist teaching.

The translation of Buddhism from India to China did not only mean that it acquired a Chinese idiom but also that its philosophical concerns were closer to those of the Chinese intellectual traditions than the Indian. While Indian Buddhism was not concerned with the notion of human nature, for instance, and many schools even rejected the very concept of essential nature, leading schools of Chinese Buddhism during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) – under the influence of Confucian thought – inquired into and debated the concept of Buddha-nature. The two dominant schools of Buddhism during this period were the Huayan or Flower Garland School (Cook 1977) and the Tiantai or Lotus School (Swanson 1995). What principally distinguishes these schools is their understanding of human nature refracted through Mencius’s idea that human nature is inherently good. While the doctrines of the

Huayan School held that Buddha-nature is essentially pristine and good, the Tiantai School held that Buddha-nature is not perfect and pure but contains elements of evil and impurities. Whereas the Huayan position reflects Mencius's argument concerning the inherent goodness of human nature that of the Tiantai derives from the Daoist notion of paradoxical integration (a concept discussed in chapter 7). The Tiantai contention is that good and evil, pure and impure are complementary opposites and the Buddha-nature's evil traits are necessary in order to understand and have compassion for ordinary sentient beings.

In metaphysics also Chinese Buddhism has more in common with traditional Chinese teachings than it has with Indian Buddhism. Indian Buddhist doctrines are characterised by a number of fundamental dichotomies, including those between spirit or pure mind and the phenomenal world or matter, between being and non-being, existence and non-existence, between consciousness and bodily existence, and so on. Chinese Buddhist doctrines, on the other hand, tend to take a typically Chinese or 'middle-path solution to the issue of duality', as Lai (2008: 268) puts it, which is expressed in both the Tiantai and Huayan Schools of Buddhism, one proposing an integration of 'consciousness and the phenomenal world' and the other emphasising 'the interdependence of everything' (Lai 2008: 268), positions which derive from Daoist teachings.

The diffusion of Indian Buddhism into China and its eventual sinicisation occupied a long period of historical time, roughly from the second century BC until the tenth century AD, during which facilitating social, philosophical and religious changes played crucial roles, and the endeavours of intellectual entrepreneurs, such as Mou Tzu, were essential. It has been argued above that neither state sponsorship nor missionary activities were themselves sufficient for the Chinese acceptance of

Indian Buddhism. Rather the development of religious Daoism in the second century was the first clearly positive basis for the apprehension and integration of aspects of Buddhist ritual practices into Chinese developments which initiated a process of transformation of originally Indian ideas into Chinese terminology and conceptualisation, harmonising the alien thought and practices with pre-existing Confucian and Daoist concepts. By the sixth century distinctive doctrinal strands of Chinese Buddhism began to emerge, which related to the debates that had shaped the philosophical development of both Confucianism and Daoism but from which a recognisably Chinese Buddhism was distinct, and certainly quite 'separate from Indian Buddhism' out of which it had ostensibly originated (Lai 2008: 235), although to put it this way neglects the Chinese sources from which it grew. Kwok-Bun Chan (2002: 199) summarises this long and complex process when he says that it took 'close to one millennium for Buddhism to complete its history of impact-integration, following a dialectical process consisting of three distinct stages: grafting, contradictions and collisions, and impact-integration'. The sinicisation of Buddhism occurred in a situation in which the Chinese traditions on which it drew were also changing, especially in Daoism but also in Confucianism. The advent of a Chinese Buddhism was also a significant factor in the transformation of the Chinese intellectual heritage on which it necessarily drew. Throughout the process of the sinicisation of Buddhism the Chinese intellectual heritage which was the standard toward which it gravitated was never static and unchanging. The dynamic interaction between the different elements of China's intellectual heritage which ensured its almost constant transformation continued after the consolidation of Buddhism's sinicisation: during the Song dynasty (960-1279) the philosophical developments



which produced Neo-Confucianism as a distinctive philosophy included borrowing from the now Chinese Buddhist system of thought (Chan 2002; Lai 2008).

It is clear from the discussion above that the notion of a distinctive Chinese intellectual heritage is both meaningful and also difficult. It is meaningful because the acceptance of Buddhism into China required that it was subjected to a process through which its terminology, philosophical concerns and general ethos were disconnected from its Indian origins and harmonised with prevailing Chinese concepts and understandings. These latter were not constant and unchanging but dynamic, and they were not simple but complex. And yet they constituted a broad set of intellectual issues and parameters that exercised a discernable influence through a forceful presence that when taken notice of and accepted by the advocates and practitioners of Buddhism in China gave rise to a distinctive and new addition to a Chinese intellectual presence which could be characterised in terms of its novel combination of otherwise familiar Chinese ideas and orientations. Chinese Buddhism as it emerged from the sixth century was as a result of its incorporation of elements of the Chinese intellectual heritage quite unlike the Indian Buddhism that was introduced into China in the second century BC. Yet the intellectual heritage that Chinese Buddhism incorporated is difficult to specify because it does not exist as a constant and singular set of ideas, concepts and theories. But it is no less distinctive for that. The discussion of the sinicisation of Buddhism indicates the effect of the Chinese intellectual heritage rather than its content, although some elements of that content can be seen in the preoccupations of Confucianism and Daoism, and, it must be added, of Chinese Buddhism that emerged after the sixth century AD.

The idea of an intellectual heritage indicated here does not coincide with the idea of a cultural essence, nor with the idea of a national character. On the contrary,

the notion of intellectual heritage used here is not concerned with those inter-subjectively held tastes, values and aspirations that define a social group and which animate the behaviour of its members which marks a culture or a people. It refers rather to a framework within which a set of concepts and their meanings, possibly in the form of discernable theories but also simply as signifiers of other concepts, cohere as a distinctive set of ideas. Within this framework change occurs and novelty can be found, generated through new combinations of existing ideas and the incorporation of external or alien ideas through their transformation and 'naturalisation'. The notion of intellectual heritage therefore also entails the idea of a shifting boundary commensurate with a changing and possibly expanding content. Such a boundary serves to not necessarily exclude sets of ideas which do not belong to the given intellectual heritage but functions as a barrier through which alien concepts and ideas must pass. If such alien ideas are to survive in their new context they must undergo some form of modification or transformation which brings them into line with the tenor and sense of the concepts that are already a part of the intellectual heritage they have joined, even though they may also alter that heritage in the process. It has been argued above with regard to the sinicisation of Buddhism and in the previous chapter that such processes are not automatic but achieved through the efforts of intellectual entrepreneurs. It has also been argued that the incorporation of alien concepts into an intellectual heritage is a source of change of the heritage itself. What is described here as an intellectual heritage is close to aspects of the notion of paradigm set out by Thomas Kuhn in his study of science and scientific change (Kuhn 1970).

The idea of a scientific paradigm as formulated by Kuhn generated a lively debate in the philosophy of science and led to further clarification and elaboration of

the concept and related ideas by Kuhn and his critics (Kuhn 1977; Kuhn 2000; Lakatos and Musgrave 1994). The concept of paradigm is complex and refers to a number of different intellectual practices (Masterman 1994) but two aspects of it are particularly useful in elucidating the idea of an intellectual heritage. First, Kuhn (1970: 11) says that a paradigm relates to the ‘genesis and continuation of a particular research tradition’ which includes theories, their application and the means through which they are applied, about which there is agreement among the members of a given scientific community (Kuhn 1970: 10-11). The idea of a research tradition in this sense parallels the notion of an intellectual heritage set out in the present chapter. A second thing about Kuhn’s conception of a paradigm that is useful for understanding the idea of intellectual heritage is the claim that paradigms exist in terms of the types of questions that are asked by the members of a scientific community as much as by the answers that are given (Kuhn 1970: 4-5). It will be argued later in this chapter that one of the differences between the Chinese philosophical tradition and other traditions is difference in the types of questions they are concerned with.

In Kuhn’s account of the history of science a sharp distinction is made between ‘normal’ science, which operates in terms of given paradigms, and periods of scientific revolution during which there is a shift from one paradigm to another (Kuhn 1970: 92-110). The implicit idea in this dichotomy, that significant change does not occur within a given paradigm but only between them, was criticised by Stephen Toulmin who pointed out that scientific change occurs through ‘a sequence of greater and lesser conceptual modifications differing from one another in degree’ (Toulmin 1994: 45). The fundamental distinction between normal and revolutionary science proposed by Kuhn therefore loses its force. Kuhn (1994: 264) came to accept

this revision and acknowledged that evolutionary development occurs within paradigms. This revision indicates the close analogy between the revised Kuhnian paradigm and the concept of intellectual heritage developed here. Another point of contention in Kuhn's original statement of his concept of paradigm is the idea of incommensurability between paradigms (Kuhn 1970: 112, 129). Kuhn (1970: 148) explains that 'the proponents of competing paradigms must fail to make complete contact with each other's viewpoints' because they 'will often disagree about the list of problems that any candidate for paradigm must resolve'. But this is not all:

Since new paradigms are born from old ones, they ordinarily incorporate much of the vocabulary and apparatus, both conceptual and manipulative, that the traditional paradigm had previously employed. But they seldom employ these borrowed elements in quite the traditional way. Within the new paradigm, old terms [and] concepts ...fall into new relationships one with the other. The inevitable result is what we must call, though the term is not quite right, a misunderstanding between the two competing [paradigms] (Kuhn 1970: 149).

The generation of only partial communication through paradigm change, Kuhn (1970: 150) goes on to say, results from the fact that 'the proponents of competing paradigms practice their trades in different worlds'.

The way in which old terms take on new meanings, described by Kuhn in the quotation above, is familiar in the changes that occur in the sinicisation of Buddhism, described here, and in the many conceptual innovations that occurred through the endeavours of Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs discussed in the previous chapter. But in these instances, while there was a real disjuncture between the alien concepts and the sinicised forms they eventually took, and also in the traditional framework

into which they were inserted compared with the framework before it was utilised in the diffusion process, there was also continuity that encourages the idea that such change might occur within a continuing intellectual heritage which sets the terms of incorporation. Kuhn's concept of incommensurability, however, which refers to the state of affairs subsequent to conceptual augmentation and transformation in the change of paradigms, precludes the type of continuity of the intellectual heritage that has been argued above and in the previous chapter. Under pressure of criticism and his own reflections, however, Kuhn qualified the idea of a radical disjuncture through incommensurability by claiming instead the idea that theory difference of the type he describes indicates not necessary incomprehensibility between the two phases of paradigm change but the need for translation and interpretation in understanding the prior state of a developing paradigm relative to its later configuration or in understanding different paradigms (Kuhn 1994: 268; 2000: 33-57). This is a particularly useful way of distinguishing paradigms, or intellectual heritages, as the differences between them, as will be argued below, is partly but importantly in the different languages each uses. Language itself has a real responsibility in producing the 'different worlds' Kuhn (1970: 150) says results from different paradigms or intellectual heritages.

The purpose in drawing on Kuhn's development of the concept of paradigm is not to suggest that the notion of China's intellectual resources has a scientific form. Indeed, Kuhn's employment of the concept of paradigm is to advance an argument about the history of European science since Copernicus that is not in any sense being imitated or treated in this thesis. But the concept of paradigm is in important ways analogous to that of intellectual heritage, certainly in the ways indicated above. By seeing the concept of paradigm in this light, it is an appropriate

means of demonstrating the possibility of discussing China's intellectual heritage in a way that escapes confusion with cultural essentialism. The experiences of Buddhism in China related above indicate a certain 'entrenched' quality in the Chinese intellectual framework. This is not to say that it is unchanging. Nor is it unyielding to alien ideas, notions and concepts. But the acceptance of such ideas into the Chinese intellectual heritage requires their modification, mutation, and a particular type of synthesis with pre-existing intellectual and conceptual patterns. In this process Buddhism was transformed. In being transformed it gained a significant foothold in China, and the Chinese intellectual heritage – indeed, the philosophical and religious landscape – was also markedly changed. The ideas that have been diffused successfully into China, to borrow Schwartz's (1985a: 21) phrase, are 'precisely the ideas that relate to already existing preoccupations of Chinese who live in history as well as in culture'. The reference to history in contradistinction to culture in this quotation makes the point that a pre-existing framework of concepts functions as a paradigm, determining the type of questions asked, and imposing a constraining and fashioning influence on any new imports. Of course concepts in a paradigm or intellectual heritage do not do this by themselves. But they set the limits on what intellectual entrepreneurs can achieve, even if the results of their work change the framework itself. It is possible to agree with David Hall and Roger Ames's (1998b: G001SECT10) provocative claim concerning the 'intransigent sense of "Chineseness" which coalesced in the Han dynasty [and] continues to determine the shape of Chinese intellectual culture' even to the modern era, provided it is understood that the intransigence is in the adherence to a framework of 'Chineseness' and not a fixed substance, and that the framework itself changes each time it is successfully applied.

## **Chinese Teachings, Philosophical Orientations**

It was argued in the previous chapter that after the Opium Wars China's intellectual heritage functioned as the framework within and through which the diffusion and transformation of modern scientific ideas and technical practices occurred. It was also shown how it operated in the diffusion and sinicisation of political and cultural ideas and concepts. The notion of an intellectual heritage, then, suggests a largely mentalistic phenomenon composed of ideas, concepts and theories. This impression is accurate to a degree, but it must also be appreciated that practices as well as ideas are important here. The focus of the present thesis and its argument is directed to knowledge flows and especially the context and possible transferability of knowledge and the concepts that convey it between regions, societies and cultures. The paradigmatic nature of intellectual heritage set out above reminds us, however, that not simply ideas but the practices through which they are activated or realised and conveyed between persons and generations are also inherent and important in intellectual heritages. Kuhn (1970: 10) says that what he 'refers to as "paradigms" ... [includes] accepted examples of actual scientific practice'. The importance of practice in intellectual traditions has general relevance insofar as concepts are never freestanding and unconnected from the way that they are used not only in the development of ideas but in the very nature of their acceptance as well as their application, as demonstrated in the account in the previous chapter of the role of intellectual entrepreneurs and their practices or behaviours in acquiring, transforming and integrating concepts across cultures. But the element of practice in intellectual heritage is especially important in understanding China's intellectual heritage.

The importance of correct belief, of adherence to orthodoxy, is shown repeatedly in the course of European history in which significant turning points, such

as the Spanish Inquisition and the Protestant Reformation, for example, are interpretable in terms of divergence from or enforcement of a singular belief system. This is not to deny that considerations of economic and political power, say, can be shown to underlie such developments; but the fact remains that a meaningful account of them in terms of orthodoxy, departure from orthodoxy and the formation of new orthodoxy signifies the historic role of symbolic coherence and uniformity in these and similar cases. Such considerations are relatively meaningless in the case of Chinese history, however. Chinese religion is not exclusive in the sense that a choice must be made between different faiths. Marcel Granet (1974: 144) shows that specialist ritual practice not dogma determines whether a person would seek access to a Buddhist priest, a Daoist priest or Confucian literati. Each has an area of competence, concerning respectively burial, health and dispute resolution. Doctrinal differences between them therefore do not translate into exclusive congregational patronage or devotional exclusivity but specialist practices each of which has a role to play for any individual person who will inevitably draw upon all of them at different times and in different contexts and who does not experience conflict between them.

The differences between European and Chinese religions noted here and the different attitudes to doctrinal orthodoxy they reflect can be connected with historical differences. Early modern European development occurred through the breakup of the Holy Roman Empire and the formation of a number of small states which competed with each other and whose assertion of independence was legitimated in religious terms. China, on the other hand, developed as a large unified empire in which doctrinal symbolic coherence was less important than conformity to practices



established by and necessary for imperial rule. The economic and social historian Evelyn Rawski (1991: 97) explains that:

The essential ambiguity of Chinese symbols reflects the state's emphasis on standardisation of structure, not of content. Cultural integration took place on the level of formal ritual, but there was no doctrinal unification. The Empress of heaven was popular precisely because she could mean different things to different people.

In China, then, the conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy has not been as important as it seems to have been in Europe. The concern, rather, has been the maintenance of orthodoxy or correct behaviour. In a simplifying statement Carsten Herrman-Pillath (2000: 182) remarks that the same symbol could be used by both Daoists and Confucianists to express their different beliefs, 'giving rise to the much quoted "tolerance" of Chinese religion, which however, has its limits in the unity of ritual behaviour'. The point to emphasise in this discussion is not that there is a uniformity of behaviour as opposed to a uniformity of belief. Nor is it to assert that belief has no significance. The point, rather, is that in understanding Chinese intellectual heritage practices as well as ideas are crucial. It will be shown below that in China Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism are regarded as 'three teachings' rather than three philosophies. The idea of a 'teaching' captures the element of a practice in the consideration of ideas, concepts and beliefs, how they operate, are understood and conveyed between people.

In the preceding discussion a contrast was drawn between European and Chinese experiences. The purpose was not primarily to compare Europe and China as alternate cultural formations. Indeed, neither Europe nor China is an unchanging and abstract phenomenon that exists outside history and that could be regarded as

singular and unitary objects to be meaningfully compared. In treating characteristic or distinctive features of a Chinese intellectual heritage, which has been described and qualified in various ways throughout this chapter in terms of its framing role more than its substance and its ever-changing content, it is sometimes necessary to draw contrasts with other historical experiences. Neither is the positing of distinctive features of a Chinese intellectual heritage an assertion of uniqueness: there is no claim here that what might be identified as a Chinese characteristic is thereby unique to China. It is sufficient to say that what is found to be characteristic or distinctive in a Chinese intellectual heritage has an effective presence in China. Such a claim is not affected by the fact that the same or a similar thing may also be located elsewhere.

The cautions set out here are necessary because there is much discussion in the literature of the peculiarity of ‘Eastern thought’ as opposed to ‘Western thought’ and the associated idea that Chinese thought is a derivative form of Eastern thought. To reiterate: the Chinese intellectual heritage includes practices and not merely ideas and it does not reside in an abstract category, Eastern thought, but has a dynamic and historical presence. A contrary and commonly held view is summarised by Ming-Jer Chen (2002: 179) when he says that ‘Western thought is noted for its strengths in categorization and analysis; Eastern, or Chinese thought, is noted for its integrative and encompassing nature’. More comprehensively, the well-known discussion of the differences between Western and Eastern thought by D. Lawrence Kincaid (1987) and his associates hold that Western perspectives are preoccupied with measuring parts only of a whole and that they tend to treat the measured elements as discrete entities not integrated into a unified process; Eastern philosophies, on the other hand, are seen as focusing on wholeness and unity. The characterisations of Western theories in this approach sees them as individualistic and highly cognitive; whereas

Eastern thought is characterised as stressing emotional and spiritual convergence. Kincaid believes that Western thinking is language-centred and rationality-biased, while Eastern thought places emphasis on intuition, direct experience, and silence. Finally, Western thought is held to presume that relationships exist between discrete individuals, while Eastern perspectives emphasise the complexities of relationships that evolve out of differences in social roles, status and power. One of the many problems with broad characterisation such as these is that Chinese ‘thought’ is as dissimilar to the Eastern thought depicted in this account as it is to so-called Western thought.

The idea of an emotional and spiritual convergence, for instance, as characteristic of Eastern thought, does not represent the mainstream of Chinese teachings at all. Indeed, Chinese Buddhism, for instance, Confucianism and Daoism are relatively uninterested in spiritual and transcendental tendencies. Also, in Chinese traditions emotion is not contrasted with reason or cognition but exists in integrated combination with cognitive faculties, through the concept of xin (heart-mind), to be discussed below in chapter 6. Further, it is inaccurate and misleading to suppose that Chinese thinking places emphasis on intuition and direct experience. Neither is it possible to say that Chinese thought is not language centred, for it is significantly language centred, as we shall see below. The Chinese written language developed as a political instrument in the maintenance of a geographically expansive and administratively unified empire, even in the face of great divergence of spoken dialects; and, as we shall see, it entails significant imperatives for action and belief. Finally, the idea that Western thought is characteristically analytic while Eastern thought is unitary or synthesising fails to notice analytic trends in the history of Chinese philosophy including the work of the Neo-Mohists and allied schools,

which, while never dominant, were important in the development of Chinese teachings overall (Liu 1996; Hansen 1992: 233-303).

In the preceding discussion the concept of Chinese ‘thought’ has been used interchangeably with the notion of teaching and philosophy. Intellectual heritages and paradigms cannot sensibly be reduced to philosophies but the latter term is preferable to the more open-ended notion of ‘thought’ in this context. The term ‘philosophy’ means different things in different contexts: it can mean an approach to life, or the assumptions and principles underlying a practice, as in the ‘philosophy of photography’, or a system or set of beliefs reached through reasoning about existence or the universe or human behaviour, and so on. Intellectual heritages may often be seen as having a philosophical dimension, especially in the last sense indicated here, but also in the other senses. An intellectual heritage functions in terms of principles and concepts that are durable sources of reason and robust means through which reasoning might take place. It follows, then, that the set of ideas that are based on reason, abstracted from practical and mundane engagements which reflect a level of material culture and that have wide currency among the more creatively occupied and sophisticated members of a society can be seen as an important part of an intellectual heritage. Certainly the endowment of ancient Greek philosophers to the European intellectual heritage is too frequently noted to require justification. The diversity within Greek philosophy and the different phases of elaboration of distinct aspects of it and also of the similarly plural possibilities of disagreement indicate a complexity that is nevertheless coherent in the sense that intellectual heritages and paradigms are infinitely complex in the propositions they entertain, but also coherent in so far as the possible range of concepts they draw upon is finite and the types of questions that are seen as important to them form a discernable pattern.

It is no departure from this Greek example to say that there is a philosophical dimension of the Chinese intellectual heritage, which shall be indicated below. At the same time it is a distinctive aspect of the Chinese intellectual heritage to say that philosophy in the Greek sense had not existed in China until the nineteenth century and that its diffusion into the Chinese intellectual heritage at this time resulted from the efforts of intellectual entrepreneur's intent on sinicising an alien notion and practice. In the discussion above concerning the sinicisation of Buddhism it was mentioned in passing that Buddhism is both a philosophy and a religion. Until recent times, however, the terms 'philosophy' and 'religion' were unknown in the Chinese language. The current Chinese word for religion was imported at the beginning of the twentieth century from Japan and sinicised as zongjiao. An earlier Chinese term, sanjiao, used from the ninth century to refer collectively to Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism, means 'three teachings' (Sun 2005: 232-3; see also Ashiwa and Wank, 2009: 9). The Chinese term for philosophy, zhexue, was similarly borrowed from Japan at the end of the nineteenth century by combining the Chinese characters for wisdom (zhe) and study (xue). Before this innovation there was instead only study of the canon or great books (jingxue) and of the traditions or teachings of the masters (zixue) (Tang 2007: 33-34). Chinese Buddhism, then, or Confucianism, are ways of seeing the world as a means of being in it – they are distinct teachings – and their texts as well as the authors of those texts can be objects of study. A distinctive Chinese approach to 'philosophy' therefore informs the Chinese intellectual heritage, which contrasts with the understanding of philosophy that arose in its original site of development in ancient Greece.

The concerns of the Greek philosophers ranged widely in terms of subject matter but a characteristic feature of their deliberations was a desire for reliable

knowledge of the external world, a primary focus on the verisimilitude of their representations of the world, both physical and social, and therefore an understanding of the task of philosophy as the seeking of truth about the world. The philosopher, according to this view, endeavours to reflect aspects of the world in their accounts of it. Philosophy, then, is seen as an intellectual activity in which an external reality is somehow duplicated in the philosopher's mind and the intellectual representation thus formed is then conveyed in language. Truth is said to be attained when the mental representation formed in this way and presented in words corresponds with experience of the external world. A representation and presentation of truth in this manner is both the motivation for and outcome of philosophy as it was practiced by the leading Greek philosophers.

This approach to philosophy raises a number of questions that attach to or are internal to the intellectual heritage or paradigm of classical Greek philosophy in the sense outlined here. First, the angle and position from which a truth-seeker views the world will influence the images of the world his or her thought seeks to 'reflect'. The question arises, then, of the basis of certainty concerning the accuracy or verisimilitude of the image the philosopher mentally forms, which is held to represent the singular and unassailable truth concerning the world. The question is put in this way because there can be only one truth, if any departure from it is to be false; and this is required because the purpose of truth in this context includes the exposure of falsehood. The solution adopted in Greece and which continues to characterise much mainstream philosophical thought in Europe and America is that a construction of the truth of the world is formed through the application of logic and other associated rational rules of thought. A problem with this general approach, which has been noted by critical currents of philosophy in the form of

phenomenology, postmodernism and post-structuralism, is that such ‘guarantees’ of truth relate to the structure of the mental apparatus of truth-making and say nothing about the world that is purportedly represented as ‘true’.

These Greek developments stand in sharp contrast to the animus of classical Chinese teachings, which operate with very different assumptions and beginning points. The philosophical question of truth that animated the Greeks has no central place in the Chinese traditions (Graham 1989: 393; Hall and Ames 1995: 279), which are instead focussed not on external physical reality but on relationships between interconnected entities. Confucianism, for instance, is almost wholly concerned with social relationships, but from the point of view of an engineer and a magistrate, say, rather than a scientist. The purpose of Confucian understandings of relations between persons is to indicate which are the most appropriate in which circumstance and what is the best way to ensure that they occur. Daoism is also concerned with relationships, usually understood as the relations between the human world and the natural world but more accurately with the relationships of connectedness in which the natural processes of becoming are in all things. These preoccupations lead not to abstract philosophical enquiries concerning the truthful representation of external realities but to cogitations about the basis of regularity and transformation in and of relationships. These are ultimately questions of order and harmony as they relate to concrete not abstract phenomena. The classical Chinese thinkers, therefore, are less focussed on abstract logic and more on the logics or trajectories of pragmatics, in Hall and Ames’ (1998c: 142) words: the focus of Chinese thinkers was ‘their interest in how a living term discloses its meaning within its various contexts, rather than assuming that terms have some univocal, essential meaning independent of how they are used’. But this formulation may concede too

much to the mode of standard philosophy, operating through the meaning of terms. Herrlee Creel (1971: 186) is more revealing of the nature of early Chinese teachings when he says that a 'Western philosopher ... may ... deny it is philosophy at all. Certainly ... it is a very different kind of philosophy, which usually stays very close to the ground of human life here and now and to human problems'.

Philosophers in the Greek truth-seeking tradition see themselves as necessarily external to the world that they observe. Indeed, the separation between and their independence from each other underlies the characteristic dualism that has been a dominant feature of the work of their philosophical heirs. An aspect of this dualism, premised on the notion of a world external to the philosopher, is the assumption that the external or objective world itself has a permanence and imminence that is external to and independent of the philosopher or subject. The relations that are possible with such an external world, according to this approach, are two-fold. The objective world can be indirectly mirrored in the form of a truthful account of it, or it can be directly encountered by means of force in conquest. The outlook that results from this object-subject dualism and the possibility of only forceful or external capture or conquest of objective reality are definitional trends of mainstream European and American philosophy that has generated a counter-trend more or less definitional of those philosophical approaches, summarised as Continental philosophy, which emphasises instead consciousness and inter-subjective perceptions (see Macann 1993). Both the truth-seeking approach in philosophy and its consequent dualism are absent from classical Chinese teachings. A leading concern of Chinese traditions, on the other hand, has been with the inherent interconnectedness of the various elements within the human world and also between the human and natural world. In this broad conceptualisation the notion of



strong or clear internal and external distinctions, of opposing subjects and objects, has no place. Defining bifurcations of the subject-object variety are quite alien to traditional Chinese teachings, which rest instead on the principal idea of interdependence rather than externality.

An orientation to philosophy as objective truth-seeking means that one truth claim necessarily discounts different or alternate statements or propositions as false (Jullien 2004; Li 2003: 264). An orientation to interconnectedness, on the other hand, as in the Confucian focus on harmony or the Daoist concern with multi-directional transformations, offers an entirely different view on difference and contradiction. In the Chinese teachings different statements or claims are not seen as necessarily in contention with each other. Their logical relationship is established contextually and in terms of their particular contribution to the construction of a complex multi-faceted characterisation of relationships to which these statements are seen as contributing. Zhuangzi, according to Li's (2003: 270) gloss, indicates that '[t]o know the Way is not to discriminate against alternatives, but to be open to them'. Even opposing statements, then, are not necessarily contradictory in Chinese thought as they frequently are in those philosophical schools that emphasise the logical exclusivity of truth and falsehood, usually associated with Aristotelian thought. In Daoism, for instance, opposites are seen as contributing to unfolding relationships that may be paradoxical, but because they are developmental, they are understood to be mutually supporting. This theme shall be developed in chapter 7. Lily Abegg (1952: 39) goes so far as to see this as a characteristic feature of Chinese philosophy in which two diametrically opposed statements can be made about the same thing, both of which can be proved and are correct.

The focus on relationships in all traditions of Chinese teachings has the corollary of a shared assumption of continuous, regenerative nature not separate from but interconnected with human society. This is associated with another shared assumption, namely that the cosmos is not understood to be created nor subject to the manipulation of an externally superior power. Questions of creation or origin therefore have no place in Chinese philosophy. Confucianism and Daoism, as well as most of the schools of Chinese Buddhism accept the idea of dao or way as an imminent force in all things through which the processes of change continually occurs. This outlook is in sharp contrast with those trends in Western philosophy which have been influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition, which has parallels in parts of ancient Greek thought, in which questions concerning creation and the existence and controlling capacity of an external Divine power, a power beyond and above both the natural world and human capabilities has occupied attention. The idea of creation and an all-powerful God underpins not only such works as George Berkeley's *A Treatise Concerning the Origins of Human Knowledge*, first published in 1710, but also works of twentieth century philosophy such as Alfred North Whitehead's *Process and Reality*. Whitehead's philosophy is particularly interesting in this context because his focus on process has led some commentators to believe that his work is close to Asian even Chinese philosophy (Mesle 2008) but the defence of theism in the work (Whitehead 1978: 342-352) arguably disqualifies this assessment. The importance of the idea of an omnipotent God is in its historical association with the notion of natural law, scientific law and even state legislation and a system of courts, all of which are significantly absent in China (Hamilton 1990). While law courts did exist in Imperial China, their scope and practice were quite unlike those in Europe at the same time (Creel 1971: 152-153).

The concept of God in the Judeo-Christian tradition is a deity which both creates and oversees the universe. In this tradition God, while immaterial, exists as a being, distinct from others and with capacities of his own. There is no analogous notion in any of the Chinese teachings. The concept of dao has been nominated as the creator of the universe in some interpretations of classical Chinese thought, but its meaning is quite unlike the Biblical notion of creation (Lau 1963a: xx-xxii). The concept of dao is complex and has undergone refinement and modification during the history of Chinese philosophy (Zhang 2002: 11-26). All Chinese philosophies seem to agree, however, that dao is not only the complete process of change but is itself manifest in each existing thing and in the processes of the interplay of these myriad things. In Dao De Jing there is the idea that:

The dao begets the One; the One begets two; two beget three; and three beget the myriad things. The myriad things, bearing yin and embracing yang, form a unified harmony through the fusing of these vital forces (Laozi 1999: 135).

Bo Mou (2003b: 257) summarises a widely accepted view when he says that dao 'manifests itself through myriad things and each of the myriad things constitutes a manifestation of the genuine dao'.

Because it is not separated or detached from the universe, because it does not itself command the universe and because it has no independent constitutive being, dao cannot be regarded as in any way equivalent to God or of having a God-like force. The Chinese universe, as Derk Bodde (1962: 68) indicates, 'is a harmoniously functioning organism consisting of an orderly hierarchy of interrelated parts and forces, which, though unequal in their status, are all equally essential for the total process'. Joseph Needham (1951: 230) makes a similar point when he characterises the Chinese universe in the following terms: 'the harmonious cooperation of all

beings arose, not from the orders of a superior authority external to themselves, but from the fact that they were all parts in a hierarchy of wholes forming a cosmic pattern, and what they obeyed were the internal dictates of their own natures'. In the Chinese world view described here there is no place for a worship of God in the Biblical sense. Chung-Ying Cheng (2008: 15) writes that the 'unity of heaven and man', in Chinese teachings, is 'not in the direction of emotional attachment to an object of worship, nor in the direction of mere cosmological understanding or metaphysical contemplation, but in an effort to engage heaven for the actualization of heaven's power in order to fulfil man's well-being as an individual, as a community, and as a state'. Indeed, the relations of dependency implicit here are not one-way: 'not only human being depends on heaven for its well-being but also heaven depends on human being for making its power and potential felt and effective' (Cheng 2008: 15-16). The cosmology of Chinese teachings, then, has no external and absolute force which is beyond and against the human world, as with the Biblical God. The concept of dao, on the other hand, to quote Wang Qingjie (2003: 225), 'is rather within the human world as it is within heaven, earth, and everything else in the universe'. In the vision of all the Chinese teachings the domain of human interest and agency is not outside and against its natural environment; the one does not control or undermine the other, they work collaboratively through the indistinguishable and unnamed dao, to paraphrase its characterisation in Daodejing and Zhuangzi.

The notion in all Chinese teachings, that phenomenon are fundamentally interdependent, has been mentioned a number of times. It is a further distinctive feature of the Chinese intellectual heritage; it stands in sharp contrast to the analytic tradition that was an important element of Greek philosophy and which continues to operate in elements of mainstream European and American philosophy. This is a

method which proceeds by making distinctions, which sees things in terms of their component parts and which regards those parts as self-sufficient. In this analytic orientation an appreciation of the whole is subordinate to a sense of the parts and the mechanical or external relations between the parts. The idea in Chinese teachings, on the other hand, is that all phenomena are interdependent and that relations between them are not external or mechanically causal but are interactive and multi-directional, interdependent and interpenetrating is possibly most fully developed in the Daoism of Laozi and Zhuangzi, but manifest also in the other traditions of Chinese teaching.

One consequence of this distinctive orientation is that Chinese philosophy did not develop as a self-contained or intellectually autonomous pursuit, separate from everyday, practical and mundane concerns. The Chinese approach, in which all entities are connected through dynamic interdependence, sees the entirety of experience as incorporated in the processes encompassing the most and also the least intellectually engaging. The anti-analytic thrust of most Chinese teachings, then, must be associated with an anti-philosophical stance, if what passes as the Western idea of philosophy – as a wholly intellectual pursuit of general principles – is the standard against which it is measured. This is the conclusion Charles Moore (1967: 5) draws when he notes that: ‘there is the profound and all-pervading inseparability of philosophy and life and even of theory and practice – a major attitude of the Chinese philosophical mind, old and new’. This practice of philosophy, to use the term under caution, corresponds with, derives from and reinforces the distinctive view of the Chinese intellectual heritage that any element of a given phenomenon is not independent of its other elements, just as any given phenomenon is not itself independent of all other phenomena.

The notion of the fundamental interdependence of phenomena, which is distinctive of the Chinese intellectual heritage, therefore avoids the tendency to dichotomy and discomfort with difference that has similarly marked post-structural and post-modern developments in late twentieth century philosophy in Europe and America. The similarity in this regard has been noted by David Hall (1991: 59) when he writes that ‘Confucianism and philosophical Taoism share something like the problematic of postmodernism insofar as it shaped by the desire to find a means of thinking difference’. Hall (1991: 59) goes on to say that this common problematic will allow ‘Anglo-European thinkers ... [to] discover in classical China supplemental resources for the development of a vision of cosmological difference and the language which articulates that vision’. Among the things that post-modernism opposes are the types of oppositional characterisations original to Greek philosophy which have been inherited in the mainstream of its philosophical heirs, namely the sharp contrasts within such dualisms as true and false, what Bodde (1962: 72) characterises as ‘antagonistic dualisms of the good-and-evil or light-and-darkness type’. In Chinese teachings, on the other hand, as Hall has pointed out and others have noted, also in terms of a sympathetic resonance with post-modernism (Moeller 2006), opposites are not seen as dichotomous and contentious but rather as mutually supporting each other in dynamic relationships of change and transformation. This is readily represented in the relationship between the quite different elements yin and yang, as ‘are two aspects of one event, suggesting that contrasting forces are interdependent’ (Chang 2009: 223).

This Chinese notion of the non-contradictory relationship of opposites derives from the earliest text of Chinese philosophy dating from the fourth century BC, the Yi-Jing. This text, and the philosophical ideas in it, has had a significant influence in

shaping all subsequent Chinese teachings, including Confucianism and Daoism, as well as other schools. As Cheng (2003: 57) puts it, the major trends in the development of the history of Chinese philosophy have been ‘guided, inspired, sustained, and enriched by this primary model of onto-cosmological and onto-hermeneutical thinking, knowing, understanding, and interpretation in the Yi-Jing’. It is in this work that the influential early statement of the ways in which the opposite elements of yin and yang is given expression, to explain how they do not exclude each other but work in collaboration. This relationship is described by Mou (2003a: 94) as one in which yin and yang ‘are ... complementary in the sense that they are interdependent, interactive, intertransforming, and interpenetrating ... they enjoy equal metaphysical status to the extent that neither could exist without the other and neither is absolutely dominant over the other’. This characterisation of the relations between yin and yang is effectively the template for understanding the relations of opposites in all of the Chinese teachings or philosophies, and within the Chinese intellectual heritage more generally. Confucianism, for instance, regards opposite elements such as self-cultivation and social order, inner and outer realms, knowledge and action as not undermining each other but rather as necessary complements to each other. Similarly, the relationship of opposites in Daoism, as discussed in the final chapter, is treated as supportive, transformative or generative of each other.

The approach described here is close to the dialectical method developed by late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel in order to challenge the idea, typical of the philosophical positions he disputed, that different viewpoints must confront each other as contradictory and oppositional. The similarity between his position in this regard and that of the Chinese teachings described above is clear in a statement from the *Logic*: ‘the purpose’ of this

dialectical method, Hegel says, is to ‘study things in their own being and movement and thus to demonstrate the finitude of the partial categories of understanding’ emphasised by conventional philosophy (Hegel 1904: 149). There is indeed much in Hegel’s Logic which parallels aspects of Chinese teachings regarding the transformation of quantity into quality, for instance, in which changes in the quantity of a thing leave the quality unaffected, but only up to a point, as when heating water leaves the water unchanged until it undergoes qualitative transformation in the generation of steam (Hegel 1904: 202-3). The idea that ‘something is lurking behind’ (Hegel 1904: 202) the quantitative change, which produces the qualitative, is a formulation which would have been familiar to early Daoist thinkers. And yet there are also discontinuities between them. The negation of the negation, for instance, requires not only transformations in the process of development but also overcoming, sublation and elimination (*Aufhebung*) in the movement of the dialectic (Hegel 1904: 320-323). There is also Hegel’s (1904: 207-212) doctrine of essence, which supposes an Absolute in which the other is ‘postulated and hypothetised’ (Hegel 1904: 207), a doctrine that has no equivalent in any of the Chinese teachings. The Hegelian dialectic, then, while it functions in terms of a holistic and synthetic not an analytic method, assumes ‘confrontation, destruction, preservation, synthesis, and the creation’ (Allinson 2003: 61). Chinese teachings or philosophy, on the other hand, assume that different viewpoints are not in even dialectical confrontation with each other in Hegel’s sense; rather, such different and contending elements relate to each other more fully in the form of collaboration, neither is eliminated, creation is beside the point, and inherent change is continuous.

While Chinese philosophy has sometimes been regarded as dialectical, as opposed to analytical, it can be seen from this discussion how unhelpful such a



characterisation is. In the Chinese intellectual heritage relations of opposites are understood to be embracing and generative, synthesis is achieved through interactive mutual influence and support, not by elimination. It is of interest that this characteristic approach to opposites and difference is not only a feature of the method typical of the Chinese intellectual heritage but also of the history of the development of each of the different traditions of teachings and of the relations between them. Wing-tsit Chan (1967b: 54) observes that the ‘whole movement of medieval Chinese philosophy was not only a continuation of the central emphasis on synthesis of the ancient schools, but was itself a synthesis of the opposing philosophies of Confucianism and Taoism’. Indeed, it was shown above how Chinese Buddhism emerged as a distinctive teaching by drawing upon Daoism. The development of Confucianism through the efforts of Xunzi (312-230 BC) during the Warring States period, for instance, was in part achieved by his both criticising and borrowing from Daoist thought (Knoblock 1988: 67-104). The historically later development of Neo-Confucianism, which began in the eleventh century and continued until the fifteenth, was accomplished by the assimilation of Daoist and Buddhist teachings (Creel 1971: 202-16). From the second century schools of Daoism absorbed elements of Buddhist practice, including monasticism, and selected Buddhist doctrine (Kirkland 2004: 89-109). While each of these teachings has retained distinct identities over the course of nearly three thousand years, during that time the composition of their beliefs and ideas benefited from cross-fertilisation and more. Exchanges between the different teachings were frequent and changes within them ongoing; they nevertheless continued to manifest a perennial influence through an enduring framework of identifiably different core concepts which occasionally held attraction for practitioners of other traditions. This is an intellectual universe of

difference, interrelatedness and change. To the outsider it presents a vision of chaos; to the insider, one of energy and promise.

The distinctive Chinese intellectual heritage set out in the preceding discussion has a context that exists not only in the traditional teachings discussed here, the history of the relations between them and their development through time. The distinctiveness of the Chinese intellectual heritage also has the context of China's historically significant geographic isolation, its distinctive social structure and its unique language. These shall now be discussed in turn.

### **Geography**

The relative isolation of China has often been noted as a source of its distinctive intellectual, cultural and social history. China's geographic separation from neighbouring regions has contributed to a history of relative isolation from foreign influence. China is cut off from South Asia to the west by the Himalaya Mountain Range and from Mongolia and Russia to the north by the Xinjiang barren region, which includes the Tian Shan Mountain Range and the Takalamakan Desert as well as other natural features which inhibit travel. There was therefore little cultural contact between China and the rest of the world in the early period of the formation of Chinese culture and civilisation, approximately 5,000 years ago. It follows from this, as Bodde observes, that Chinese civilisation 'was founded and therefore developed in relative isolation from any other civilizations of comparable level' (Bodde 1962: 73). This geographic isolation of China from South Asia contributes to the unhelpfulness of the idea that China's intellectual heritage might be a part of a general and broad 'Eastern' approach in philosophy that includes, say, India. Indian philosophy, no doubt due to its early contact with Hellenic culture and

philosophy (Banerjee 1981), has more resemblance to European metaphysics and philosophy in general than it does to classical Chinese teachings. In noting that 'Indian philosophy shares many vital concepts with Greek linguistic and psychological theory' Chad Hansen (1992: 16) refers among other things to the mind-body metaphysics shared by Indian and European philosophy, which are absent from classical Chinese thought.

In addition to its relative geographic isolation from South Asia or India to the west and greater Russia to the north, China's long history of uneven and ebbing trading and political relations with the region to its south and east paradoxically reinforced this geographic isolation as a result of its dominant role in its relations with subordinate tribute states in the region. The relationship China had with island and mainland South East Asian areas to its south and with Japan and Korea (especially during the Tang dynasty) to its east was almost wholly shaped by the cultural and political domination of China which was maintained by tribute trade. While this trade was economically insignificant for China it was very important for the subject states and contributed to the sinicisation of the region. China's tribute trade therefore had the consequence of being translated into the cause of an effective absence of foreign influence from this direction on China's own development (Wang 1991; Reid 1996). It is of interest that when European influence was to come to China in the seventeenth century it was indirect, through the Philippines, in which there was a Spanish presence, and from Malay, which had a Dutch presence. Until the advent of the Jesuit influence in China, through Matteo Ricci's appointment in 1601 as Imperial advisor to the Ming emperor Wanli (Spence 1984), China 'had developed in virtual independence of the Indo-European cultural experience' (Hall and Ames 1998a: G001).

As well as China's relative geographical isolation, which contributed to the largely endogenous early development of its culture and society, uninfluenced by the pressure of competing or alternate civilisational forces, its large continental land mass and the predominance of internal trade in its economy, as opposed to overseas trade, also played a significant role in China's ability to develop a distinctive intellectual heritage, certainly compared with that of the South Asia, for instance, or Europe. Because China's agricultural civilisation arose and prospered on a large land mass which included diverse terrains and climatic regions there was an absence of any imperative for long-distance trade which would have exposed China to the influence of other civilisations. This is in sharp contrast to the situation faced by other great historical civilisations, such as Ancient Greece, Renaissance Italy, Reformation Holland and also England, all of which relied on naval transport and overseas voyages for economic well-being.

Not only did the absence of a significant commercial and economic reliance on overseas trade contribute to China's isolation from the rest of the world it also had a profound direct effect on the constitution of China's intellectual heritage. The foundation of Chinese thought was not based on astronomy, which comes with extensive navigational experience, as in Europe (Hansen 1992: 30-31), but from a concentration on land management, irrigation and canal construction required for internal trade. The necessity to develop astrological science and mathematics in pursuance of oceanic navigation laid a foundation for the positivistic and dualist technical approach to philosophy, discussed above in relation to Greek thought, that was simply absent in China. The intellectual consequences of overriding concerns with land and water management, on the other hand, encourage not an abstract and logical mentality but one characterised by concrete and pragmatic thought. Fung

(1966: 17), in his discussion of the basis of early Chinese philosophy, indicates that ‘throughout Chinese history, social and economic thinking and policy have centred around the utilization and distribution of land’. Chinese agriculture required the social and political management of water and irrigation, with important intellectual and not only political consequences. All early Chinese administrations, as Bodde (1962: 73) notes: ‘were obliged to construct extensive irrigation works, which in turn required the establishment of organized political control over large masses of manpower, thus encouraging the formation of a strongly bureaucratic state’. Indeed, so important was the management of water for agricultural irrigation and inland navigation that writers such as Karl Wittfogel (1957) elaborated from it a sophisticated theory of oriental despotism. Wittfogel’s theory is discredited today (Lewis and Widen 1997: 94-100), but its premise concerning the significance of water and land management for understanding the intellectual foundation of early Chinese civilisation remains important.

While geography on its own explains little, the intellectual consequence of the peculiarities of China’s geographic situation are not without relevance for an understanding of the context and background of its intellectual heritage, as briefly indicated here. That these aspects of China’s intellectual distinctiveness are manifest in the nature of Chinese trade and economy, internal rather than external and predominantly agrarian rather than mercantile, suggests the nexus in China’s case between geography and social structure. Indeed, the Chinese social structure has significant influence on the content and function of China’s intellectual heritage, and on its distinctiveness.

## **Social Structure**

The idea of the important place of trade in the intellectual heritage of the early Greek, Italian, Dutch and British nations and of the alternative significance of land, agriculture and irrigation for the Chinese, is reflected in the ways in which the associated social structures of these civilisations contributed to different formations of their intellectual heritage. This is captured in Fung's (1966: 25-26) summary in which he says that while 'the Greeks organized their society around the city state, in contrast the Chinese social system ... [was organised around] the family state'. The importance of the family in understanding Chinese society and politics, as well as its intellectual heritage, arises from the agricultural nature of China's early economic organisation. Agricultural activity requires an intensity of labour that is best supplied by the family formation. The family and kinship structures are thereby elevated in Chinese society to an importance that has many consequences for further social development and for the nature of China's intellectual heritage.

In a summary of comparative research on cultural and institutional development in China and Europe Avner Greif and Guido Tabellini (2010: 137) show that large kinship structures had largely atrophied in Europe by the ninth century, and except on the social and geographical margins had no significance, while in China at that time they remained socially and politically important. Across Europe, favourable political, social and judicial developments no longer supported the social maintenance of large kinship groups. Legal codes by this time had ceased to link rights with kinship; also, the Church discouraged practices that sustained extended kinship, including adoption, polygamy, concubinage, marriage between distant kin and marriages without bride-consent (Grief and Tabellini 2010: 137). By 1350 most cities in Europe had gained self-governance, which further undermined

extended kinship structures as independent cities privileged individual autonomy (Grief and Tabellini 2010: 138). Non-kin cooperation and impersonal exchanges were thus supported by those legal, religious and urban developments in Europe which both required and reinforced a generalised morality and formalised infrastructure of enacted codes and regulations. The Christian dogma of moral obligation toward non-kin was fostered in these circumstances in which the legal system refined non-kin cooperation and provided legal protection for impersonal exchange (Grief and Tabellini 2010: 138). There were no parallel developments in China, however.

The Chinese trajectory of social innovation at this time was based on a consolidation of kinship solidarity and clan structure. Grief and Tabellini (2010: 137) explain that in China:

Clans provided their members with education, religious services, relief from poverty, and other local public goods. Cooperation was sustained by intrinsic motivation and reputation supplemented by formal, intra-clan mechanisms for dispute resolution. The objective was not to enforce an abstract moral law but to arbitrate a compromise ... Clans were responsible for tax collection, the conduct of their members, and the training of candidates for the civil service exams. Because it benefited from the clan, the state reinforced intra-clan cohesion ... Intra-clan enforcement reduced the need for formal enforcement institutions.

In the circumstances described here by Grief and Tabellini the social significance of the clan or extended kinship structures in China is clear, and its relationship to the relative irrelevance of the instrument of law for the maintenance of social order and regulation. Indeed, in these circumstances litigation and commercial regulation is

cost-effectively managed by intra-clan arbitration rather than state jurisdiction (Grief and Tabellini 2010: 138).

It is clear from the above summary that kinship structure in China took a different trajectory of development than that experienced in Europe. Indeed, the role of kinship in Chinese social regulation, outlined above, suggests why it has an influence not only on practical behaviour but also in reflective orientations. In the Chinese tradition, as Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (1986: 1) put it, 'kinship has always been a matter of both philosophical and political importance'. Indeed, Ebrey and Watson (1986: 1) continue by emphasising the fact that 'Throughout the imperial period, not only were family and kinship of major importance to ordinary people, as they have been everywhere, but they were central to the practical, political, and ethical concerns of the elite'. Even today kinship groups remain important in the form of family and clan operations in the Chinese economy (Peng 2005). Kinship organisations influence the operations of moral obligation and reputation between individuals and between an individual and the broader community.

In his research of law as it operated from the Qing dynasty up until the present time Philip Huang (2006a; 2006b) has observed that court procedures emphasise mediation and arbitration, and that adjudication tends to be only applied when previous efforts at arbitration have failed. The practice of Chinese law, then, contrasts sharply with the tradition of legal formalism which developed in Europe. While in the latter case law and the operation of the court system principally functions to enforce a right decision, in the Chinese case legal disputation is directed to finding a compromise rather than establishing a right. The difference between the two reflects the different role in each of the kinship structure in the practice and authority of legislation.



Associated with these differences, which goes toward explaining the secondary importance of law in social regulation in China, are differences in the early historical operations of patriarchy. In early Europe the authority of the father in the family structure is rendered through transference from an external authority, originally religious authority and then legal. Robert Bellah (1991: 92) summarises the situation when he writes that it 'is on the basis of authority derived from God that parents and rulers should be revered' (see also Hamilton 1990: 93). Chinese patriarchy, on the other hand, is not exercised through sanction of external authority but through adherence to role expectations internal to patriarchal relations themselves. These role expectations are embodied in Confucian morality, which 'emphasises the ultimate supremacy of roles' (Hamilton 1990: 92). Adherence to ethical principles, then, especially those entailed in the notion of xiao (filial piety) plays an important function in social relations in China, more effective than law in maintaining harmonious relationships and social order because compliance arises internally out of the operations of the relations themselves, in which the principle is embodied, rather than externally imposed, as in legal enforcement. Xiao firstly operates in the relations between a son and his father, extends to other elder members of the family, then to the broader community, and finally to the ruler of the state. Filial piety, 'as a cornerstone of Confucianism', as David Ho (1996: 155) puts it, effectively determines 'not only intergenerational but also superior-subordinate interactions'. Given that any single individual will be involved in a number of roles, familial, generational, age-set, occupational, communal and political, to name only the most obvious, the efficiency and generality of the Confucian sanctioned principle of filiality does not simply define the obligations and duties associated with any social role but encourages the discharge of those obligations and duties without need

of or intervention by a codified legislation, devised and policed by forces outside the relationship itself.

The corollaries of distinctive aspects of Chinese social structure which flow from the historical importance of extended kinship relations and their patriarchal nature, as described above, have been elaborated by the eminent Chinese sociologist Fei Xiaotong. Fei (1992: 60-86) demonstrates how Chinese society is patterned through quite different organisational principles than those that are prevalent in Europe and America. Organisational principles, as Gary Hamilton and Wang Zheng (1992: 19) point out, 'are to a society what a grammar is to a language ... They provide the structural framework for social action [and] are deeply embedded in people's worldview'. Fei operates on a level of generality that permits him to distinguish between Western and Chinese societies. Western society, Fei (1992: 60-70) says, is patterned through *tuantigeju* (the organisational mode of association) which he contrasts with Chinese principles of social organisation, *chaxugeju* (the differential mode of association).

In discussing the pattern of Western society, Fei (1992: 61) draws an analogy: 'the rice straw is bound into small bundles; several bundles are bound into large bundles and these are then stacked together'. Individuals are analogous to discrete straws which are bound into bundles, *tuanti* (groups); in the social setting this is organisation. Each organisation has clear boundaries and an individual's rights and duties are clearly defined within it. Such organisations shape Western society's social structure, according to Fei. These organisations, as Hamilton and Wang (1992: 20) summarise, 'are the firms in the economy, the bureaucracies in the government, the universities in the educational system, and the clubs in local society. They are everywhere and serve as devices for framing individualism in modern Western

societies'. Chinese society, on the other hand, is depicted by Fei in terms of a pattern of differential social relationship, analogous to concentric ripples formed on the surface of a lake by the splashing of a rock thrown into the water: 'Everyone stands at the centre of the circles produced by his or her own social influence. Everyone's circles are interrelated. One touches different circles at different times and places' (Fei 1992: 62-63). This is a system of social relationship with self in the centre of the circle with immediate family close to the core, extended family at the next circle, friends at a further circle, all of which are set according to the degree of closeness in their relationship to the self. Whereas in Western society an individual may conceive himself or herself as autonomous and independent from others, only constrained by the rules of those organisations in which one has membership. In Chinese society, on the other hand, the self is embedded in social relationships and fulfilment of selfhood is achieved through fulfilment of obligations as defined by the roles in which self is implicated. The Chinese self is a relational self, defined through his or her relationship with others and his or her fulfilment of associated role obligations. Instead of being determined by the composition of organisations Chinese society, in this account, is composed of 'overlapping networks of people linked together through differentially categorised social relationships' (Hamilton and Wang 1992: 20).

One thing to draw from this account is that the frequently repeated idea that traditional Chinese society is collectivist as opposed to individualist misunderstands the ego-centeredness of Chinese social structure, as indicated in Fei's (1992: 62-66) concept of *chaxugeju*, described above, in which social relationships 'possess a self-centred quality' (Fei 1992: 65) constrained and directed by 'hierarchical differentiations' (Fei 1992: 66), especially those identified in the five cardinal

relationship defined by Confucius, namely those between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and those between friends. As the self is conceived as the underlying core of all social relationships in the Chinese social structure, the individual is not constrained by those relationships in the sense that a European or an American may be constrained by the imperatives of the organisations that characterise their societies, but experiences them as a vehicle or medium through which they can shape their own situation and future. In this relational individualism which characterises Chinese social structure, ‘the inner self’, according to one commentator, ‘in the sense of being the source of ultimate moral standards’, represents ‘a more radical individualism than the Western one’ in which moral authority has a necessarily external source (Herrmann-Pillath 2009: 339). But to bring the discussion back to the influence of social structure on the Chinese intellectual heritage it can be seen that the underlying focus on interconnectedness, that is distinctive of the key concepts of Chinese teachings and philosophy, is a reflection of the operations of its associated social structure.

## **Language**

In locating the context of the distinctiveness of China’s intellectual heritage the relevance of language cannot be ignored. Language is the vehicle of thought, ideas and concepts, and these are moulded by the language through which they are conveyed. This view of language, put forward by the pioneer psycho-linguist Lev Vygotsky, is now widely accepted. Vygotsky’s research findings challenged the view ‘that thought could be “pure”, unrelated to language’ (Vygotsky 1986: 254), and demonstrate that ‘thought development is determined by language’ (Vygotsky 1986:

94). Vygotsky's experiments show that language occupies an essential place in cognitive formation and that language and thought develop together under reciprocal influence. An associated view is Benjamin Whorf's (1956), which holds that it is through the medium of language that culture is transmitted and internalised, by which means it influences patterns of thought. Among the many demonstrations of Whorf's hypothesis the experiments of Li-Jun Ji, Zhiyong Zhang and Richard Nisbett (2004: 64) show that 'language can serve as a cuing effect for reasoning style'. Thus the particular linguistic elements distinctive of Chinese language can be shown to be implicated in the characteristic conceptualisations associated with the Chinese intellectual heritage. This is an important consideration for the present thesis because its underlying argument is that the introduction of Chinese concepts into English-language social theory can extend and broaden its cognitive base and therefore lead to expansion and reorientation of theory and research.

In Chinese philosophical traditions the social context of persons is arguably the major or over-riding concern, including the fine details and texture of their relations with others. 'People come first in China', as the American philosopher Moore (1967: 5) puts it, a disposition which requires, he says, 'comprehensive treatment both in general and in its specific applications to the many affected sides of Chinese thought and life'. The role of language in both reflecting and contributing to attitudes and practices when considering such matters will be elaborated here. Those philosophical traditions which inherit their concerns and perspectives from Hellenic or Greek origins, on the other hand, are more directed to abstract representations of the physical world which has a bearing even on the nature of moral concepts and arguments in these traditions, which tend to search for conclusive certainty rather than dynamic textures of contextually situated interconnectedness. The difference

highlighted here is captured by Hansen (1992: 42) when he says: ‘In philosophical terms, the Chinese theory of language starts from pragmatics – the relation of language and user; Western theory focuses first on semantics – the relation of language and the world’. The influence of language on the distinctiveness of the Chinese intellectual heritage will be considered in terms of the very individual features of Chinese language, including the writing system, its tonal form, grammar, and vocabulary.

The most obvious characteristic feature of the Chinese language is its distinctive visual form. The Chinese writing system is logographical in sharp contrast to English, say, and other European languages, which are alphabetical. In the latter type of languages words are composed of individual letters, each of which corresponds to a particular phoneme or sound but is itself without meaning. Alphabetical languages tend to encourage their users to store, organise and retrieve information in abstract form (McCusker, Hillinger and Bias 1981; see also Schmitt, Pan and Tavassoli 1994; Tavassoli 1999). Chinese characters, on the other hand, are composite written entities which function in terms of the meanings they convey. While Chinese and English, say, involve phonological and non-phonological codes in processing information, learning to read Chinese depends much less on phonological awareness skills and depends much more on visual skills, with the reverse operating for the learning of alphabetical languages such as English (Huang and Hanley 1994).

Chinese characters historically originated from pictographs. The earliest recorded Chinese writing consists of inscriptions incised on bones and shells during the Shang dynasty (1500-1028 BC) (DeFrancis 1986: 78-79). Although Chinese writing underwent evolution from picture-like to square-formed characters the

principles governing the formation of the Chinese writing system have remained effectively unchanged. Creel (1958: 160) says that ‘every important principle of the formation of modern Chinese characters was already in use, to a greater or less degree, in the Chinese of the oracle bones, more than three thousand years ago’. The largest category of Chinese characters consists of compound characters which are not simple pictographs but complex graphs composed of recurrent partials (DeFrancis 1986: 79). Chinese words are made up of characters which do not necessarily indicate sounds. While there may be radicals or parts of characters rendering clues for pronunciation, the pronunciation of a character is generally acquired through rote associative learning. The identification and reading of the semantic information or meaning of Chinese characters is not mediated by phonological processes of sound and pronunciation (Perfetti and Zhang 1991). The Chinese language, then, is a pictographic or ideographic language in which words represent ideas but not sounds. Each character has to be memorised to a large extent separately, because it cannot be decoded like an alphabetic word.

Each character in the Chinese language is shaped in a sort of square framework formed by different strokes. The shape of the framework and the number, place and inclination of the strokes together convey a particular meaning. Chinese language users, then, tend to store, organise and retrieve information in concrete form. The consequence of the written form of Chinese language, in pictographic or ideographic characters, for cognition is to structurally encourage and facilitate concrete rather than abstract thinking. This is not to say that Chinese language users are thereby incapable of abstract thinking but it does indicate that the written form of Chinese equips Chinese language users with linguistic schema that encourage concrete and practical conceptualisations. The orientation toward concrete rather

than abstract conceptualisations in the Chinese intellectual heritage can in some measure be understood in terms of the facilitating disposition in this respect generated by the written form of the Chinese language.

Not only is the written form of Chinese language unlike that of alphabetical languages, its spoken form is also quite unlike the languages practiced in Europe and in countries of European linguistic heritage. Chinese is a tonal language in which the change of tone and therefore sound changes the meaning of a word. In English, for example, when tone is used at all, it is employed to express emotion or to provide emphasis, as when surprise, suspicion, anger and so on can be detected in the voice of the speaker, but it plays no role in the construction of the meaning of the expression itself. There is a division of labour in English and similar languages, therefore, between words and tone, with words denoting ideas and tone indicating emotion. This linguistic characteristic facilitates and in a sense represents the conventional distinction even opposition in Western cultures between reason and emotion, intellect and feeling, belief and desire (Barbalet 2001: 54-61). Certainly such a distinction does not go unchallenged, but to say that it is challenged already acknowledges that the separation of reason and emotion is a cultural default position. The role of tone in alphabetical languages can be seen as contributing to this distinction which helps to sustain it.

While tone in Chinese language also plays a role in expressing the speaker's emotions or feelings, this is only one of its functions and by no means the primary one. Much more importantly, tone in spoken Chinese plays a linguistic role in differentiating word meanings. For instance, *ma* pronounced in the first or flat tone means 'mother', when it is pronounced in the second or rising tone it means 'flax', in the third or inflexive tone it means 'horse', whereas in the fourth or descending tone



it means 'scold'. Such diversity of meaning through the range of the four tones is absolutely typical for Chinese words. Indeed, there is no Chinese spoken word in which there is consistency of meaning in a move from one tone to another. Given this difference between Chinese and alphabetical languages it might be predicated that there is an absence in Chinese of the thought-emotion distinction typically found in European languages and culture. Indeed, in all Chinese philosophical traditions reason and emotion are not exclusive or oppositional but interdependent. This is expressed in the Chinese term *xin*, meaning 'heart-mind', which has no equivalent in English, say, or similar language. The nature of the concept of *xin* and its potential importance in directing social science research and theorising will be discussed in chapter 6.

The structure of a language has implications for the cognitive disposition and intellectual activity of its users, as Whorf (1956) famously indicated. Different languages, he showed, are associated with different styles of thinking and remembering. Grammatical structure is particularly important in this regard. In English grammar, for instance, there is a distinction between countable and uncountable nouns, which differentiate an object and the substance it is made of, as, for example, in the distinction between river and water, desk and wood. Different plural forms, such as few and little, many and much, relate to countable and uncountable nouns respectively. This distinction in the grammar of English and similar European languages reflects a philosophic tradition of thinking in terms of viewing and measuring the parts of a whole, the latter of which is backgrounded in the process. This grammatical form reflects an inclination that Moore (1967: 3) characterises as 'departmentalization-analysis-of the totality of truth, experience, life and philosophy itself'. He immediately goes on to say that '[t]his division of

philosophical labour in the West and its strong tendency toward analysis are responsible for this manner of representing the over-all picture in its various parts'. The style of thinking in this way is demonstrated in the advancement in geometry, for instance, including the discovery of imaginary numbers. Imaginary numbers, first noticed in ancient Greece, are numbers whose square is negative, as opposed to real numbers, which when squared never produce a negative result. Imaginary numbers have numerous applications in science and technology (Nahin 1998). The drawback of the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns, however, as Needham (1956: 183-184, 280-289) has pointed out, is in the encouragement it provides for the extraction of single patterns of causality in explanations drawing on factual data, that are in reality characterised by a multiplicity of internal inter-associations and interrelationships. In other words, distinction between countable and uncountable nouns tends to give rise to overly simplistic and constrictive assumptions about the nature of the phenomena it seeks to describe.

In Chinese grammar there is no distinction between countable and uncountable nouns. This corresponds with a Chinese philosophic tendency to focus on wholeness and unity when considering parts. In Confucian thinking social roles are only considered in terms of their contribution to an overall social order. Thus individual persons are defined in terms of the relational responsibilities they bear to others, as indicated in the discussion of social structure above. In Daoist thought, economic relations, for instance, are understood in terms of both governmental functions and the processes of natural phenomena. This means that a separation of theory and practice, which is a hallmark in the specification of philosophy in the classical Greek tradition and its heirs in Europe and America today, is difficult to find in Chinese thought. Whereas the elements of role responsibility make it difficult

in Chinese social thought to draw a sharp distinction between theory and practice, so do considerations of the implications of natural processes for human well-being make it difficult to separate theory from practice in traditional Chinese explanations of physical processes. It is of particular interest in this context that Chinese philosophical awareness of the infinite interdependence and interrelatedness of natural phenomena was first introduced into Europe by the eighteenth century German philosopher and mathematician, Gottfried Leibniz, as a corrective, as he saw it, to the narrowness of the analytic and theoretical perspectives that characterised the philosophy that he was familiar with. Leibniz had access to Chinese thought through his correspondence with members of the Jesuit mission to China at the time. He was inspired by and wrote about Chinese thought and philosophy (Leibniz 1994), incorporating aspects of Confucian thought and what he saw as mathematic implications of Yi-Jing into his own philosophical system (Pekins 2004).

The point to take from this brief discussion of the structure of grammar of the Chinese language is that it not only parallels but no doubt contributes to the distinctive emphasis on interrelatedness in the Chinese cultural heritage. This quality is not only conveyed by grammar, however, but also vocabulary. The occurrence of paired terms, sometimes opposites, in the construction of a single word is characteristic of Chinese language, a linguistic practice which is necessarily absent from alphabetical languages. It is an additional basis of support for the inclination in the Chinese intellectual heritage to regard phenomena as interdependent, in contrast with the idea that phenomena are inherently discrete, which is typical of European and American commonsense. The routine use of such paired terms in Chinese language implies, as Wonsuk Chang (2009: 220) says, that ‘a single term would not constitute a self-sufficient entity’ because of the assumed unavoidable

interdependence of things. There are countless examples in Chinese language of words constituted by two characters, thus combining two inter-related concepts. For instance, the word for universe, *tiandi*, combines heaven (or sky) and earth in order to convey the interdependence of the two. The word *junchen* is a single term combining the characters for emperor (ruler) and subject (ruled), indicating the inseparability of the two distinct opposite but complementary roles. Whereas in English the words 'father' and 'son' are necessarily separate, referring to quite different statuses, a single Chinese word, *fuzi*, literally 'father-son', encapsulates each role together in combination. Similarly there is a word, *fuqi*, which combines the characters for 'husband' and 'wife' in construction of a single word, 'husband-wife'.

There is a particularly interesting category of paired terms in the Chinese vocabulary in which characters with opposite meanings are combined to form a single word. For example, a word which means 'right and wrong' is composed of the characters *hei* (black) and *bai* (white). A word which means mishap or accident is composed of the characters *chang* (length) and *duan* (width). A word meaning 'success and failure' or 'advantage and disadvantage' is captured in one word, *deshi*, made of the characters *de* (gain) and *shi* (loss). Another example is the word for 'crisis', made by combining the characters *wei* (danger) and *ji* (opportunity). A characteristic Chinese style or way of thinking is embedded in and reflects this unique language form in which characters or words for opposite entities are understood as integral components constituting a unitary phenomenon. This is emblematic of key aspects of the Chinese intellectual heritage in general, in which difference and opposites are regarded as components in or elements of integrated and dynamic relationships in which the parts do not necessarily diminish or contradict

each other. This has been mentioned a number of times in the present chapter and will be more fully treated in chapter 7.

The relevance of certain characteristic feature of Chinese language in highlighting and partly accounting for the distinctive nature of the Chinese intellectual heritage has been indicated in the preceding discussion. The relationship between language and thought is two-way. Language, as a human artefact and social product, must be seen as something that is constructed by the ideas and conceptions of those who use it, and in using it thereby make it afresh. There is no need to disagree with this point of view. It accounts for the way that language changes over time through the incorporation of different language practices, linguistic usages and the introduction of foreign terms and neologisms of various sorts. And yet the apparently opposite view, that the way people think and the types of thoughts that they have are influenced by the language that they use, is equally true. Indeed, the relationship between language and thought is complex, always interactive and mutually enforcing. When Lee Yearley (1983: 434) says that ‘[w]hat we seek, what we fear, and what we hope for arise from the language that our culture gives us’, he is not saying that language is prior to or creates the reality language users face, but that the elements of reality to which attention is given and how that reality is understood, are necessarily influenced by the language used in conveying, describing and coming to terms with that reality.

Abstract thinking especially is highly constructed by the concepts inherent in the language the thinker employs, a fact noted by linguist Alfred Bloom (1981: 33). For these reasons the importation of a Chinese concept into a social science theory which is developed in Europe or America and typically expressed in English, does not simply add what the concept denotes in only a linguistic sense but also introduces

a pattern of cognition that broadens, qualifies and transforms the intellectual scope of the theory. This effect will be indicated in different ways in chapters 5, 6 and 7. The observed linguistic difference between English and Chinese, as Bloom (1981: 29) says, 'are not merely differences in linguistic form, but differences in linguistic form that reflect and may very well be highly responsible for important differences in the way English speakers, as opposed to Chinese speakers, categorize and operate cognitively with the world'.

Language labels and schemas, including concepts, make significant and distinctive contributions to the thinking of those who use the language in question. Languages as different in so many fundamental respects as Chinese and English, say, are therefore associated with radically different styles or forms of thinking. Bloom (1981: 83) reports that according to his research 'distinct languages, by labelling certain perspectives on reality as opposed to others, act (i) to encourage their speakers to extend their repertoires of cognitive schemas in language-specific ways and (ii) to define for their speakers that particular set of schemas they can make use of to mediate their linguistic acts and to establish explicit points of mental orientation for giving direction to their thoughts'. It has been shown in this chapter that not only language but also social structure and even geography contribute in different ways to the distinctive nature of the Chinese intellectual heritage. Like all heritages the Chinese intellectual heritage operates as a framework in which incremental and sometimes radical change occurs, but through a strange form of continuity in which points of reference seem to have stability at the time that they are drawn upon but through careful consideration with hindsight can be shown to have a history of movement and transformation of their own. This process too has been indicated in the present chapter.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter has indicated major features of what has been called here the Chinese intellectual heritage. In the discussion of the three preceding chapters the nature of asymmetric knowledge flows, especially as they relate to Chinese concepts in a globalised world, were discussed from different point of view, contemporary and historical. In that discussion the distinctive features of a Chinese intellectual heritage were frequently alluded to but not clearly specified. In the three chapters that will follow this one the Chinese concepts of face, xin and paradoxical integration respectively will be outlined and applied to particular problems of social analysis and theory development. Again, the discussion in these chapters assumes a distinctiveness of Chinese concepts that justifies their application to social theory in order to extend and enrich it. The present chapter bridges these two sets of chapters by providing a fuller discussion of the notion of a Chinese intellectual heritage and indicating what its content is. The chapter has also provided a discussion of the context, geographic, social and linguistic, in which the Chinese intellectual heritage operates and which provide it with characteristic cognitive elements.

A demonstration of the manner in which the Chinese intellectual heritage operates, how it is changed and how it continues, providing a sense of persistence in spite of profound transformation, was given in the discussion of the sinicisation of Buddhism over a long period of historical time, from the second century BC to the ninth century AD. The role of intellectual entrepreneurs was indicated in the adaptation and transformation of Indian ideas in order to be accepted into a Chinese milieu, in a manner similar to the practices of intellectual entrepreneurs spelled out in chapter 3. Through this example of the making of Chinese Buddhism the

paradigmatic nature of an intellectual heritage was discussed, drawing on the work of the American historian and philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn. In a consideration of the principal strands of Chinese teachings or philosophies the elemental components of the Chinese intellectual heritage were identified. In order to highlight their distinctiveness certain features of this intellectual heritage were contrasted with aspects of Greek and European philosophical developments. This was neither to elucidate a general history of philosophy nor was it to offer a comparative perspective on Chinese and European thought. Rather it was to highlight aspects of Chinese distinctiveness through pertinent contrasts with dissimilar but comparable aspects of European philosophical concerns.

The special qualities of an intellectual heritage, its provision of a framework within which alien ideas may be normalised and absorbed, its provision of a sense of continuity at the same time that through its operation it accepts and generates conceptual and intellectual change, its provision of a set of intellectual resources for understanding the cultural world of which it is itself an important component, all of these have been indicated in this chapter by argument, presentation of examples and recourse to the authority of relevant experts. These are also the means through which an intellectual heritage operates.

Given the sense of transformation as well as continuity inherent in the idea of an intellectual heritage the context in which such heritages operate and through which they draw a sense of their own solidity has also to be identified. The geographic, social structural and linguistic context of the Chinese intellectual heritage was outlined in the present chapter. The geographic isolation of China, its agrarian economic base and its exclusion from an external vision by virtue of the significance of internal trade and the absence of a sea-born trade except for tribute



with the dominated states of South East and East Asia all encouraged a highly distinctive intellectual heritage. The social structure and language of China, which were formed early in its history and are operating still in a remarkably persistent way, are further elements which inform, support, refresh and inculcate the distinctiveness of the Chinese intellectual heritage in its focus on the concrete rather than the abstract, in its perception of wholeness and its sense that all things no matter how dissimilar or opposed nevertheless exist in some fundamental interrelationship through which all things develop and change. The Chinese intellectual heritage, it has been shown in this chapter, projects an image of the world which is also a self-image of that heritage, of order in chaos and persistence in continuing transformation.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Face: A Chinese Concept in a Global Sociology**

#### **Introduction**

Textbook accounts of the emergence of social theory and sociology in particular trace their origins to the work of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century European thinkers, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber who are almost universally regarded as the founding fathers of modern social theory (Giddens 2001). Those authors who take a broader view, such as Robert Nisbet (1993), by including thinkers from the period of the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century as well as the Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century, reinforce the view that social theory arose as a reflection of essentially European experiences. The development of sociology in particular during the twentieth century, through innovations in research methods and theory, added to its competence and diversity; the expansion of university teaching in America and Europe increased its popularity (Calhoun 2007). This situation, however, reinforced its 'eurocentric' focus. While some theorists, such as Andre Gunder Frank (1966) and Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), drew on the experiences of non-European and non-North American societies in explaining international structures of inequality and exploitation, the concepts they used were those of the 'core' not the 'periphery', to use their terminology. While sociology could include the study of non-European and non-American societies, the

concepts used to describe and explain their organisation and the patterns of their social life were alien to them.

The ‘mobility’ of theoretical concepts from one cultural setting to another has recently been raised as a matter of significance for development of social sciences ‘on a world scale’. Raewyn Connell (2007) has shown that social theory is not confined to Europe and America but can be found in many other societies. She has demonstrated, by referring to the work of African, Latin American, Asian and Middle Eastern writers that social theory can be written by drawing on local intellectual traditions and concepts. The application of concepts drawn from non-Western experience in the development of ‘global’ social sciences raises questions, then, concerning the capacity of ‘local’ concepts to provide explanations of non-local, even universal phenomena. This question will be explored in this chapter. An early and unrecognised instance of such a development is Erving Goffman’s classic elaboration of the concept of face. While Goffman does not highlight his reliance on the Chinese conception of face, which he acknowledges in a footnote at the beginning of his discussion (Goffman 1972: 5-6 footnote 1), Goffman’s argument can be seen as an instance of the benefits of cross-cultural borrowing in the achievement of theoretical development.

This chapter will argue that sociological analysis of the concept of face can continue to benefit from discussion of Chinese conceptualisations. This is because while face is indeed a universal phenomenon, in terms of the social anchoring of self in the gaze of others, the Chinese experience of face and the concepts available in the Chinese language to describe it, highlights aspects of face that are less obvious in non-Chinese societies and therefore absent in existing Western sociological accounts of the phenomenon. The notion of face is therefore highly appropriate in

demonstrating the benefits, under conditions of globalisation, of incorporating non-Western concepts into mainstream theorising in the generation of a global social science. The importance of the Chinese concept of face in contributing to this development derives from the elemental role of face in human sociality in general and, at the same time, its salience in Chinese society in particular. The discussion in this chapter will demonstrate the value of drawing on the Chinese experience of face and the understanding of face in its conceptualisation in the Chinese language. The concept of face is basic to the social sciences, as we shall see in the discussion of the early Scottish thinker Adam Smith and the pioneer American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley, as well as in the discussion of Goffman's account of face. In bringing the Chinese concept of face to an elaboration and development of this notion as it is discussed in the social sciences, the remote and exotic become familiar, cultural distance is bridged in social analysis and the possibility arises of a global social theory, which ceases to be either 'Western' or 'Eastern'.

In the discussion to follow it will be argued that while there may be specific and distinct cultural elements which determine different aspects of face in different societies, and while the rules according to which face operates may therefore vary between societies, the imperative of the self-awareness individuals have of their social evaluation by others is universal and therefore found in all societies. In the examination of treatments of the Chinese concept of face it will be argued that differences between two Chinese terms, *lian* and *mianzi*, both of which mean face, raise issues concerning the different contextual considerations of face, including its moral and social aspects. Through discussion of further distinctions within the Chinese concept of face the chapter goes on to provide an account which reflects both its comprehensiveness and its dynamics. The experience of face generates

emotions of various sorts within the individual, which are significant in understanding the mechanisms of face. This too is discussed in the present chapter. Finally an additional dimension of the complexity of face is in the fact that it can function not only as a means of social interaction but it can become an object of self-conscious consideration and intentional management.

### **Specificity and Universality in Face**

Chinese language terms such as *mianzi* (face), *guanxi* (interdependent relations), *renqing* (reciprocal favour or benefit) and *huibao* (interdependent obligation), are readily seen to be indicative of characteristically Chinese socio-cultural phenomena, in the sense that they derive from the pattern of Chinese historical experiences. It is widely accepted, as Peter Buckley, Jeremy Clegg and Hui Tan (2006: 276) indicate, that '[t]he need for *mianzi* [face] is intrinsic to various aspects of personal and interpersonal relationship development in China'. *Mianzi* or face is an inevitable and unavoidable aspect of interpersonal encounters, connections and relationships in almost every aspect of social life in China, ranging from informal personal interactions to the most ordered and formal elements of organisational and institutional relationships. The concept of face is one of the keys in understanding Chinese politics, economics, business, and education at every level. It is for this reason that '[n]early all Chinese and Western researchers identify face as a major dimension of Chinese culture', as Peter Cardon and James Scott (2003: 9) indicate.

In chapter 4 it was noted that it is possible to refer to what is distinctive in the Chinese intellectual heritage without making a claim about uniqueness. The concept of face is an excellent example of something that is characteristic of Chinese society

and culture but by no means unique to it. There is nothing exclusively Chinese about face. In the English language the term ‘face’ is so widely used to mean prestige, honour, dignity or status that it is seldom realised that its place in English in this sense is as a Chinese semantic loan. The term is ‘so firmly established in the English vocabulary,’ according to linguists Mimi Chan and Helen Kwok (1985: 60), ‘that the average native [English] speaker is unaware of its Chinese origin’ (see also Carr 1993: 74). Ying Lau and Daniel Wong (2008: 52) make it clear that ‘concern for face is not solely an “Asian” phenomenon, as it is found in individuals from all societies and ethnic groups’. Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987: 62) similarly argue that ‘the mutual knowledge of [a person’s] public self-image or face, and the social necessity to orient oneself to it in interaction, are universal’. The insight that individuals, irrespective of their cultural background, cannot disregard the opinions or appraisals of others in their own self-understanding, led Goffman (1972: 44) to remark that ‘underneath their differences in culture, people everywhere are the same ... [in the sense that one] is taught to be perceptive, to have feelings attached to self and a self expressed through face, to have pride, honour, and dignity, to have considerateness, to have tact and a certain amount of poise’. Through their social relationships individuals seek the approval or respect of others and typically desire to achieve a position of approbation in the social group to which they belong.

The universality of face is widely acknowledged, even though it may take nuanced cultural forms in different societies. Keith Alan considers face to be an essential element of all language interchanges and holds that a ‘satisfactory theory of linguistic meaning cannot ignore questions of face presentation, nor other politeness phenomena that maintain the co-operative nature of language interchange’ (Allan 1986:10). Similarly Hua Zhu (2003: 316) says that ‘people, despite their various

cultural backgrounds, are believed to possess self-image/value and want their self-image/value to be appreciated and respected by other members of the community'. The experience of face is so sociologically pervasive that Joseph Agassi and I. C. Jarvie (1969: 140) see it as the carrier of humanness when they write: 'People are human because they have face to care for – without it they lose human dignity'. The same point is made in a slightly different way by Alvin Hwang, Anne Francesco and Eric Kessler (2003: 74) when they describe face as 'an important pancultural construct to explain the desire for social acceptance'. Not only is face experienced in all human societies, but within any one of them it operates very broadly indeed. David Ho (1976: 883) shows this when he argues that face should be regarded as a concept of central importance in sociology 'because of the pervasiveness with which it asserts its influence in social intercourse, it is virtually impossible to think of a facet of social life to which the question of face is irrelevant'. The consensus of a number of writers, from a broad social science background, holds that face includes a socially formed self-image that is essential to the dynamics of the individual's relations with others regardless of their cultural background or national context. The qualification, that while face itself is universal, features important to it in any particular culture may not be general across them all (Ho 1976: 881-882), shall be considered below.

In considering the universality of face it is relevant to mention that the word 'face' may be absent even when the phenomenon is discussed. The term 'looking glass' self, developed by the eighteenth century Scottish thinker Adam Smith, captures the details of the relationships of face outlined above:

We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behaviour, and endeavour to imagine what effect it would, in this light, produce upon us. This is the only

looking-glass by which we can, in some measure, with the eyes of other people, scrutinise the propriety of our own conduct. If in this view it pleases us, we are tolerably satisfied... if we are doubtful about it, we are often, upon that very account, more anxious to gain their approbation, and ... we are altogether distracted at the thoughts of their censure, which then strikes us with double severity (Smith 1982: 109).

By imagining how they are seen by others individuals are directed in their behaviour by a self image or face that comes out of their social relations.

In individualistic cultures, in which persons believe themselves to be self-sufficient and autonomous, it may be that a person may not know or be aware of their dependence on the opinion of others, on the importance of face in their own self-image and behaviour. The possibility of such a failure to acknowledge the salience of face was anticipated by Cooley. Cooley did not use the term face but like Smith refers to 'the reflected or looking glass self' (Cooley 1964: 184). Indeed, Cooley was responsible for introducing the notion of a 'looking glass' self into modern sociology. He wrote:

Many people ... will deny, perhaps with indignation, that ... care [of what others think of them] is an important factor in what they are and do. But this is illusion. If failure or disgrace arrives, if one suddenly finds that the faces of men show coldness or contempt instead of the kindness and deference that he is used to, he will perceive from the shock, the fear, the sense of being outcast and helpless, that he was living in the minds of others without knowing it, just as we daily walk the solid ground without thinking how it bears us up (Cooley 1964: 208).



This 'outgoing of the imagination towards another person's point of view', Cooley (1964: 206) observes, 'means that we are undergoing his influence'.

While there are differences in the degree to which face is regarded as an object of explicit concern that may influence behaviour directly, the underlying processes of face – even if a person is not aware of them – are as general as human society itself. While being an underlying aspect of all social behaviour, face may also be a distinct and distinguishable cultural object in which an explicit concern for face is itself a factor in motivating the actions and influencing the behaviour of individuals. In this case a set of culturally explicit rules will operate by which face is understood as a thing that may be achieved, lost, saved and in any event is required to be at least maintained. Such rules, and the considerations and distinctions they draw upon, arguably indicate aspects of the more universal mechanisms of face. In the section after the following one aspects of the Chinese treatment of face will be discussed in order to prefigure features of face which are broader than the particularly Chinese experience of face. It is necessary to first consider an anomalous absence of serious discussion, until recently, of face in Chinese language sources.

### **Neglect of Face in Research in China**

Relative to its importance in Chinese social relations there are surprisingly few scholarly discussions of face in Chinese sources. Only recently has it gained attention from scholars writing in Chinese in fields including sociology, psychology and management. One obvious explanation is that face is so basic to social relations between Chinese people that it is simply taken for granted and has failed to attract Chinese scholarly investigation. Wenshan Jia (2001: 20) has observed that '[n]o Chinese scholar-official ever explicitly made a systematic observation or a study of it

[face] before Smith'. The Smith referred to here is Arthur Smith (1845-1932), an American missionary who spent fifty-four years in China and wrote books introducing China to foreign audiences. In *Chinese Characteristics*, first published in 1894, Smith wrote on the physical vitality of the Chinese, on filial piety, mutual suspicion, and other themes he regarded as quintessentially Chinese. But the first chapter was devoted to face. Arthur Smith (1894: 17) says that face is 'in itself a key to the combination lock of many of the most important characteristics of the Chinese'. While Smith's writings aroused the interest of foreigners in the importance of face in China – Smith was 'responsible for the introduction of the notion of "losing face" into English' (Kipnis 1995: 120) – it more importantly awoke a Chinese awareness of omnipresence and significance of face.

The pattern Jia suggests with reference to Smith, that Chinese interest in face is prompted by foreign curiosity about Chinese culture, is by no means confined to this case, as we shall see below, although the importance of Smith in this regard cannot be underestimated. One of China's most influential writers and social and cultural critics of the early twentieth century, Lu Xun (Lu Hsun), read Chinese translations of Smith and was impressed by his insightful observations concerning Chinese character. Inspired by and in reference to Smith, Lu Xun wrote a short essay on face which was published in the magazine *Manhua Shenghuo* (*Caricature of Life*) in 1934. Lu Xun writes:

The term 'face' keeps cropping up in our conversation, and it seems to be such a simple expression that I doubt whether many people give it much thought. Recently, however, we have heard this word on the lips of foreigners too, who seem to be studying it. They find it extremely hard to understand, but believe that 'face' is the key to the Chinese spirit and that grasping it will

be like grabbing a queue twenty-four years ago [when wearing a queue or pig-tail was compulsory] – everything else will follow (Lu 1960: 129).

Another influential Chinese writer and social and cultural critic, Lin Yutang, also wrote about face but his writing was directed toward an American audience. Lin lived most of his adult life in the United States. His book *My Country and My People* (1977) is written in English and aims to introduce China and Chinese culture and social mores to American readers. In the book Lin (1977: 186-193) discusses face. Face, he says together with fate and favour are ‘three sisters [who] have always ruled China, and are ruling China still’ (Lin 1977: 186). Lin places face before fate and favour to emphasise that ‘[i]t is more powerful than fate and favour, and more respected than the constitution’ (Lin 1977: 191).

While there is no doubt that face is so immersed in Chinese society and the lives of Chinese people that it is taken for granted by them, this itself does not adequately explain an absence of studies concerning face by Chinese scholars. Part of the explanation must refer to the introduction, establishment and development of sociology in China. This constitutes an instance of knowledge flow in which existing native Chinese concepts were largely ignored and a set of foreign theories was simply applied to an alien or exotic context. Sociology as an intellectual and cultural artefact originating in the West which was first introduced into China in the early twentieth century by American missionary sociologists (King and Wang 1978: 42; Wong 1979: 11-19). Indeed, during this early formative period, between 1910 and 1930, the study of sociology ‘developed such distinct foreign and religious features’, as Siu-lun Wong (1979: 11) put it, ‘that it might be named American missionary sociology’. Even when Chinese non-missionary universities offered courses in and established departments of sociology, they were ‘closely connected with American

interests and heavily influenced by American sociology' (Cheng and So 1983: 473). Prior to 1916 most sociology lecturers in Chinese universities were foreigners with the majority being Americans (Li et al 1987: 617). Western theories, concepts, methods and textbooks were used and American research interests were pursued in sociological study in China, but not of China. In this context, in which the teaching of and research in sociology, was through imported American textbooks and by teachers and researchers, the means for apprehending characteristically Chinese cultural properties, such as face, were simply absent.

As sociology underwent sinicisation, during the period from 1930 to 1949, the concept of face was again neglected as a subject warranting serious sociological research or commentary. During this period sociology was concerned with practical problems of agrarian inequality and poverty and therefore directed to 'solve social problems through reformism and social adjustments' (Cheng and So 1983: 475). In a survey of the development of sociology in China during this period Maurice Freedman (1962) wrote that research was directed to three main areas: welfare problems, rural study and law. In a much more comprehensive study Wong (1979: 19-36) indicates a similar conclusion when he says that at this time sociological research focused on the study of minorities, rural studies, agrarian class structure and issues of structural change. The fate of Chinese sociology changed dramatically after the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949 with the victory of the Chinese Communist Party. From this time sociology was compelled to adopt Marxist-Leninist principles and the role of the sociology was, according to an official statement, to 'learn to use Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung to analyse concretely practical social situations' (quoted in Skinner 1951: 369). The areas of research concern for sociologists at this time were more or less confined to class

structure and land ownership, studies through the lens of Marxist materialist terminology (Cheng and So 1983: 478). Under such social conditions possibilities of research on concepts such as face were simply absent. In 1952 in China all university departments of sociology, political science and also law were abolished (King and Wang 1978: 49). It was not until 1979, when China reopened its door to the Western world, that sociology was re-established as a discipline to be taught in universities and to be the intellectual basis of empirical and theoretical research. It has been shown here that in each phase of its development in China sociology simply ignored the concept and practice of face, for quite different reasons but with the same effect.

It was shown above that Arthur Smith's discussion of face, directed to explain China to foreigners, stimulated Lu Xun's reflections on face. The Chinese writer, Lin Yutang, similarly wrote on face when introducing China to American readers. In more recent times the attempts of Chinese social scientists to explain Chinese social practices to foreign social scientists have more or less for the first time made face a theme for research and systematic study. The discussion of face by Chinese sociologists, including David Ho (1976), Chuansi Stephen Hsu (1996), Hsien Chin Hu (1944), Kwang-kuo Hwang (1987a) and Wenshan Jia (2001) is motivated by these concerns and is therefore written in English. More recently, since China has 'opened its doors' there has risen not only in mainland China but also in Taiwan an interest among Chinese-language social scientists in comparing Chinese and non-Chinese societies. In this context face has become a topic about which there is now Chinese-language discussion among Chinese sociologists and psychologists (Hwang 1987b; Lu 1996; Zhai 1994; Zhai 1995; Zhai 2006; Zuo 1997). The growing scholarly and research interest in face in China has meant that Ho was encouraged to

later publish a Chinese version of his (1976) paper in a book (Ho, Peng and Zhao 2006), and similarly Kwang-kuo Hwang's (1987a) paper was simultaneously published in Chinese (Hwang 1987b).

The summary of the relationship between the concept of face and sociology in China presented here can be translated into an account of the changing role of intellectual entrepreneurs. The brief history of sociology in China can be characterised in terms of three distinct periods. The first phase, described by Wong (1979: 11) as 'American missionary sociology', occupied the period 1910-1930. During this time neither the American teachers of sociology nor their Chinese students functioned as intellectual entrepreneurs in any meaningful sense. The concepts, theories and methods of American sociology were simply presented to Chinese students who were expected to accept them as they were given. The second phase, from 1930 to 1952, was one of limited sinicisation. The concepts and methods of sociology were applied to the practical social problems faced by reform-minded individuals and movements in China during this period. These were predominantly the issues of rural poverty associated with the agrarian class structure and patterns of land ownership. The intellectual entrepreneurs who were engaged in the appropriation of Western sociology and its transformation into an instrument for Chinese practitioners of social change left the concepts and methods they borrowed more or less intact. They inserted these concepts into an existing framework of investigation that attempted to bring about social change. The application of social science to programs of social transformation had an unavoidably political dimension. The focus of intellectual entrepreneurs at the time was therefore on both the conceptualisation of Chinese agrarian social structural categories and also the competition between Marxist and non-Marxist concepts and explanations of social

forces and directions of social change. This debate was terminated in 1952 with the closure of sociology departments in Chinese universities.

The third phase of the history of sociology in China began with the re-introduction of sociology from 1979 up to the present time. In many ways the role of intellectual entrepreneurs during this period is similar to the preceding period insofar as concepts, theories and methods drawn from Western sociology are largely applied to Chinese problems. This process is led by sociologists who studied abroad and took PhDs from predominantly American and European universities and returned to China to teach and conduct sociological research. There is one additional factor, however, mentioned above, found in this period which is the attempts to explain Chinese social practices to non-Chinese social scientists. This factor takes the discussion beyond the theme of sociology in China to consideration of Chinese sociologists and social thinkers in the West, especially America, from the 1940s (Hu 1944; Ho 1976; Hsu 1996) who wrote on Chinese themes. This aspect of 'Chinese sociology' requires a new direction in the activities of intellectual entrepreneurs who engage in these practices because they are concerned not simply to apply alien sociological concepts to Chinese questions but to introduce Chinese concepts, in this case the concept of face, into Western sociology.

The discussion of intellectual entrepreneurs in preceding chapters has argued that the sinicisation of alien concepts requires not simply a communication of these concepts to a Chinese audience but also the work, performed by intellectual entrepreneurs, of changing the receiving framework of ideas and practices in a way that makes them amenable to newly introduced concepts. The explanation to foreign social theorists of Chinese practices of face, on the other hand, requires that the work of intellectual entrepreneurship, as performed by Hu (1944), Ho (1976), Hwang

(1978a), and others, addresses the framework of Western social theory itself and considers how the introduction of Chinese concepts may modify the things identified by the theory in question and how the theory itself might operate as an explanatory device. Not only is this a change in the direction the intellectual entrepreneur faces, no longer looking toward the framework of Chinese thought and how it might be changed through the introduction of an alien concept, but also the relationship the Chinese intellectual entrepreneur has with Western knowledge. There is a tendency for Chinese sociologists explaining face to Western sociologists to require a change in Western social theory rather than seeing that theory as a resource from which concepts can be appropriated. These different orientations were set out in chapter 2 when considering the possible ways guanxi could be treated by social theory. They relate to the direction of knowledge flow.

The integration of the Chinese concept of face into mainstream sociology and social theory has the dual purpose of identifying aspects of social formations of self identity that would otherwise not be so apparent and at the same time, through doing this, of enhancing the explanatory capacity of social theories of selfhood. The theorist who appropriates the Chinese concept of face and reconstitutes the theory of self identity so that this alien concept can be meaningfully inserted into it is in this sense acting as an intellectual entrepreneur. The following discussion of face is therefore the work of the writer of this thesis as an intellectual entrepreneur, in a modest sense attempting to transform an existing framework of ideas so that an alien concept can be integrated into it with the purpose of providing an expanded basis of explanation. By drawing on Chinese concepts and modifying the existing framework in order to assimilate them there is also a contribution to a knowledge flow from the



Chinese intellectual heritage into the Western academic world. This will also be the purpose of chapters 6 and 7.

### **Distinctions within Face**

In a pioneering anthropological account of the ‘Chinese concept face’ the distinction between two Chinese words which both mean face, *lian* and *mianzi*, is explored by Hsien Chin Hu (1944). Hu, a researcher at Columbia University in the United States, published her paper ‘The Concept of “Face”’ in *American Anthropologist* in 1944. Little is known about Hu, who seems to have published only one other item (Hu 1948). Her very widely cited paper on face, however, is regarded as the first serious and weighty scholarly work on the notion of face and signals a landmark in research on a Chinese concept (Ho 2006: 109). Hu’s work not only inspired Western scholars’ research on face, such as Goffman’s theory on facework, but also invigorated the study of face among Chinese scholars. We shall see that the distinction between the words of *lian* and *mianzi* introduced into the discussion by Hu raises a number of relevant concerns for an understanding of face in general, and for understanding the impact of face on self formation and social relations.

The idea that the Chinese concept of face can be regarded as having two component parts, a focal point of Hu’s discussion, one moral (covered by the term *lian*) and the other social (covered by the term *mianzi*), corresponds to this linguistic distinction her account draws attention to. *Lian* is defined by Hu (1944: 45) as ‘respect of the group for a man with a good moral reputation ... it represents the confidence of society in the integrity of ego’s moral character, the loss of which makes it impossible for him to function properly within the community’. *Mianzi*, as distinct from *lian*, according to Hu (1944: 45), ‘stands for the kind of prestige ... [of]

a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation ... For this kind of recognition ego is dependent at all times on his external environment'. The differentiation of *lian* and *mianzi*, representing moral and social aspects of face respectively, is not confined to Hu's account. Christopher Earley (1997: 56) defines '*lian* as a set of rules for moral conduct and *mianzi* as a person's position within a social structure ... *lian* reflects the enactment of "correct" behaviour, whereas *mianzi* reflects an outcome state of social interaction'. But the distinction between moral and social aspects of face, which is not without significance, cannot rest on this linguistic division: the concept of *lian* in fact is not limited to moral connotation and *mianzi* does not necessarily exclude a moral sense. Mianzi, Ho (1976: 868) says, is 'not altogether devoid of moral content' and the two terms, *lian* and *mianzi*, 'are not completely differentiated from each other in that the terms are interchangeable in some contexts'. Even in the examples given by Hu, *lian* may be devoid of a moral aspect, as when a lecturer is unable to answer students' questions, he then will have 'his incapability ... proven and his *lian* [*lian*] lost' (Hu 1944: 48). At the same time Hu (1944: 57) provides an example of *mianzi* which shows that it may have moral implications: '[e]verybody knows that X is incapable of holding that job. But of course, he and so-and-so were schoolmates, so so-and-so wanted to give him some *mien-tzu* [*mianzi*]'. Even if Hu believes that an incompetent's achieving a position of employment through nepotism is without moral relevance, X's employment in a job everyone knows he is incapable of holding is not merely social positional.

Indeed, the case for a simple dichotomy between *lian* as moral face and *mianzi* as social face is further weakened by the fact that the concept *lian* does not have a clear cut moral connotation in a number of common Chinese concepts in

which lian is a part of the expression or term. These include such concepts as zhanglian (to increase face), shanglian (to give face), fanlian bu renren (total denial of relations between previously close friends), da zhonglian chong pangzi (falsification of credentials and worth to achieve face), sipo lian (reckless disregard for previous good relations), silian (long face, sulky), heilian (bad cop of the 'good cop, bad cop' couple), honglian (good cop of the 'good cop, bad cop' couple), among others. If a person believes or feels that he or she has lost lian or does not have lian when facing others, it does not necessarily indicate that they have transgressed moral standards. For instance, a person who has failed a university entrance examination may be unable to face their parents, teachers and others who had high expectations of him or her. While this is not a situation of moral failure it would conventionally be described as meilian jian fumu, as a situation in which the person has no face in front of parents.

Another possible way of distinguishing between lian and mianzi is to say that the two terms refer to different levels of severity in an incident related to face or to the 'amount' of face a person possesses or has lost or gained. Chuansi Stephen Hsu (1996) suggests that lian may refer to face-relevant situations of great significance or gravity, in which moral wrongdoing may then appear to be an important element of the situation, whereas mianzi signifies face in less important or more mundane incidents. A different approach, however, which also avoids the moral/social distinction of lian and mianzi, operates in terms not of the significance of the situation but the sense of dignity of the person. According to Chung-Ying Cheng (1986: 336):

The mien-tzu of a person is the uppermost limit of his dignity and social respectability whereas lien is ... the minimum social respectability a person

has in the society regardless of his actual social position, prestige, wealth or power.

The alternative positions set out here, represented by Hsu (1996) and Cheng (1986), are not necessarily opposed. When *lian* relates to the lower limits of respectability then the marginal impact of moral transgression will be much higher than it would be for *mianzi*, this latter being the upper limits of dignity and therefore a moral space with relatively more latitude than found with *lian*. What is clear in both Hsu's and Cheng's account is that *lian* and *mianzi* can be distinguished in terms of the gravity of the situations which provokes them and not necessarily in the types of values, moral or pragmatic and positional, associated with those situations.

It is worth noting that although she made the distinction between *lian* and *mianzi*, Hu (1944: 62) recognises that 'lien [*lian*] and mien-tzu [*mianzi*] are not two entirely independent concepts'. This is because *lian* and *mianzi* can be used interchangeably in most situations. For instance, both 'zhanglian' and 'zengjia mianzi' can be used to mean 'to enhance face' while 'shanglian' and 'gei mianzi' may both represent 'to give face'. When referring to a situation of 'to gain face', either 'zheng lianmian' or 'zheng mianzi' can be used; 'to maintain one's face', either 'baochi ... lianmian' or 'baochi...mianzi' can be used. Both 'shiqu lianmian' and 'shiqu mianzi' can mean 'to lose face'.

One possible explanation for the failure in the relevant discussion to find a common basis for the differences between *lian* and *mianzi*, and indeed for the less frequent reference to *lian* in scholarly discussions of or references to face (which has not been of concern here), is that *mianzi* is a more variable term which has more applications, and as a consequence it has become the more studied term in academic research. As Cheng (1986: 331-332) notes, 'lien [*lian*] is a concrete term and a more

confined concept than mien [mian], while mien can be said to be more general and less concrete but has more meaning content than lien. This should explain why mien essentially has more social, moral, civil as well as valuational content than lien'. Indeed, my own preference is to use the single term, mianzi, while at the same time acknowledging that face has both moral and social aspects which are necessarily interrelated and also that there are differences in the degree to which experience of the power of face can influence self appraisal and a person's behaviour.

### **Further Distinctions within Face**

In the English language, in which a singular term for face applies, the explicit distinction between lian and mianzi is of course unknown. And yet, as we shall see, another dichotomy emerges, namely the distinction between positive and negative face. According to Goffman (1972: 5):

face may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact.

Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes.

While this statement is a useful summary of the concept of face, it may be misleading to insist, as Goffman does, that the social value a person claims for himself must be positively approved. To say that it is 'positive' makes sense in so far as loss of face requires a subtraction from an existing stock of face, which can be assumed to be a positive quantum. But this is not the usual understanding of positive in the context, which is rather taken to be a normative evaluation. This is the way in which Goffman is usually interpreted and no doubt wished to be understood. For face to be meaningful, however, the question is not whether the evaluation is positive in this sense but whether it is socially shared or current. What is socially shared or

approved at one time in a particular social situation and with regard to a specific social group may be understood quite differently at another time and for a different social group. This is not clearly captured in Goffman's statement. The idea that a person's having face is associated with that person's 'positive' self evaluation can be understood not normatively but quantitatively in the sense that a loss of face would amount to a subtraction from an existing stock of face. The issue of positive evaluation, in this sense, then, relates to a quantitative relationship between what a person possesses of face and what is socially given – or taken – against the amount of face a person has at any given time. This is what 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself' amounts to and it is how Goffman should be understood.

Difficulty with use of the terms positive and negative in the context of face can be indicated further by briefly considering a view of face which its proponents claim builds on Goffman's research. Brown and Levinson (1987: 61-2) say that 'the public self-image that every member [of society] wants to claim for himself' consists of two components, negative face and positive face, with negative face as 'the want of every "competent adult member" that his actions be unimpeded by others' and positive face as 'the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others'. Brown and Levinson develop their 'politeness theory' of face by relating face to its significant role in human communication, in which negative face ('please excuse me') yields to the other and positive face (expectation of praise) asserts self over the other. The difficulty here is that rather than being a general theory of face, a thin aspect of face is used to develop a theory of communication. The point to be taken from the example provided by Brown and Levinson is that face must be understood as something possessed by individuals and that is provided to

them or taken from them by a complex of social interactions. Whether the face is positive or negative is not a matter of definition but arises from the interactions themselves. But what has been said here suggests that inherent in the distinction between positive and negative face is another distinction, between internal and external or subjective and objective aspects of face.

The relationship between a person's self image and their social standing in the formation of face is noted by a number of writers (Ho 1976: 803; Cheng 1986: 332). The subjective dimension of face is the value or self-regard of a person in their own estimation, in their self-esteem, as it relates to their social relationships and to society at large; while the objective dimension, on the other hand, is the social standing a person possess through the recognition they receive from others in the same society or from a specific person on a given occasion. Cheng (1986: 332), in particular, acknowledges the difference between how a person may imagine they are seen by others and how that person is actually seen by others. The question is not whether others view a person objectively in the sense of a clear, rational or even scientific appraisal but that the person is an 'object' of another's appraisal as opposed to being the 'subject' of their own assessment.

The distinction between subjective and objective aspects of face in the sense indicated here corresponds with accounts which regard face as the result of dual sources: 'the evaluation of self based on internal and external (to the individual) judgments concerning a person's adherence to moral rules of conduct and position within a given society' (Earley 1997: 43). On this basis face is manifest in the form of two phases or parts: '[f]irst, there is a distinction between face tied to rules of conduct versus face as a position in a social hierarchy. Second, there is a distinction between the sources of these perceptions, namely, internal versus external reference'

(Earley 1997: 55). It is curious that Earley (1997: 56) here confines considerations of face to ‘a set of rules for moral conduct’ when social evaluation of all sorts of competences relating to diverse types of actions and events can have consequences for loss – and gain – of face, as shown in the discussion above. In addition to this consideration, the distinction Earley draws between internal and external processes in the formation of face is in fact continuous with the other distinctions that are referred to in the above discussion.

What emerges from the preceding discussion in this section and in the previous section is a more complete appreciation of the component parts and also the underlying processes of face which indicate the complexity of its referents to moral as well as social factors, to differences in the gravity of situations which provoke face considerations and also to the internal or psychological aspects of a person’s face as well as the more directly public or social appraisals productive of face. Thus a definition or understanding of face can be constructed which recognises the following elements that emerges from the critical analysis of the concept of face conducted through the preceding discussion.

The first thing to notice is that face is always a self image. The self image that is face can be conceptualised as having two inter-related forms: face is an image of self possessed by a person through their interest in how they are regarded or judged by others, and face is a social representation of a person reflecting the respect, regard or confidence others have in them. Secondly, the evaluations of self which are constitutive of a face state (the state of gaining, losing, recovering or maintaining face) are necessarily socially current or shared by others and never personal or idiosyncratic, and therefore the evaluations leading to face function in terms of the self’s successful performance of actions socially understood as representing or



reflecting those values (in the case of gaining, recovering and maintaining face) or unsuccessful performance, negligence or negation of those values as represented in actions or expressions of attitude (in the case of losing face). Third, the particular values salient for face can be moral, pragmatic or utilitarian, and social positional.

It is important to emphasise that while the particular content of the values mentioned above is not fixed, and therefore that there is variation between different societies and through time in a single society, social values are the essential currency of face. Judgments of right and wrong, of capacities to perform skilled accomplishments and of social standing relative to others all relate to a sense of a person's fulfillment of obligations to himself or herself as a member of a social group and contributor to a social network and therefore also to the group or network itself. Finally, the idea that face is socially provided to persons or taken by them through the fulfillment of 'obligations' means that social judgments of a person's performance against the values salient for face is always in terms of social expectations. The social approval and disapproval generative of face, then, has a continuously prospective element, connected with what is socially expected. Attributions of face are never fixed or static but dynamically subject to change both in terms of the individual's behaviour and its social appraisal and also in terms of the values and expectations which govern those appraisals.

What have not been identified in the definition of face set out above are the mechanisms that align a social evaluation of a person's face with the self image possessed by the face 'holder'. This is the question of the interaction between inner and outer processes, between a person's own perception of his or her social self-image or face and the perception other people form of that person's social 'worth' or 'standing'. When face is seen to be subject to not only external or social judgment

but also to internal assessments, then the relevance of emotions becomes central to face considerations and to the internal mechanisms of face.

### **Emotional Mechanisms of Face**

Face arises in social interactions or relationships which are in turn responsible for emotional experiences, and it is these latter that underlie the processes of face. The social basis of face provides it with contingent or conditional qualities which are experienced in terms of emotional feelings. The conditionality of face is captured in Goffman's (1972: 10) statement that 'while [a person's] social face can be his most personal possession and the centre of his security and pleasure, it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worthy of it'. Face is what a person feels about his or her image as it is seen through the eyes of others, of the person's social group, community or a wider public. When a person sees his or her own image in this social 'mirror' constituted by others, as discussed above in the account of the 'looking-glass' self, that person's emotional state will inevitably be affected by the vision their imagination presents and will be involved in the processes of feeling pride, embarrassment or whatever state the individual's face is formed through and responds to. As Goffman (1972: 6) observes: 'a person tends to experience an immediate emotional response to the face which a contact with others allows him'.

Face, therefore, is not to be detached or separated from emotion but, rather, face is infused with different emotions and exists in terms of them. As Jia (2001: 31) argues, 'emotion intertwines and overlaps with *lian/mianzi*'. Viewing oneself through the eyes of others, one's face may be enhanced (gain face), maintained (unchanged face), protected (saved face), or reduced (loss of face). In gaining face,

persons experience feelings associated with pride, honour and dignity. When a person maintains his or her face, in Goffman's (1972: 8) terminology is 'in face', then that person 'responds with feelings of confidence and assurance', as he immediately goes on to say (Goffman 1972: 8). When a person saves his or her own face, which unlike the maintenance of face requires not merely social acceptance of a given state but the purposeful activity of the person directed to his or her presentation to others, that person is likely to feel a sense of relief and security. When a person loses face, or as Goffman (1972: 8) puts it, is 'in wrong face or out of face', then 'he is likely', Goffman continues, 'to feel ashamed and inferior because of what has happened to the activity on his account and because of what may happen to his reputation as a participant'. Depending on the seriousness of the matter and a person's perception and psychological bearing, the feelings that they will experience may range from embarrassment to shame, from incompetency to inferiority. There is confirmation of this perspective in the findings which S. Gordon Redding and Michael Ng (1982: 215) report, namely that strong feelings of pride, satisfaction, and confidence follow from gaining face while strong feelings of shame accompany losing face.

The emotional components of face are not simply a product or residue of experiences of face and changes in face, they are the drivers of the dynamic motion of the possible face states, including the gaining, losing, recovering and the maintaining of face. In social terms emotions arise out of the interactions between persons and in that sense are social products. In terms of their subjective qualities emotions give direction to and energise actions. The importance of emotions to face, then, is not simply that changes in face states produce emotional responses but in the fact that the particular emotions produced by different face states are the mechanisms

that lead to either the stabilisation of or to changes in those face states. The feeling of shame, for instance, associated with the loss of face, provides its subject with a painful signal of the social disapproval of his or her transgression and motivates a withdrawal from the society of others. The shamed isolation of an individual is itself a penalty that brings with it various painful deprivations, including the loss of both social interactions with others and their recognition. The painful loss of such socially valued relations can motivate the experience and expression of remorse in shame, which in turn signals to others the subject's recognition of his or her transgression and also the person's sorrow about their previous behaviour and a desire to make amends. This is the beginning of recovering face and is facilitated by the emotional components of face. As a subjective experience, then, emotions are directed to not only internal feelings but also to particular ways of relating to and interacting with others. This is connected with a further aspect of face, namely, the way in which one person's experience of face is supported and encouraged by their emotional feelings, and by feelings-related actions of others.

Since face is crucial to each person's normal operation in their own social networks, a person is expected not only to look after their own face but also to maintain the face of others. There are frequently social obligations to give face, maintain and also save the face of another in order for a person to perform their own role or maintain their own position in their given social circumstances and location. That is why a person also has 'feelings about the face sustained for the other participants', as Goffman (1972: 6) puts it. By enhancing the face of another, one may achieve a sense of power, fulfillment or joy depending on the relationship between the two persons and also possibly the motives of the face giver. By rescuing the face of another, one may have feelings of benevolence, or empathy or

guiltlessness. There are two possible orientations, as Goffman points out: ‘a defensive orientation toward saving his own face and a protective orientation toward saving the others’ face’ (Goffman 1972: 14). A person’s achievement of face therefore involves not only what society provides to him or her but also what that person offers to others in society. Each of these is accomplished through the emotional experiences that social interaction conveys.

While most studies of face have confined themselves to the social production of an individual’s face, there is another side of face, then, in which a person’s face is also the consequence of what they provide to other members of society. This matter is less frequently discussed in the literature even though it is an essential aspect of face and one which is given greater relief in the context of a recognition that face functions in terms of emotional experiences, and of the reciprocal nature of emotions.

### **Two Sides of Face**

It can be seen from what has been shown in the above discussion that face is a complex but efficient force of social control in social interactions, which includes incentives and sanctions enforced through both subjective and socially current perceptions and expectations. Individual experiences of face will necessarily be pleasurable or painful, depending on whether face is gained, say, or lost. The role of these and other emotional feelings is central to the way in which face, as a social force, promotes social conformity. Although he does not use the term face, Jack Barbalet (2001: 108) finds that these processes are treated in Adam Smith’s understanding that ‘social harmony and order are maintained, not by the subject’s feelings for others, but by the subject’s feelings concerning how they are regarded by

others'. These mechanisms of face operate instantly, efficiently and automatically. In order to maintain face, a person will tend to represent themselves or behave in a way that leads to their social acceptance or respect. The positive or negative response from other members of a society toward that person then reinforces such behaviour and leads to continual and further conformity. When it encourages socially approved behaviour, then face enhances social harmony and stability. In this vein it has been suggested that in Chinese society concern for face similarly serves to 'regulate the perceived appropriate social behaviour of the Chinese, thus maintaining social harmony' (Lau and Wong 2008: 53).

One of the problems with social conformity or harmony as a valued outcome of social relations, including those of face, is that the possible costs of conformity for not only individual independence but also for society as a whole, depend significantly on the specific content of what is conformed to. A landmark social psychological study of conformity was conducted by Solomon Asch. Asch (1956) reports an experimental situation in which the majority of participants were instructed by the investigator to give completely erroneous responses to the subject of the experiment. Asch (1956) found that seventy-five percent of the subjects in the study were influenced at least once by the majority responses while only twenty-five percent remained completely independent of majority position. In discussing Asch's conformity experiments Thomas Scheff (1988: 403) indicates that people find it extremely painful to perceive or imagine that they are negatively evaluated by others. When face leads to the approval of error (factual or moral), inappropriate or wrongful behaviour, vanity or the overvaluing of socially trivial characteristics such as celebrity or sporting success, and when face consideration rewards inconsequential or misguided achievements, then behaviour designed to maintain or

achieve face can arguably be seen as a destructive force. During the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976) in China, for instance, illiteracy was socially encouraged and education was condemned. Perhaps everyone in China at the time was familiar with the social praise of and the giving of face to Zhang Tiesheng for handing in a blank examination paper. In this way young people in China during the Cultural Revolution gained face by avoiding school, joining Hong Weibing (Red Guard) and tormenting and harassing distinguished intellectuals. In this instance face was part of the process which led the country to chaos and destroyed not only social justice but the best interests of countless young people.

As a mechanism for the maintenance of social order, and especially conformity, the impact of face on a person and indeed on their society will be dependent on the nature of the social order to which conforming behaviour is orientated. Face only entails the tendency to take pleasure in social approbation and to experience pain in meeting social disapproval or condemnation. At the same time, and through the same processes or mechanisms a person may feel that their own preferences or values are subverted in circumstances in which fear of loss of face, for example, leads to conforming with regard to a matter that independently of social approval may have been simply shrugged off or ignored. Under such conditions a face-focused individual may jeopardise not only his or her normal social functioning but his or her own best interests and the interests of their associates. The question raised by these considerations is the possibility of the reification of face, the generation of face as a conscious project of social relations.

It has been shown that face can be seen as a consequence or outcome of social interactions, encounters and relationships, and that face gives rise to emotions that are experienced as either pleasure or pain. It is possible, then, that face

considerations may go beyond a mere mechanism associated with social approval and disapproval of the thing that gives rise to face or subtracts from it, and that face itself becomes an object of self-conscious consideration. It is possible, then, that persons may be engaged in the construction of face as a self-conscious project, not only to achieve the pleasure of social approval and avoid the pain of social disapproval or censure, but also to engage in a politics of face as an explicit social practice. In his observation of social life in Hong Kong Michael Bond (1991: 59) describes the 'plethora of relationship politics in Chinese culture' as represented by 'name dropping, eagerness to associate with the rich and famous, the use of external status symbols, sensitivity to insult, lavish gift-giving, the use of titles, the sedulous avoidance of criticism'. Indeed, it is a standard norm in Chinese society to address a person with their title rather than their first name in order to give face to the addressee. In this way the names of socially valued occupations become titles that are used instead of first names so that a person may be addressed as Manager Li, for instance, or Teacher Zhang. In practising the politics of face a person may make it known that they have a relationship or association with an influential or famous person, they may display a photo which shows them in a public setting with a notable person which gives rise to face-enhancement through 'face-borrowing'. In the maintenance of face of a person operating in an authority role face is likely to be more important than admission of an error or the correction of a mistake no matter how costly these might be. In this vein Andrew Kipnis (1995: 136) emphasises that '[n]o perfection of the legal system will eliminate leaders' needs for mianzi' in China. Indeed, a number of cases are cited by Zhai Xuewei (2006: 146-154) which indicate the difficulty if not impossibility of correcting or even addressing erroneous decisions or actions carried out by different levels of authority in China. Those



subjected to such flawed administration have to endure long period of often painful experiences so that the authority's face will not be lost. In this sense, 'saving mianzi rather than losing it becomes a primary objective in Chinese society' (Hwang 1987a: 961). It may not be an exaggeration, therefore, to claim as Haihua Zhang and Geoff Baker (2008: 22) do that mianzi to Chinese people is 'more important than life itself' and 'often mianzi is ranked before their health or wellbeing'.

Indeed, this may be a normal aspect of face under certain circumstances as when there is an absence in a society of other explicit bases of social control or conformity, such as law or organised religion that functions in terms of a sin-morality – neither of which has traditionally operated in China, for example. When face work becomes a dominant means of social conformity then it ceases to operate as a backgrounded means of the inter-subjective exchanges between individuals in which a self image is formed through a sense of how a person is perceived by others. It becomes instead a matter of primary concern to all members of society. In these circumstances a large repertoire of enforcement means emerge in the relations between people. At the same time conscious and explicit codes of conduct directed to face management emerge which take on enormous social significance. These developments constitute a second order of face when face becomes an explicit and conscious purpose of interaction rather than simply a covert and implicit means of facilitating interaction.

What has been shown in the discussion above, then, is that in those societies in which face is an explicit object of social relations, rather than simply a means through which social relations are conducted, the processes involved are a highly visible form of those which govern the operations of a mere socially embedded form of face work, which both Smith and Cooley summarised in terms of a 'looking glass'

self. For this reason the concepts of face that are used in those societies in which face is an explicit object of social relations can be applied to the elucidation of face formation and relations in those societies in which face is merely implicit in the social relations between persons.

## **Conclusion**

The preceding discussion has clarified key elements of face, and the processes underlying it, by drawing upon, among other things, examination of the Chinese concept of face. The value of cultural borrowing in the development of social theory has therefore been demonstrated in the development in the chapter of a comprehensive analysis of face. Indeed, by drawing upon the Chinese conception of face it is possible to discover details of the complexity of face, as the present chapter has demonstrated. The argument above has indicated distinctions within face states, namely moral, pragmatic or utilitarian and positional valuations. Also, by distinguishing between external and internal processes of face, the importance of the integral connection between emotions and face has been highlighted. A further contribution of the chapter is the distinction between face as an embedded social process and as an object of social contestation.

The significance of conceptual refinement for advancement of sociological theory is indicated in Robert Merton's classic discussion of the relationship between theory and empirical research in which the 'basic requirement of research is that the concepts, the variables, be defined with sufficient clarity to enable the research to proceed' (Merton 1968: 169). The task of conceptual refinement and innovation is necessary, according to Merton, to identify and understand previously neglected objects and relationships and thereby advance social theory (Merton 1968: 146-7).

One source of conceptual development in a globalised world, as the case of Goffman discussion of face work, can be cross-cultural. Underlying the discussion of face in the present chapter, therefore, is a demonstration of a more general point concerning the development of sociological theory by introducing, in this case, Chinese concepts. This constitutes a realisation in practice of what Taiwanese sociologist Xiao Xinhua (1986: 335) sees as a possible future direction of sociological research:

At present, sociology is a subject totally influenced by the special experience of the US and Western Europe. It has already reached the state of standstill; in order to give sociology the opportunity to receive new impulses and to rejuvenate, it is necessary to look for new elements in sociology, elements from diversified and different specific cultural traits (quoted in Gransow 1993: 107).

The discussion of the sinicisation of sociology is directed to a number of purposes, including the renewal and generation of a more global social science which includes concepts drawn from the Chinese language (Cheng and So 1983; Gransow 1993; Chan 1993; Sun 1993).

The link between Merton's argument concerning conceptual refinement and innovation and the sinicisation of sociology is the fact that the origin of social science is through European and North American historical experiences. This limited basis of social science has not inhibited its 'universalistic' pretensions, however (Connell 2006). It is frequently mentioned in a growing literature that the application of Western social science to non-Western societies is either exploitative, with the non-Western case simply mined for data, or generative of flawed description or

theory (Hamilton 2006: 50-74, 220-36). One possible response to the asymmetrical ‘theory flow’, from the metropole to the periphery (Appadurai 2001b; Castells 1996; Hannerz 2008), demonstrated in the present chapter, is to incorporate into standard or Western social theory concepts drawn from non-Western cultures and fashioned through non-Western, in this case Chinese experiences. Not only does this go toward redressing the imbalance, it also enriches sociological theory in general, and in particular, the theory of face.

Because of the cross-cultural element in the form of theory development outlined in this chapter it is possible to describe the practices involved as intellectual entrepreneurship, a concept developed in chapter 3. This process requires the appropriation of an alien concept and at the same time a transformation in a receiving framework so that the concept can be integrated into it. The practice of intellectual entrepreneurship has been engaged in this chapter. The following two chapters shall also involve enactments of intellectual entrepreneurship in so far as Chinese concepts shall be integrated into mainstream social theory, and in being integrated in this way the theory in question will be transformed.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Relations of Emotion and Reason: The Challenge of the Concept of Xin (Heart/Mind)**

#### **Introduction**

The opposition of emotion and reason is an established convention in Western writing and thought. Indeed, the distinction is so clear-cut that emotion is frequently regarded as representative of body and instinct in contrast to mind and intellect. The view that emotion and reason are necessarily in opposition is not only widely held in ‘commonsense’ accounts but also persistently given expression in academic fields. This is succinctly captured by Dylan Evans and Pierre Cruse (2005: xii) when they write that for ‘thousands of years, it was almost universally assumed by Western thinkers that emotions were, at best, harmless luxuries, and at worst outright obstacles to intelligent action’. Paolo Santangelo (2007: 293) places the dichotomy in the perspective of its historical and theological origins when he writes: ‘there is a tendency within the ancient and medieval traditions to view the passions as “diseases of the soul” that cloud reason and reduce freedom in the context of the ontological juxtaposition of the rational and affective spheres, a belief which has been handed down to us in the present’. In a similar diagnostic vein Chad Hansen (1995: 186) notes that ‘dichotomies [are] embodied in [the] Greek heritage: reason/

emotion, belief/desires, intellect/passion, and mind/body ... [This] model has led to some notorious problems in Western philosophy’.

The entrenched dichotomised view of emotion and reason and the treatment of emotion as having an unfavourable role in thought and reason led to a relative neglect of emotion in scientific research until the end of the nineteenth century when there began a surge in the study of emotion, including Charles Darwin’s (1872) *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, William James’ (1884/1968) essay on emotion and Sigmund Freud’s various writings including ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (1915). This golden period for the study of emotion in psychological enquiry was short-lived, however, with the dominance of behaviourism in the 1920s. In the 1950s, the emerging computational theory of mind had the consequence of leaving emotion outside the scope of the cognitivist theories of the mind that operated at the time (Evans and Cruse 2005: xi). For much of the twentieth century, as Evans and Cruse (2005: vi) emphasise: ‘the emotions received scant attention in science, with only a few neuroscientists ... and anthropologists bucking the trend’. In a similar vein, Isabelle Blanchette and Anne Richards (2010: 276) have noted that until recently ‘these [higher level cognitive] processes were studied in a vacuum, separately from the affective system, as if they were immune from such influence’. The absence of consideration of emotion in the study of cognition, as Blanchette and Richards (2010: 276) explain: ‘may have stemmed from early conceptual distinctions between reason and passion, with its implicit hierarchical distinction’.

The position indicated by Santangelo and also Hansen is often summarised in philosophical discussion as ‘Cartesian dualism’. The position outlined by the seventeenth century philosopher Rene Descartes, which continues to underpin much

mainstream European philosophy, claims that emotion and reason are two separate and unrelated faculties. One commentator has indicated that:

In the *Passions of the Soul* ([1649]) ... [Descartes] held that persons can take no responsibility for their feelings and emotions. This is because these are not things that persons do, but what their bodies do to them. It is on these grounds that he established the division between mind and body, and allocated reason to the mind and emotion to the body (Barbalet 2001: 34).

In many ways Descartes' position summarises and refines a long tradition of Western thought going back to Plato and includes Kant as well as Hobbes, Bacon and Spinoza, all of whom view emotion as inimical to reason (Mercer 2006: 290). In the work of Max Weber, which continues to be influential, the opposition between emotion and reason is central to his approach. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* Weber (1991: 118-9, 136) argues that purpose in action, self-control, and forethought, which he sees as the substance of rationality, are the opposite of impulse, dependency and 'nature', which he claims are characteristic of emotion.

While recent developments in research on emotion and reason challenge the role traditionally assigned to emotion as subverter of reason, the conventional position remains dominant. Current academic literature on emotion and rationality can be summarised in terms of four distinct positions. First, some writers regard emotion as principally a consequence of relationships and not a primary source of decision, as argued by Russell Hardin (1995), for example. In this sense emotions are more or less irrelevant in consideration of rationality. A second group of writers regard emotions as supportive of reason. A number of behavioural economists have shown that emotions are instrumentally and strategically significant for rational actors. Robert Frank (1988) shows that emotions resolve problems of commitment

that would otherwise interfere with broadly self-interested action. Jack Hirshleifer (1993; 2001) even more strongly claims that emotions, while possibly disruptive of short-term interests, are central to the realisation of long-term interests. A third group of writers argue that emotions are necessary for or underpin reason. In a number of books Antonio Damasio (1994; 1999; 2003) has shown that emotion does not simply provide contingent support to reason, as argued by Robert Frank and Jack Hirshleifer, but that it is neurologically necessary for the practice of reason. But these three positions do not represent the mainstream. A fourth position, that emotion is a source of irrationality, is represented in all disciplinary fields. Jon Elster (1989), for example, acknowledges that emotions may give purpose to life, but argues that emotions may also prevent a person achieving their purposes, that emotions mislead and distort reason. This last position, while by no means unchallenged in Western academic writings, continues to be dominant and constitute the mainstream.

In the following discussion the enduring Western position on the antithesis of emotion and reason will be contrasted with the Chinese tradition in which a single concept, *xin*, which literally translates as heart-mind, assumes a unity of thought and emotion denied in the West from Plato to Elster. Through an examination of the works of major classical Chinese thinkers it will be shown that the concept of *xin* captures neglected aspects of relations between emotion and reason not lodged in relevant English language conceptualisations. It was acknowledged above that in recent years emotion has become the focus of intensive theoretical work among Western philosophers and social scientists. But as Joel Marks (1991: 1) notes, a 'striking' feature of this literature 'is the almost total absence of references to Asian thought', an assessment which remains valid still.



This chapter will not only address the unity of emotion and reason which recent Western scholarship has begun to treat (Barbalet 2001; de Sousa 1987; Nussbaum 2003), but will do so with reference to Chinese intellectual resources. We shall see that certain gaps in English-language research on the connection between emotion and reason can be closed when it is informed by discussion of the Chinese concept of xin. The concept of xin, according to an historian of Chinese thought, ‘plays a crucial role in the discourse of the [formative period of Chinese philosophy, the] Warring States period, and the subsequent development of Chinese thought’; he goes on to say that the concept of xin must be understood as ‘the centre of will, emotion, desire, and intellect (both rational and intuitive)’ (Schwartz 1985b: 184). The treatment of the Chinese concept of xin developed in this chapter provides a perspective on the relationship of emotion and reason which is neglected not only in conventional Western thinking, but also in areas of the revised literature which considers the continuities between them. Chinese concepts are capable of rendering an alternative to the Western opposition of reason and emotion, in which the separate faculties of heart or feeling and mind or consciousness operate. In the classical Chinese intellectual heritage it is postulated instead as a single faculty or organ, the ‘heart-mind’, in which xin resides (Hansen 1995: 183).

The following sections of the present chapter will discuss respectively the unity of emotion and reason in xin such that xin exists as a singular faculty in classical Chinese thought; the interdependence of emotion and reason in xin, in the sense that one exists in terms of the other; the third section will consider that while emotion and reason are typically seen as opposed to each other in Western thought in the Chinese concept of xin emotion and reason have a non-oppositional relationship; the fourth section will show that in xin emotion and reason support each other and

that emotion may guide reason and also that reason may guide emotion; the fifth section will consider paradoxical elements of xin. The unity of emotion and reason in xin is as characteristic of the Chinese intellectual heritage as their opposition is of mainstream Western thought. In the final section of this chapter is an explanation of these contrasting positions in terms of differences in the structure of power and social relationships in respective developments of European and Chinese societies. Throughout the following discussion the argument will be supported with references to classical Chinese sources as well as relevant Western texts.

### **The Co-Existence of Emotion and Reason in Xin**

In Western thought emotion and reason have been and generally continue to be treated as opposed and incompatible elements, residing in different parts of being, the physical body and non-physical consciousness respectively. In the legacy of Chinese intellectual resources, on the other hand, emotion and reason have been seen to co-exist within a single faculty through the notion of xin, which is universally translated as heart/mind. Xin, in all of its applications in classical Chinese literatures, embraces both emotional and intellectual aspects in combination, and in Chinese understanding emotion and reason are not separate and independent in the Western sense. This position is summarised in Santangelo's (2009: 295) statement that 'for many Chinese thinkers ... the concept of "mind-heart" encompasses both the intellectual faculties, which the Western tradition attributes to the soul or to mind-reason and affective or sensory faculties, which the Western tradition normally attributes respectively to the heart and the senses'.

In the accounts of all major Chinese thinkers, including Guanzi (683-642 BC), Laozi (571-480 BC), Confucius (551-479 BC), Mozi (479-381 BC), Mencius

(372-289 BC), Xunzi (330-227 BC), Lu Jiuyuan (1139-1192), Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and Dai Zhen (1723-1777), there is a shared recognition of the unity of both emotional and intellectual qualities which are internal to xin; each of these authors agree that emotion and reason exist in combination. In his celebrated history of Chinese philosophy Fung Yu-lan (1995: 334) states that xin has functions of both thinking and feeling. It is similarly noted by Zhang Dainian (2002: 409) that 'though without any explicit claim to be doing so, from Mencius to Dai Zhen (1980), Chinese philosophy united moral knowledge with moral feeling'. The Modern Chinese Language Dictionary (DEGLRICSSA 1981: 1269) indicates the dual aspects of xin in defining it as 'the organ of thinking, thoughts and feelings'. This same understanding of xin is found in authoritative translations of Chinese texts. In Richard Lynn's (1999b) translation of Laozi's Daodejing xin is translated as heart/mind throughout. In what follows in this section of the chapter some key instances in the use of xin in classical sources will be outlined.

The long history and authenticity of the combination or unity of feeling and thinking in xin can be demonstrated by considering early Chinese literary sources. One of these sources is Shi Jing (Book of Poetry), the earliest compiled book of poetry in Chinese consisting of 305 poems and songs, largely narrative and lyrical, with some of the poems dating back to 1000 BC. The Shi Jing provides access to representation of the cares, concerns and distractions in the lives of the earliest Chinese people. Reference to xin is frequent throughout the Shi Jing. In his discussion of Shi Jing Benjamin Schwartz (1985b: 184-185) says that xin 'figures prominently throughout the Book of Poetry as the centre of emotions and sentiments... Elsewhere [in the Book] it is made clear that the hsin [xin] is also the source of intellect and understanding... Thus as early as the Book of Poetry (Shi

Jing) the mind/heart already seems the centre of all those expressions of the conscious life which we attribute to both heart and mind in the West’.

It is not necessary or possible to provide here a full account of Shi Jing. One typical example from the section of Shi Jing known as Guo Feng (Airs of States) is a sequence of poems, Zhao Nan (Odes of Zhou and South). One of the poems in this sequence, ‘The Grasshopper’, contains the following lines:

When my lord is not seen,

I feel a grief most keen.

When I see him downhill,

and meet him by the rill,

my xin with joy would thrill (translation based on Xu 1995: 27 and modified by author).

Here is expressed the idea that the feeling of grief experienced through not seeing the lord and the later perception of seeing him are combined in a xin which has a joy transcending grief in its cognitive apprehension of the lord. Here the emotion and the perception or thought are irrevocably combined in a xin that is neither the prior feeling nor the intellectual perception but a combination of them both.

Not only in poetry but also in expository prose xin is used to reflect affective and intellectual faculties combined. Written nearly 3,000 years ago, from the mid and later Warring States period to the Qin and Han Dynasties (covering over 100 years), Guanzi is an encyclopaedic compilation which discusses a wide range of topics including politics, law, economics, philosophy, military affairs, education and other themes of state and survival. The work is named after the philosopher Guan Zhong, Prime Minister to Duke Huan of Qi and edited by Liu Xiang, a Han Dynasty scholar. While it is mainly considered to be in the legalist tradition, although sometimes seen

as Daoist, the text blends doctrines current at the time, including legalism, Confucianism, Daoism and Mohism. Guanzi holds that a state should be governed on the basis of law, as in legalism, and insists that the people are the foundation of a country and that the stability of a country depends on the satisfaction of their basic needs, as in Confucianism.

Guanzi's discussion of xin is particularly instructive. In chapter 49, *Neiye* (Inner Training) it says:

The form of xin is always such that it is naturally full and naturally complete, naturally born and naturally perfected. It loses its essence through sorrow and joy, happiness and anger, desires and profiteering. If one can discard sorrow and joy, happiness and anger, desires and profiteering one's xin will go back to fullness. The emotions of this xin profit from calm and tranquillity. If there is neither trouble nor confusion harmony will be produced naturally (Guanzi 2009: 494; author's translation).

The idea that xin is naturally full and complete, and naturally produced, indicates the subject's accomplished engagement with the world productive of their xin. This balanced apprehension in sense and feeling can be disrupted, however, by emotion, desires and self-interest, through which the person's xin is thrown out of equilibrium, the point being that a harmonious heart-mind is disrupted if one part is excessive relative to the other. But the corrective is also in the feelings of the subject. Guanzi (2009: 497) goes on to say: 'When our xin is regulated then the senses are regulated. When our xin is calm then the senses are calm. What regulates them is xin. What calms them is xin'. This passage indicates the power of self-consciousness, the xin of xin, in preventing or correcting the upset of xin that imbalance of feeling and thought or sense can produce. Any apparent similarity with the idea that emotion disrupts

reason is actually not entertained here. The argument is rather concerned with problems of order and the reciprocity of heart and mind in coping with disorder.

Another Warring States period thinker, Mozi, also applies and extends the concept of xin. As the founder of Mohism, Mozi significantly influences the development of Chinese philosophy by introducing new concepts and arguments. Mozi agrees with Confucius on the ethical importance of human benevolence, ren, but he adopts a very different approach toward it. Confucius acknowledges as a natural disposition the capacity for affection. For Confucius the original and firmest basis of human affection and benevolence is the family. According to Confucius, then, ren is a dynamic concept that denotes both the relational attachments of kinship and compassion for others as a derivative form of familial affection (Lai 2008: 61). Mozi, on the other hand, does not accept the Confucian idea of graded love, which he argues encourages partiality because it gives priority to a person's own family over affection for others. According to Mozi this partiality or discrimination is the source of the calamities of the world and in their place he proposes 'universal love' (jian-ai) (Mozi 1990: 121-156).

Translation of jian-ai is not entirely uniform in the literature. The problem is at least partly the propensity in the English language to classify a concept as referring to either an emotion or to a thought, but not to a notion that combines the two. Fung (1966: 53-54) renders jian-ai as 'all-embracing love', emphasising its emotional element, while Angus Graham (1989: 41-42) argues that it should be interpreted as 'concern for everyone', which is more emotionally neutral. Karyn Lai (2008: 55) similarly interprets jian-ai as 'impartial and mutual concern for everyone'. For Mozi jian-ai is neither emotion nor cognition but a combination of both, it is a xin which combines the emotional feeling of a universalising ethical prescription and a

representation of a perception of those properties of human commonality which transcend familial partiality.

In the chapter *Qinshi* (Elevating the Worthy), Mozi holds that ‘It is not that there is no comfortable dwelling, rather it is that [persons] do not have a settled xin; it is not that there is no rich property, rather it is that [persons] do not have a satisfied xin...A junzi (upright gentleman) will not bear resentment even if he is among ordinary people’ (Mozi 1990: 4; author’s translation). In this discussion the content of xin includes the disquiet that is not only in the feelings of an emotion but in the cognitive awareness of comparison – a small dwelling compared to a large one, small resources compared to abundant resources. The xin of resentment indicated here is not merely an emotional state but an awareness of unfair disadvantage and a moral evaluation of that disadvantage. Reason in the form of evaluative calculation, cognition in the measurement of difference, and the feeling of unfair difference all play a role in the unitary concept of xin represented in Mozi’s account.

In another chapter of Mozi, the *Qi Huan* (Seven Troubles), is the following statement:

If there is no food stored in the warehouse, you will not be able to go through famine; if there are no weapons in the armoury, you will not be able to fight a war for justice; if the city wall is not consolidated, you will not be able to defend yourself; if your xin does not think carefully and meticulously, you will not be able to handle unexpected incidents (Mozi 1990: 32; author’s translation).

Here xin explicitly refers to the intellectual attributes of thought, but because the requirement is dealing with unexpected incidents the emotional elements of anticipation and affective preparedness are implicit.

While it is historically important in the development of Chinese philosophy Mohist thought is overshadowed by the dominant position Confucianism has come to occupy in Chinese history, especially after the classical period (550-200 B.C.). Confucius, the most prominent Chinese thinker whose thought has been most enduring, is the founder of Confucianism, or Ruism. As indicated above, ren (benevolence) is a central idea in Confucius, with the term appearing 109 times in the Analects. ‘If a man sets his heart on ren’, according to Confucius, ‘he will be free from evil’ (Confucius 1979: 72). For an individual to undergo moral development, according to Confucius, ren requires active cultivation. Confucius (2007: 2) says that the root of ren is in ‘being a filial son and an obedient younger brother’ (author’s translation). Thus an individual’s ability to experience affectionate feelings for family members in order to fulfil obligations to them is the starting point in development of ren and the cultivation of moral sensibility.

The emotional feelings characteristic of ren are not freestanding in Confucius’ account but necessarily attached to the moral obligations they guide behaviour towards. The normative goals, the cognitive framework and the emotional feelings are unified in ren xin. In Confucius’ approach, then, ren centres on relationships, especially those between an individual and his parents, between brothers, and between an individual and others. An individual is encouraged to cherish and cultivate their natural sentiments within the family, and extend these sentiments to others.

Confucius’ Analects has been the object of intense research. It is curious that scholars have given only little attention to the use of xin in his work. In chapter 2, Wei Zheng (The Governing), Confucius says in a famous passage: ‘At fifteen, I aspired to learn. At thirty, I found my footing. At forty, I no longer suffered from



perplexities. At fifty, I knew the biddings of Heaven. At sixty, I was able to discern the truth. At seventy, I could follow my xin's desires without overstepping the line' (translation based on Confucius 1979: 63; 2000a: 13; 2000b: 40; and modified by author). Compared to Laozi's (1999: 143) view, in which the sage contracts the scope and intensity of his xin in order to embrace and join the xin of the common people, Confucius's approach is to cultivate moral responsibility and in doing so xin has a significant role in the capability of making choices between moral and immoral desires. Because of the expansive role of moral agency for Confucius, xin is seen as capable of development, a quality not emphasised by Mozi. Through acquiring knowledge, the ability to tell right from wrong, and in following Heaven's decree, all set out by Confucius in the quotation above as steps in his moral development, xin attains its full potential. In Confucius' account, therefore, a person's xin leads them to choose moral desires to be followed in order to avoid wrongdoing. Xin has not only emotional aspects to free the anxiety and distress of doubtfulness but also cognitive and intellectual capacities necessary for moral judgment.

The most substantial and comprehensive discussion of xin in classical sources is provided by Mencius. In his important elaboration of the Confucian system Mencius contributed to its dominance in the history of Chinese thought. It is Mencius' systematisation of the concept of ren that crystallised the hierarchy of obligations within the family and from the family to strangers (Mencius 2004a 1A7: 11). In the Confucian mould Mencius (2004a: 7-8, 35-36, 38-39, 41, 54, 81-82, 85-86, 147, 158) says that the ruler must be attentive to ren and sensitive to people's feelings rather than rule through law or coercion:

No man is devoid of a xin sensitive to the suffering of others. Such a sensitive xin was possessed by the Former Kings and this manifested itself in

compassionate government. With such a sensitive xin behind compassionate government, it was as easy to rule the Empire as rolling it on your palm (Mencius 2004a: 38).

Thus Mencius emphasises compassion and empathy as the motivating and guiding source of a person's moral actions (Yang 2009: 638).

The practice of ren generates harmony in society, according to Mencius:

The people will delight in the joy of him [the King] who delights in their joy, and will worry over the troubles of him who worries over their troubles. He who delights and worries on account of the Empire is certain to become a true King (Mencius 2004a: 19).

An ethical king, according to this account, implements governance through the xin of benevolence rather than through legal edict and its enforcement. Mencius argues for the cultivation among the people of ethical principles contained in the ren xin. This contrasts with the Greek ideal at the root of much Western philosophy, in which ethical claims are justified by appealing to rational metaphysical theories (MacIntyre 1991: 104-122; 2004a: 160; 2004b: 203-218; Wang 2009: 339).

It may be an exaggeration to say that 'Mencius was one of the first classical thinkers to offer a coherent philosophic conception of the mind-heart' (Ng 1999: 92), but it is certainly true – as Ng implies – that Mencius has more to say about xin than his philosophic predecessors. Whereas Confucius refers to xin three times, and Laozi six times, Mencius refers to xin as many as 117 times (He 1995: 31). Mencius holds that siduan (literally, four beginnings) comprise the innate abilities in all persons. These siduan each include a particular xin; first, the xin of compassion; second, of shame; third, of courtesy and modesty; and finally, the xin of right and wrong. While

emotional feelings are internal to each of these so is thought, cognition and evaluation. This is clear in Mencius chapter 6, Part A, in which it is claimed that:

the xin of compassion is possessed by all men alike; likewise the xin of shame, the xin of respect, and the xin of right and wrong. The xin of compassion pertains to benevolence, the xin of shame to yi (appropriateness), the xin of respect to observance of li (rites), and the xin of right and wrong to zhi (wisdom) (2004b: 163; translation based on Mencius 2004a: 125 and modified by author).

This brief statement not only reveals the characteristic co-existence of emotion and reason in xin but also captures the varying dimensions of particular and specific xin. Xin includes both the emotive power and the intellectual ability of feeling and thinking, to perceive and respond to situations, and to make a correct moral choice and therefore the ability to act appropriately.

Because Mencius acknowledges that morality, for instance, has a necessary emotional element or source as well as cognitive and evaluative aspects which are equally necessary, these are readily assimilated in the concept of xin as integral elements of a singular and unified faculty which is required for the ability to perform morally correct and contextually appropriate actions. This understanding of *xin*'s place in the practice of moral behaviour is more fully explored by Xunzi, who explicitly addresses Mencius in a critical vein, and who develops the concept of xin even further.

Mencius is widely seen as an advocate of the idea that human nature is inherently good. Xunzi takes exception to this premise because, he argues, it renders redundant the purpose of moral education and ritual as means of generating and enforcing moral conduct. Xunzi is the most important contributor to the Confucian

tradition after Mencius. His philosophical adversaries – apart from Mencius – are legalism, Daoism and Mohism. Xunzi's importance partly hinges on the fact that he does not simply reject non-Confucian thought but synthesises what he believes are their strongest elements into the Confucian system.

In explicitly disagreeing with Mencius on human nature Xunzi (1999: 741) famously says that 'Human nature is evil; any good in humans is acquired by conscious exertion'. He immediately goes on to explain:

... the nature of man is such that he is born with a love of profit. Following this nature will cause its aggressiveness and greedy tendencies to grow and courtesy and deference to disappear. Humans are born with feelings of envy and hatred. Indulging these feelings causes violence and crime to develop and loyalty and trustworthiness to perish ... Thus, it is necessary that man's nature undergoes the transforming influence of a teacher as the model and that he be guided by ritual and moral principles.

The difference between Mencius and Xunzi on human nature is on the necessity of social institutions in the generation of morality. Mencius is not indifferent to the importance of moral education, as a corrective of moral lapses, but his formulation concerning the inherent goodness of human nature potentially compromises the significance of education for moral development. Xunzi's approach to human nature leaves no doubt concerning the importance to moral development of education and ritual. The significance of Xunzi's approach in the present context is to enlarge consideration of *xin* from a concern with its content to include further an understanding of its source in social institutions.

Xunzi's treatment of *xin* is focussed on not just the moral capacity of *xin* but the very source of that capacity and especially *xin*'s autonomy as a human faculty. In

Xunzi and Early Chinese Naturalism, Janghee Lee argues that it is this faculty of autonomy that ‘allows xin to be comprehensively characterised as the seat of all psychological phenomena – not only emotions and desires, but also intellect and volition – without much difficulty in assuming its unity’ (Lee 2005: 36).

In chapter 22 Zhengming (On the Correct Use of Names), Xunzi compares *xin*'s qualities with the functions of human bodily organs. He says:

The shape, colour and texture of a thing are discerned by the eyes; the pitch and timbre, bass and treble, modal keys and rhythm, and odd noises by the ears; the tastes of sweetness, bitterness, saltiness, blandness, pungency or sourness by the lips; smells of fragrance and stench, aroma and rotten odours, putrid and rancid smells, foul and sour odours by the nose; physical pain, itchiness, cold, heat, smoothness, coarseness, light or heavy texture by bodily touch (Xunzi 2004: 170; author's translation).

After the description of these organs in terms of their sensory capacities, Xunzi moves on to describe the function of xin: ‘pleasure, distress, joy, anger, sadness, happiness, like, distaste and all kinds of desires are discerned by xin. Xin has the function of examining and understanding things’ (Xunzi 2004: 170; author's translation).

The foregoing discussion has indicated the understanding in classical Chinese sources of xin as a singular faculty in which emotional feelings, cognitive assessments and moral judgements exist in a unitary combination. This notion of xin is by no means only confined to the sources mentioned above but is located in the work of countless other writers of both classical and modern periods and in the Chinese language today.

It has been shown in this section of the chapter that the concept of xin incorporates sensory perception, emotional feelings and desires as well as moral evaluations. This provides xin with a relatively independent and therefore autonomous capacity in so far as it can assess the thoughts and emotional feelings that constitute it, in providing direction for an individual's sense of correct conduct (Lee 2005: 41). All major Chinese classical thinkers understand xin as actively encompassing emotion and cognition or thought. In this way xin is understood to provide appropriate information and motivation to those who possess and experience it.

### **The Interdependence of Emotion and Reason in Xin**

Guanzi's account of xin, as we saw in the preceding section, refers to both its emotional and cognitive competences. Guanzi (2009: 497; author's translation) also makes a discerning point about the way in which there can be interdependent relationships between the two elements through the fact that 'xin contains an inner xin. Within xin there is another xin'. The unity of emotion and reason in xin implies that one cannot influence the other as an external cause because they exist in a composite form as xin. But the idea of a xin within a xin, a xin about a xin, allows for a reflexive interdependence and adjustment of emotions and thoughts. This is similar to the notion of emotional dynamism through iterated emotions, such as feeling guilty about being jealous, in which one emotion may moderate another. Xin, however, is not mere emotion but emotion and thought or reason combined, as we have seen, and iterated xin, in the sense Guanzi suggests, provides more complex and diverse relational possibilities, a much greater scope of interdependence.

In a simple-minded sense it could be assumed that the unity of emotion and reason in xin provides the basis of their interdependence. But there is difficulty for elements fused together to have an interdependent relationship, as noted here. The problem is resolved though, through Guanzi's notion of iterated xin. It is in this way that emotion and reason are interdependent in (iterated) xin, and that rather than working independently of each other emotion and rationality require the involvement and cooperation of each other.

Mencius was also considered in the preceding section. Xin exists for him as a unity of emotion and reason in the form of interdependent components. This has been seen differently by different commentators. Torbjorn Loden (2009: 609-610) says that 'Mencius himself never indicated that he was particularly concerned with distinguishing between reason and feeling. Rather one may think that he saw these two realms as closely unified or tied together' (Loden 2009: 609-610). David Wong (1991: 31) similarly notes that 'Mencius held a picture of the role of emotion in moral motivation that militates against a general separation of reason from emotion'. This assessment of Mencius' conception of xin, as consisting of hardly distinguishable elements, follows the letter of his account, in a sense, but fails to penetrate beyond the surface of that account. We shall see that Mencius does see emotion and reason as unified in xin but at the same time distinguishable in the complex ways in which they are interdependent.

The following passage in chapter 2 of Mencius, Conversations with Gongsun Chou, Part A, may be seen to support Torbjorn Loden and David Wong, but we shall see that their statement in its present form does not provide the detail of Mencius' account of xin. Mencius says:

No man is devoid of a xin sensitive to the suffering of others ... Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would immediately have a feeling of alarm and distress in his xin. It was not because he wished to establish a relationship with the parents, nor because he wished to build up a reputation among his neighbours or friends, nor because he loathed the crying of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of xin of compassion is not human; whoever is devoid of xin of shame is not human; whoever is devoid of xin of courtesy and modesty is not human; whoever is devoid of xin of right and wrong is not human. The xin of compassion is the germ of ren (benevolence); the xin of shame, of yi (appropriateness or righteousness); the xin of courtesy and modesty, of observance of li (rites); the xin of right and wrong, of zhi (wisdom) (Mencius 2004b: 55-56; translation based on Mencius 2004a: 38 and modified by author). This presentation of Mencius' account of the xin of compassion allows us to distinguish emotional, cognitive and moral elements combined in an inter-relationship or interdependence of which this singular xin consists.

In a well-known discussion Antonio Cua (2001) breaks Mencius' xin of compassion into a number of component parts. He makes the point that the xin of compassion is 'expressed as a qing or feeling, which pragmatically implies an epistemic attitude, i.e., belief, thought, or judgment' (Cua 2001: 33). Thus the xin of compassion includes cognitions, or epistemic attitudes, implicit in or implied by feelings. As Cua (2001: 33) goes on to indicate, 'the xin of compassion involves the following: (a) a feeling of alarm and distress, (b) an implicit belief, thought or judgment that one ought to help the person in distress, and (c) a disposition to act accordingly'. In a later paper Cua (2003: 164) states that 'If we regard the siduan as



sentiments that have both emotive and cognitive import, we can then say that xin, while expressive of a feeling, has also a cognitive aspect – thus the appropriateness of rendering xin as “heart and mind”. When seeing a child about to fall into a well, the feelings, as part of the xin, stimulate an immediate reaction of panic and pain, at the same time these feelings generate a response of action that would seek to save the child. In making a choice or taking a decision there is not only an interplay of emotion and cognition but also emotion exerts an influence which generates or shapes a cognitive assessment. Emotion does not work against reason in Mencius’ xin of compassion, as in the conventional Western approach, but neither is there an absence of a distinction of emotion and reason, as suggested by Loden and Wong, referred to above. On the contrary, emotion works hand in hand with reason to achieve a desirable goal. The outcome of joint effort entails emotional consequences and cognitive reinforcement which may shape future action and decision.

The use of the concept of xin in Mencius and the other contributors to the classical Chinese discussion corresponds with and encourages recent developments in research concerning emotional intelligence (Goleman 1995) and also in neurology (Damasio 1994). Key aspects of the concept of emotional intelligence correspond with elements of the Confucian ideal, including the representation of it in Mencius’ treatment of xin as set out above. Daniel Goleman (1995: xii) says that ‘emotional intelligence ... includes self-control, zeal and persistence, and the ability to motivate oneself ... the importance of emotional intelligence hinges on the link between sentiment, character, and moral instincts’. He goes on to say that ‘ordinarily there is a balance between emotional and rational minds, with emotion feeding into and informing the operations of the rational mind’ (Goleman 1995: 9).

Similarly, important elements of Damasio's approach closely resemble the integral relationship of emotion and reason found in xin. Damasio (1994: 175) refers to a 'partnership' of emotional feelings and perceptions, cognitions and thoughts that makes decision-making possible. As a neurologist Damasio invokes a modern outlook when he indicates the nature of this partnership, but it will be clear that it parallels the position of the Chinese intellectual heritage set out here. He treats emotions as 'somatic markers' that do not replace inference or calculation, but enhance decision-making by 'drastically reduc[ing] the number of options' that have to be considered (Damasio 1994: 176). This is more than reminiscent of Mencius' account of feeling in the compassion xin which leads to a particular choice. Again, like Mencius, Damasio says that the person experiencing the relevant emotion will not necessarily be aware of emotional sensations, for the thought, the emotion and the action are functionally inseparable. Damasio's conclusions correspond with Chung-ying Cheng's (2001: 79) summary of the classical Chinese philosophical tradition in which mind is 'an inter-linked entity of sensibility, feeling, awareness, thinking and willing'. Cheng goes on to say that through 'consideration [of] sensate activity ... and volitive/purpositive decision-making' mind can be understood as 'an internally and organically interrelated unity'. The interdependent relationship of emotion and reason, which has been established in China for three thousand years, has been gaining currency in scientific research over the last thirty years or so. Damasio (2005: 3) emphasises that '[after] a long period of neglect neuroscience has turned its attention to the elucidation of emotion'. In a review of research on interpretation, judgment, decision making and reasoning involving cognition conducted over the last twenty years, Blanchette and Richards (2010: 309) summarise the present situation by saying that the 'traditional distinction between the

“hot” and “cold” functions, referring to emotion and cognition respectively, is being replaced with a dynamic interplay between the two, with an acknowledgment that many brain structures are both “cognitive” and “emotional”.

### **The Non-Opposition of Emotion and Reason in Xin**

It was noted at the beginning of this discussion that in Western conventions emotions are treated as impulsive and uncultivated forces, typically undermining rationality and potentially destructive of human wellbeing. Although it is no longer uniformly believed there remains still in Western social science the idea that emotions are essentially irrational, a position associated not only with the sociology of Weber, but including such current sociologists as Jon Elster (1999). Catherine Lutz (1988) has developed a trenchant critique of what she describes as the Western approach to emotions, in which emotions are devalued and regarded as a source of human weakness and an obstacle to the realisation of meaningful values, including rationality. She shows that typical Western cultural representations of emotions place them with socially devalued or marginal groups including children, women, and ethnic and racial minorities, while rationality is culturally associated with dominant social groups, predominantly white males.

It has also been shown above that the classical Chinese understanding as expressed through the concept of xin, on the other hand, includes the idea of a non-contradictory unity of emotion and reason. The understanding represented in the concept of xin of the relations between emotion and reason is summarised by Santangelo (2009: 294) when he remarks that ‘in Chinese civilization such dualities were not expression [of] an opposition of absolute ontological concepts, but are rather seen as ... not totally exclud[ing] each other’. Wong (1991: 31) notes the

contrast between Western and Chinese approaches when he notes that ‘Mencius does not, as Plato and Aristotle do, employ the contrast between reason and emotion to assert the need for the primacy of reason’.

It is particularly interesting that the Confucian tradition is premised on the idea that desires in particular and the emotions associated with them do not necessarily undermine human welfare but can be cultivated to more completely achieve the satisfaction of human needs. This position is most fully elaborated in the work of Xunzi, who after Mencius is the most important contributor to the development of the Confucian system. He argues that desires and their associated emotional feelings can be regulated by ritual and education and any pernicious elements within them can be not only rendered harmless but directed to socially constructive purposes. This view is captured in his account of the sage’s self-control, which permits that ‘even when the sage indulges his desires and satisfies his emotions to the full, he can nevertheless manage his affairs and responsibilities. Through his regulated xin no further exertions, restrictions or fear are needed’ (Xunzi 1999: 694).

Unlike the conventional Western notion of emotion, in which the body controls the will through emotion, Xunzi indicates that the faculties of moral reason and will are not threatened or subverted by emotion but rather that xin, which he says is not susceptible to such ‘orders’ or ‘commands’, is capable of having its own impartial judgment and thus able to provide independent decisions which harmoniously represent morally wilful emotions and emotions harnessed to right action and thought. Xunzi writes that:

[xin] is the lord of the body and master of the spiritual intelligence. It issues commands but does not receive commands. On its own authority it forbids or

orders, renounces or selects, initiates or stops. Thus, the mouth can be forced to be silent or to speak. The body can be forced to crouch down or stretch out ... If xin thinks something right, it will accept; but if it thinks something wrong, then it will reject it (Xunzi 1999: 687).

Xunzi thus argues that through xin it is possible to make choices between different desires because decision making powers are built into the concept of xin itself.

It can be inferred from Xunzi's chapter 22, Zhengming (On the Correct Use of Names), that emotions and intellectual faculties are not opposed to each other. According to Xunzi, 'human nature is born naturally. Emotions are the substance of this nature. Desires are the reactions of emotions upon things in the external world' (Xunzi 2004: 180; author's translation). He continues by saying that 'When what is desired is judged to be obtainable, it will be pursued. That is a necessary and inescapable part of our essential nature. Judging it possible and leading the way to it is where the intelligence must come into play' (Xunzi 1999: 731). It can be seen that for Xunzi desires, as representations of emotions, are not to be treated as something opposed to intellect. Rather than being condemned as irrational or suppressed in the psyche of persons in order for them to remain reasonable, emotions are regarded as natural aspects of human beings. Emotions and intellect are here regarded as different qualities which nevertheless work together to achieve a common goal of personal well-being and therefore social harmony.

Xunzi does not discount the possibility that desires may be negative in their consequences for well-being. The corrective force that he sees as operating in such cases, however, is the xin possessed by a person. He holds that:

When desires run to excess, actions do not reach that point because xin stops them. If what xin permits coincides with what is appropriate (li), then although

the desires are numerous, how could there be harm to order (zhi)! Although the desires are not strong enough to motivate a person, his actions may exceed his desires because xin has ordered them to do so. If what xin permits conflicts with what is appropriate, then although the desires are few, how could it stop at disorder! Thus, order and disorder lie in what xin permits and not with the desires that belong to our natural dispositions (Xunzi 1999: 729, 731).

According to Xunzi, then, desires do not interfere with the course of development of intellect because they are limited by emotions, and desires are therefore not considered as disruptive forces which could undermine social peace and order.

The difference between the Western convention and the Chinese tradition is that in the latter there is no idea that emotions are inherently antithetical to reason and well-being. This is not to deny that excessive desires and inappropriate emotions or xin may not have negative consequences but that what results from a desire or feeling, or particular thoughts for that matter, is not inherent in desires, feelings or thoughts as such but as a consequence of the way in which particular desires, feelings or thoughts relate to particular circumstances or a given context. If these latter change the effects of the desire, feeling or thought will also be different. Cheng (2008: 24) captures this difference when he writes: 'It is not those feelings and desires which are intrinsically bad (in fact, they can be instrumentally good for some purpose under certain conceivable social and economic conditions), it is the anticipated results of pursuing them which are considered bad'. While indulgence of the desire for personal benefit, for example, or sensual desires, or a feeling of envy or hate may in some circumstances promote disorder, in other circumstances they may respectively bring material benefit for family advancement, marital happiness, or

curtailment of injustice – there is nothing inherently good or bad about these desires or feelings and similar ones (Chong 2008: 66-68).

In our continuing exploration of xin the discussion above has focussed on Xunzi's thought. It has been shown that while the conventional Western perspective regards emotions and reason as opposed, Xunzi holds that through xin they are cooperating elements of a unitary faculty which has the capacity to educate and curtail of desires so that appropriate and ordered actions may occur. The above discussion can be summarised in Cheng's (2001: 79) words, that 'while reason and emotions remain at odds and contradict each other in the European tradition, they remain basically harmonisable in the Chinese tradition'.

### **The Role of Emotion to Reason in Xin**

From the conventional perspective which continues to influence Western discussion of emotion – in spite of the efforts of Daniel Goleman, Antonio Damasio and others – emotion is seen as a force that undermines rational thought and action. Matteo Mameli (2005: 159-160) notes that 'It is part of the folk-psychological conception that emotions interfere with our ability to "make the right choices". And this view has been the received view in psychology and philosophy since Plato. Only a few have opposed the received view'. In a similar vein, Dylan Evans (2005: 179) emphasises that '[u]ntil recently, most philosophers and psychologists have tended to agree with Plato' whose negative view of emotion held that 'emotions usually affect reasoning for the worse'. It has been shown above in discussion of the classical Chinese tradition from Confucius to Xunzi that emotional feelings are conjoined with cognition and rational evaluation in xin. It is particularly interesting, therefore, that significant English-language contributions to discussion of Chinese philosophy,

including discussion of the concept of xin, show evidence of being influenced by the Western depreciation of emotion. Certain recent contributions to analysis of the concept of xin have emphasised its intellectual functions, which are given substantial acknowledgement, while ignoring the contribution of emotional regulation of and influence on thought and action. In an important article on Mencius' moral psychology Cua (2001: 42) holds that xin is subordinate to reason (li) and must be guided by it. 'Without such guidance', he says, 'it would be incapable of resolving doubts concerning right or wrong conduct' (Cua 2001: 42).

Yet Mencius' discussion of the xin of compassion, which Cua discusses and which was considered above, indicates that it is the feeling of alarm and distress and the emotion of sympathy within the xin of compassion which first prompts and motivates a person to act and to take a morally appropriate course. Indeed, in a more recent discussion of reason, feeling and ethics in Mencius and Xunzi Loden (2009: 608) argues that 'Mencius was of the opinion that as moral beings we rely on our feelings: Our moral judgements are based on our feelings'. This is not an endorsement of the modern emotive theory of ethics, Loden quickly indicates, but it does remind us that xin cannot simply be reduced to mind or rationality in the Western calculative sense when it is the basis of correct or appropriate action.

Philosophers and social scientists who dissent from the conventional Western depreciation of emotion frequently point out that emotion and reason operate in terms of different but complimentary capacities. Philosopher Ronald de Sousa (1987: 195) argues that emotions serve to narrow 'the range of information that the organism will take into account, the inference actually drawn from a potential infinity, and the set of live options among which it will choose'. de Sousa's position that emotions limit the range of available alternatives in the process of rational



deliberation is illuminated by psychologists Timothy Ketelaar and Peter Todd (2000). In making a decision, faced with a vast number of possible courses of action to be explored and possible consequences to be considered, Ketelaar and Todd argue that emotions can guide information search by focusing the computational mind on precisely that information which is most useful for making decisions that lead to good outcomes over the long run. Evans (2010) similarly characterises the role that emotions play in limiting infinite choices as ‘the search hypothesis of emotion’, in other words, ‘emotions prevent us from getting lost in endless explorations of potentially infinite search spaces by providing us with both the right kind of test and the right kind of search strategy for each kind of problem we must solve’ (Evan 2010: 189).

The positive role of emotion in guiding rationality in making a decision is supported by neuroscientist Damasio’s empirical findings. The idea of emotional markers in Damasio’s (1994: 171-172) account refers to the way in which emotional experiences reduce the number of alternative choices that reason needs to consider in making a decision. Without the emotional framework within which rationality operates the number of alternative possibilities would be excessively large and a decision may never be made. In this sense rationality requires emotions and emotions are indispensable precursors to any action, a point developed in research influenced by Damasio (Wenstop 2006: 162). In a discussion of agency and practical reasoning in Confucius and Mencius a similar conclusion emerges: Yang Xiao (2009: 630), in summarising Confucian thought, says ‘virtuous actions must be spontaneous expressions of deep dispositions such as compassions and empathy for the loves ones. They must flow from “somewhere deeper” in an agent than the discursively rational part of the self’. In this case emotion plays a guiding role in rational thought

and moral action in the way that Damasio established nearly 3,000 years later. Indeed, the scientific evidence reported by Goleman (1995: 12) shows that the emotional centres of the brain have ‘immense power to influence the functioning of the rest of the brain – including its centres of thought’ and that ‘the emotional faculty guides our moment-to-moment decisions, working hand-in-hand with the rational mind, enabling – or disabling- thought itself’ (Goleman 1995: 28). In a similar vein, Mameli (2005: 175) emphasises that ‘the choice between different actions is always determined by the emotional feelings caused by the thought of possible outcomes of possible actions – i.e. by somatic markers – and not by an unemotional cost-benefit analysis’.

It was mentioned above that English-language contributions to discussion of the Chinese concept of *xin* may echo Western depreciations of emotion. In an influential treatment of Xunzi’s philosophy Lee (2005) provides an interpretation of Xunzi’s understanding of *xin* which emphasises its intellectual capacities at the expense of its emotional elements in decision making. Lee (2005: 50) comments that ‘regardless of the quantity or direction of desire, *xin*’s reflective and volitional capability allows people to pursue what is reasonable and what should be done’. Lee fails to adequately relate the role of emotion that is evident in Xunzi’s account, as indicated in discussion above.

There is a convergence between the approaches critical of the conventional Western understanding of emotion, in Daniel Golman, Antonio Damasio, Catherine Lutz and others, and the classical Chinese concept of *xin*. Within this convergence is acknowledgement that when a person decides on an appropriate course of action or pursues a correct moral path, then many emotions will be involved. Consider, for instance, the sense of pride or compassion that underpins motivation, the satisfaction

felt in controlling impulsiveness, the joy experienced in overcoming difficulties, frustration at obstacles, elation experienced in achieving success and distress in meeting failure. All of these emotions and more are indispensable stimuli, prior signals or encouragements which are capable of directing, steering or reinforcing cognitive evaluation. Choices and decisions cannot be made only on the basis of calculative rationality, reflection and a need to act. In fact such reflective and volitional intentions require the support and direction or guidance of emotion. When impulses are stifled and gratification delayed it is an emotion which is behind the 'sensible' behaviour. Not only fear stalls an expression of impulsive anger, but also the emotions underpinning commitment to goals that would be disrupted by such an outburst, too instantaneous for a rational calculation of the possible consequences to be made. This is the perspective of Mencius, Xunzi, Guanzi as well as Goleman and Damasio.

### **Paradoxical Integration**

It has been shown in the above discussion that the concept of xin integrates the different elements of feeling, cognition and appraisal into a single faculty. This idea of diverse elements combined within a single unit is represented by Xunzi, for instance, by saying that xin combines the qualities of storing and emptiness, plurality and unity, and movement and placidity. In chapter 21, Jie Bi (Dispelling Blindness), Xunzi says:

xin never stops storing; nonetheless it possesses what is called emptiness (xu).

Xin never lacks plurality (liang); nonetheless it possesses what is called unity (yi). Xin never stops moving; nonetheless it possesses what is called placidity (jing)' (Xunzi 1999: 682-683).

Xunzi elaborates his interpretation of these qualities of xin in the following account, when he goes on to say:

Men from birth have awareness. Having awareness, there is memory. Memories are what is stored, yet [xin] has the property called emptiness. Not allowing what has previously been stored to interfere with what is being received in [xin] is called emptiness. [Xin] from birth has awareness. Having awareness, there is perception of difference. Perception of difference consists in awareness of two aspects of things at the same time. Awareness of two aspects of things at the same time entails duality; nonetheless, [xin] has the quality called unity. Not allowing the one thing to interfere with the other is called unity. When [xin] is asleep, it dreams. When it relaxes it moves of its own accord. When it is employed in a task, it plans. Thus [xin] never stops moving; nonetheless it possesses the quality called stillness. Not allowing dreams and fantasies to bring disorder to awareness is called stillness (Xunzi 1999: 683-685).

According to this account, then, xin is an integration of different qualities or forces.

In presenting these things as apparent opposites Xunzi shows that they are merely different. Storing memories is contrasted with not permitting those memories to interfere with present and future experiences or perceptions; a process Xunzi calls 'emptiness'. Storing memories is required in order that xin may accumulate information through past experience, which is registered as existing knowledge. At the same time xin is emptiness in the sense that there remains within it space for learning from new experience without necessarily interfering with previous knowledge. This is required if action is to be not merely reactive nor based only on long-since established habits. Xunzi also indicates that xin entails both duality and

unity, awareness of difference coexisting with one thing not interfering with the other. Again, there is an appearance of opposites, duality and unity, but in fact there is no contradiction between them. The different elements constituting duality are not working against each other but in being different contribute together, as in a division of labour, to a singular purpose or outcome. Xunzi shows that this feature of xin makes it possible for a person to perceive two or more things or aspects of things without confusion and in drawing on the differences generate a complex and therefore powerful set of means to achieve an outcome. Xunzi also indicates that xin combines movement and its apparent opposite, stillness, in a non-contradictory way. Xin empowers persons to dream while working, to have reveries and at the same time seriously ponder things. In summary, xin allows persons to be emotionally involved and at the same time to have composed deliberation. More fundamentally, the apparently opposed things Xunzi refers to are shown by him to be only different, so that they can be integrated together in xin and therefore in a mutually dependent way compliment the power of each of the other elements in producing an otherwise unattainable result.

### **Explanation of Contrasting Positions**

It was noted earlier in this chapter that the opposition of emotion and rationality can serve as a shorthand summary of the European intellectual tradition. Similarly, the non-oppositional relation between emotion and reason can characterise the Chinese tradition. It has also been shown that these summary statements are not complete or entirely accurate formulations in so far as the dominant Western trend has been challenged and revised from within through alternative accounts of the relations between emotion and rationality. Nevertheless, the dominant

representations that are identified here can be described as enduring and forceful; they operate as default positions in their respective intellectual cultures in so far as they inform associated sets of ideas and conceptualisations.

Given the continuing cultural representation of the opposition of emotion and reason in the West, in spite of developments in psychology, sociology, neuro-science and other disciplines which lead to appreciations of their unity or non-contradictory relationship, and the similar strength in Chinese culture of the idea of the unity of emotion and reason in *xin*, two conclusions can be drawn. First, and most obviously, the fact that these quite different perspectives can be identified means that neither position indicates a necessary function of mind or 'nature'. That is to say, they are each associated with aspects of social structure or culture in the distinct contexts from which they emerge. The second, equally obvious point is that an explanation of the particular configuration of the emotion-reason relationship needs to be provided in terms of a core aspect of the prevailing social structure in European societies on the one hand and Chinese society on the other.

Sociological explanations of the separation of emotion and reason in Western development focus on the predominance of the instrumental rationality of the market. Agnes Heller (1979: 185) describes a dual structure of capitalism in which there is a distinction between the 'domain of the market [as] the world of instrumental rationality' on the one hand, and the 'domain of the family [as] the world of emotional "inwardness"' on the other. In a similar way, in a classic essay on the culture of the modern metropolis, Georg Simmel (1971: 328-329) indicates that urban and market relationships both depend on and generate the time consciousness of punctuality and a calculative or instrumental orientation which displace emotion as a 'reason' for acting and as motivational force in the relations between people.

Under these circumstances these relations become impersonal and thus ‘instead of reacting emotionally, the metropolitan type reacts primarily in a rational manner’ (Simmel 1971: 326). In this way the instrumentalism derived from capitalistic market relations becomes associated with the separation of emotion from reason.

It is of interest that in an early modern text written at a time when market society was becoming important in Scotland, but which was informed by the clan structure of the Highlands, Adam Ferguson (1966) characterises the relations between emotions and reason as non-oppositional and in a way reminiscent of the Chinese concept of *xin*. Ferguson (1966: 29) says:

... there is a felicity of conduct in human affairs, in which it is difficult to distinguish the promptitude of the head from the ardour and sensibility of the heart. Where both are united, they constitute that superiority of mind, the frequency of which among men, in particular ages and nations, much more than the progress they have made in speculation, or in the practice of mechanical and liberal arts, should determine the rate of their genius, and assign the palm of distinction and honour.

The implicit comparative perspective employed by Ferguson, of the encroaching market with its privileging of a rationality separated from emotion, on the one hand, and the martial and heroic society of the Highland clans in which passion and action were united, on the other, suggests the distinct types of societal systems which contribute to the different forms of relationship between emotion and reason treated in this chapter.

The advantage of comparison, but with a much longer historical reach than Ferguson’s, is employed in a discussion of patriarchy in the West and China that supports the type of explanation presented here of the Western opposition of emotion

and reason and their unity in China. Gary Hamilton (1990) shows that the constitution and developmental potentials of patriarchy in European and Chinese societies were fundamentally different. Western patriarchy, he says, is tied to ‘the symbolic structure of authority underlying Western religions, particularly Christianity and Judaism’ (Hamilton 1990: 93). The significant point here is that the legacy of Western patriarchy is a conceptualisation of power ‘viewed as a positive force, emanating from the will of the superior – from the father, the priest, or the ruler’ (Hamilton 1990: 93). Hamilton does not develop the point but a corollary of his argument is that the Western conception of power in political and legal practices is related to a notion of rationality which has an imperative over and against emotional feelings.

Chinese patriarchy, instead of emphasising the instrumental power of a superior, Hamilton (1990: 93) says, ‘places the stress on the subordinate’s duty to obey (hsiao), assigns role obligations that signify his or her submission to duty (e.g. mourning rites), and restricts legitimate acts of power and obedience to behaviour in role sets (e.g., father/son, emperor/subjects, husband/wife)’. We will recognise these relations as those set out by Confucius and mentioned earlier in this chapter. Indeed, Hamilton (1990: 93) goes on to make the point, central to the Confucian system, that ‘this depersonalised form of patriarchy is in turn justified by the belief that it is the duty of all individuals to conform to their roles in order to maintain the harmony of the whole’. While this discussion associates the structure of relations with a doctrine, Confucianism, it is understood that the doctrine legitimates but does not generate the form of relationships in which behaviour is prescribed by the obligations of interlocking roles. Before considering the underlying social structure Hamilton



alludes to, it can be noted that the form of role-power characteristic of Chinese patriarchy does not force a separation of emotion and reason but relies on their unity.

The traditional agrarian structure of Chinese society underlies an orientation toward family and kinship. While the Chinese peasant is a 'sufficient unit to provide the necessary and minimum social co-operation in everyday economic pursuits' (Fei 1946: 2), the gentry, on the other hand, find it necessary to organise beyond the immediate family into kinship groups in order to both secure their rule over peasants and also maintain their advantaged position – through clan organisation – in Chinese society. Kinship or clan organisation provides the gentry with a security required because they are 'an economically unproductive class living upon privileges [which makes them] politically vulnerable' (Fei 1946: 4). Kinship or clan organisation provides the gentry with a capacity to preserve their land and privilege through alliance formations that are based on common family name or association. Patricia Ebrey and James Watson (1986: 1) summarise the situation: 'Throughout the imperial period, not only were family and kinship of major importance to ordinary people, as they have been everywhere, but they were central to the practical, political, and ethical concerns of the elite'.

Kinship organisation or clan operates through the observance of its member's moral obligations and their fulfilment of reputational requirements, associated with such things as 'face'. In this type of society dispute resolution does not focus on enforcing 'an abstract moral law' but on the arbitration of 'a compromise' (Greif and Tabellini 2010: 137). Moral obligations and reconciliation within a kinship group or clan relationship require the involvement of both familial attachment and the feelings associated with it, and also the cognitive considerations of responsibility and the judgements of moral duty and code. Here emotion and reason necessarily work

together and are inseparable. Emotional feelings and reasoned deliberation together deliver an outcome. In doing so there is no organisational or cultural force distinguishing them as separate or opposed faculties.

The European experience in these matters was quite different. The Church discouraged tribal or clan tendencies and operated with a marriage dogma that undermined large kinship organisations by proscribing such practices as adoption, polygamy, concubinage, marriages among distant kin, and marriages without the woman's consent (Greif 2006: 308-312). By the ninth century the nuclear family predominated. Legal codes, for example, no longer linked rights and kinship (Greif and Tabellini 2010: 137). Generalised morality and the absence of kin groups by the tenth century led to a distinct trajectory of societal organisation (Greif 2005; 2006). These culminated in the formation of independent cities and the market economy, with the consequences for instrumental rationality and the cultural representation of the opposition of emotions and reason, noted earlier in this chapter. Such developments did not occur in China. One consequence of this, as Avner Greif and Guido Tabellini (2010: 139) note, is that 'kinship groups remain a more important conduit for economic exchange in China'. Family enterprises are prevalent in China, and market relationships involve both instrumentality and attachment. Guanxi which is significant in business relations, as shown in chapter 2, entails involvement of both emotion and reason. In these ways there is continuity from imperial to present day China and the continuing provision of a social basis for non-opposition of emotion and reason in institutions and also in cultural representation.

The contrasting positions described here, concerning the relationship of emotion and reason in Western and Chinese mainstream thought, derive from differences in social and constitutional structure and in the social relations of power

in the respective developments of European and Chinese societies. The emphasis on power as an attribute of individuals, the enforcement of formal law and the development of the capitalist market in the West encourage the distinction between and opposition of emotion and reason. The formation of social power in the obligations of roles in relationships, the constitution of moral obligations within family and the dominance of kinship group and clan relationships in China, on the other hand, lead to the integration of emotion and reason and the absence of one being privileged over the other.

## **Conclusion**

The discussion in this chapter has been concerned with the Chinese concept of xin. It has been shown that in contrast to a dominant trend of Western thought that in xin emotion and reason coexist in an integrated unity and function together as a single faculty. In Western conventions on the other hand emotion is treated as opposed to reason, even as an undesirable or destructive force which interferes with or subverts the competence and function of reason. While challenges to this view have been presented in recent social scientific, neurological and philosophical research the conventional perspective continues to remain influential in both mundane and academic realms.

The discussion of the Chinese concept xin in the chapter also provides a focussed treatment of major Chinese classical thinkers. It was shown that xin encompasses both emotion and reason, and that emotion and reason are seen within xin as an interdependent whole in which emotion and reason are not opposed to each other. Rather than being regarded as a damaging force undermining rational thinking, emotion is instead regarded in the Chinese tradition as working collaboratively with

reason to attain a unified purpose or outcome by playing a supportive, enhancing and even guiding role. The Confucian perspective on emotion, regarding it as a driving force and mechanism which can lead to a moral personal life and harmonious society, provides insight into the role of emotion in reasonable and ethical conduct.

The analysis of the Chinese concept of xin set out in the chapter demonstrates the benefit it provides to an understanding of the possible relationship between emotion and reason, which is absent in Western conventional thinking. Therefore the Chinese concept of xin supports those approaches critical of the conventional opposition of emotion and reason. Consideration of this Chinese concept permits capture of aspects of properties or characteristics that are otherwise neglected in Western conventional thinking. The developments in social and scientific theories which challenge the conventional opposition of emotion and reason have neglected the enormously rich but consistent Chinese appreciation of the ways in which emotion and reason interact and function together in human action and endeavours. The final section of this chapter explains the persistence of the conventional opposition of emotion and reason in the history of European social structure and also the social structural basis of the Chinese conceptualisation of the unity of emotion and reason in xin. This comparative perspective is not only essential for explaining the different configurations of emotion and reason in the West and in China, but also for appreciating the ways in which emotion and reason mutually support each other in social relationships everywhere.

## **Chapter 7**

# **Paradoxical Integration, Contradiction and the Logic of Social Analysis**

### **Introduction**

Whereas earlier chapters have discussed the processes underlying intellectual entrepreneurship the present chapter, like the two before it, offers a further instance of its practice. In particular, the discussion will indicate how mainstream social theory may be enriched by incorporating the Chinese concept of paradoxical integration. This idea is not entirely alien to Western social theory, but it is underdeveloped and inadequately theorised. A sustained engagement with Chinese conceptualisations of the idea will, I argue, address this limitation. In the Chinese intellectual heritage paradoxical integration is central to understandings of process and development. This raises a second theme that has run through this thesis, namely the idea of the paradigmatic nature of intellectual heritage. The question is posed in this chapter of the distinct ways in which Aristotelian logic and its tradition on the one hand and Daoist philosophy on the other characterise difference and opposition. Some salient features of different intellectual heritages are therefore made explicit in considering how the Chinese concept of paradoxical integration may be inserted into mainstream theory by drawing out and highlighting latent aspects of social thought

with which the Chinese concept has certain affinities. Finally, contradictory aspects of globalisation – another theme that runs through the discussion of this thesis – is taken up toward the end of the chapter when one particular treatment of paradoxical aspects of globalisation discussed in the social sciences literature is identified as a prime example of an application of paradoxical integration in mainstream social theory.

This chapter, then, is concerned with a single aspect of the logic of social analysis, namely the representation of opposition or polarity. The dominant approach to this subject in Western intellectual history, which is incompletely challenged by hermeneutic and Hegelian modifications, is located in Aristotelian logic. A leading element of the Aristotelian system, the law of contradiction, states that ‘the same attribute cannot belong and not belong to the same thing at the same time and in the same respect’ (quoted in Ross 2004: 166). According to this approach opposite claims regarding a single entity cannot both be true; if one is true then the other is necessarily false. A characteristically Chinese understanding, on the other hand, holds that the relations of opposites are by no means necessarily contradictory in this Aristotelian sense. Indeed, according to Daoist principles, opposites may bear a relationship of paradoxical integration.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to contrast Western and Chinese legacies. Aristotelian logic has played an important role in the development of European and North American philosophy, but it is not the only or even the most important influence. What the chapter presents, rather, is a significant Chinese alternative to Aristotle’s law of contradiction in the form of the principle of paradoxical integration. It will be seen that there are anticipations of this principle in twentieth-century European and American social theory, although it is nowhere elaborated as

completely as it is in the classical Daoist text, Daodejing, which originates over 2,500 years ago.

There is no single term in Chinese for paradoxical integration but a number of terms for specific types of paradoxical integration can be found, in keeping with the concrete as opposed to abstract disposition of the Chinese language and its concepts. Two obvious general categories, however, are readily identifiable: *xiangfan xianghe* and *xiangfan yiti*. As with many Chinese words these are composite terms. The word *xiangfan* is made up of two characters, *xiang* (each other) and *fan* (opposite); *he* (joining together or integration) is combined with these terms to produce the expression *xiangfan xianghe*, which indicates paradoxical integration. *Xiangfan xianghe* can be shortened to *fanhe*. The word *yiti* (uniting as a whole) can be joined with *xiangfan* to provide another form of the term paradoxical integration.

Three distinct forms of paradoxical integration are identified in the discussion in this chapter. These are not the only types of paradoxical integration that can be found in Daodejing but they are the most significant for social analysis. The forms of paradoxical integration elaborated in this chapter are first, interdependency of opposites, in which one element of a pair is required for the meaning or purpose of the other element. Secondly, the paradoxical integration of generation is outlined. This is the paradox of one thing contemporaneously becoming something else. Three different types of generation are discussed below, namely functionality, development and consequence. Finally, the paradoxical integration of reversal is described. Reversal refers to those situations in which one thing provides access to its opposite.

Each of these forms of paradoxical integration can be referred to by a distinct term in Chinese. The term *xiangfan xiangyi*, which is a combination of *xiangfan* and *xiangyi* (depending on each other) denotes that opposites exist interdependently. The

term *xiangfan xiangsheng*, which includes the idea of generating (*sheng*), as well as the term *xiangfan xiangcheng*, which includes the idea of bringing about (*cheng*), both refer to the condition that one thing generates or brings about its opposite. Finally, in reference to the third form of paradoxical integration to be discussed here *fanzhuan*, which combines the notion of *fan* (opposite) and *zhuan* (turn, turning), indicates reversal and signifies the way in which one thing gives access to its opposite.

Before outlining the nature and content of the complex concept of paradoxical integration as it is developed in *Daodejing*, it is necessary to first describe this ancient text and situate it as an historical source. The chapter will then go on to indicate the place of Daoist thought in the intellectual legacy of Chinese traditions, including during the Maoist period. This is necessary background to the exposition of the concept of paradoxical integration.

After providing a comprehensive exposition of paradoxical integration as it is set out in *Daodejing* instances of the use of paradoxical integration in recent social science are discussed. This is to show the importance of the principles of paradoxical integration for social scientific research and theorizing, but it also reveals that there is an absence in modern social sciences of a full appreciation of the importance of paradoxical integration and the value of acknowledging the methodological principle of paradoxical integration as an analytic research tool.

## **Daodejing**

*Daodejing* is a book with a long history and a forceful presence. Although it has an earlier existence through oral transmission during the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 BC), as a written text *Daodejing* is usually described as being



approximately 2,500 years old. It is reputed to be the second most translated book after the Bible, with ‘thousands of versions in virtually every language’ (Dyer, 2007: xii). Lin Yutang describes it as ‘one of the profoundest books in the world’s philosophy’ (Lin 1955: 579).

The origin of Daodejing, which is also called Laozi after its putative author, is subject to much speculation as there is no conclusive record of the exact time or circumstance in which it was produced. The most familiar form of Daodejing is the one used by Wang Bi (1999), a second century commentator, which consists of approximately 5,000 Chinese characters divided into 81 short chapters and dated from approximately 250 BC. Recent archeological discoveries, however, have provided two different forms or versions of Daodejing which, while bearing a close parallel with what is known as the Wang Bi version, differ sufficiently to indicate that there is no single extant text of Daodejing. The so-called Mawangdui Daodejing, written on silk, was discovered in 1973 in Hunan Province and dates from 168 BC. More recently, in 1993, the so-called Guodian Daodejing was discovered in Hubei Province, written on bamboo slips and dated from approximately 300 BC. Thus Daodejing was known during the Warring States period (480-222 BC). Indeed, the book is quoted and paraphrased in Zhuangzi, which dates from approximately 400 BC, and in Xunzi, written approximately 250 BC.

There are also disputes concerning the authorship of Daodejing. The traditional view, expressed by Sima Qian in *Shiji*, written during the Han dynasty, held that either Lao Lai Zi, an old contemporary of Confucius or Dan, possibly Laozi, was the sole author of the text. This view has been repeated by a number of modern Chinese scholars, including Ma Xulun, Zhang Xu, Tang Lan, Guo Moruo, Lu Zhenyu and Gao Heng (Ren 1995: 1). Another traditional view is that Zhuangzi,

an early Daoist, wrote the text in the name of Laozi (Graham 1981: 126-128). Modern scholarship, however, has shown that in terms of its style, tone, content and nature, Daodejing is a composite work, the text of which accumulated over a period of time beginning in the pre-Qin era, that is, prior to 221 BC (Lau 1963b: 90-103).

Daodejing, effectively an anthology, is not arranged in any particular pattern by topic, issue, content or sequence. There is some repetition and minor inconsistency in the text. The work is without an introduction to indicate what the text is trying to convey or achieve, and nor are there headings to any of the chapters or subheadings within them that might guide the reader through the text. In addition, because each of the chapters of the text is brief and aphoristic appreciation of the sense of the work invites more interpretation than philosophical sources typically require. The text of Daodejing has been variously described as chaotic, fragmentary, obscure, ambiguous and enigmatic. Others describe it as terse, insightful and full of meaning. The argument of Daodejing draws upon a number of images including those of valley, water, uncarved block, and philosophical concepts such as dao (the way or path) and de (particularity), wu (absence, vacuity) and you (presence, having, being), the fuller meaning of which will be explained below. The text operates, as Hans-Georg Moeller (2006: 19) notes, by the ways in which '[e]ach line and image connects to a number of similar lines and images throughout the entire book' and more importantly, rather than being randomly or loosely assembled these images 'mutually explain and relate to each other'.

The subject or purpose of Daodejing has been variously seen as individual enlightenment, religious devotion and ritual practice and also political counsel. Indeed, all are given expression in the encompassing notion of Daoism. In an important article the American historian of Chinese thought, Herrlee Creel, explains

that Daoism is in effect three not one set of principles and practices (Creel 1977). Creel distinguishes ‘contemplative’ and ‘purposive’ Daoism; the first deriving from the Zhuangzi and the second from Daodejing. Whereas Zhuangzi has the purpose of cultivating an understanding of the Dao or Way to achieve inner strength, according to Creel, Daodejing is directed to the organisation of political power and advice to Kings (Creel 1977: 4-6). Neither of these forms of Daoism is religious. During the second century, however, an immortality movement emerged in southern China which combined elements of folk immortality cults, Buddhist organisational forms and the Daoist name (Creel 1977: 7-8). According to this movement everlasting life could be achieved through the use of drugs and alchemic practices, breath-control and gymnastics, dietary management and macrobiotics, moral (Confucian) virtue, sexual techniques, magical rites and charms, and talismans – all of which are opposed or ridiculed in the Zhuangzi and the Daodejing (Creel 1977: 8-9). Most serious commentators agree that the primarily purpose of the authors of Daodejing was to advise how a ruler could achieve the good social order by following ziran (so-it-be, natural spontaneity) and practicing wuwei (effortless action) (Lai 2008: 99; Lynn 1999a: 3; Moeller 2006: 57).

There persists, however, the idea that Daodejing is a mystical text. D. C. Lau (1963a: xxxviii) is correct to observe that ‘[b]oth in China and in the West, there have been attempts to put undue emphasis on the mysterious elements in the Lao tzu’. The sociologist Max Weber, in his classic study of Chinese religion, described Daodejing as containing an exposition of ‘contemplative mysticism’ (Weber 1964: 186). The historian of Chinese science, Joseph Needham (1956: 35), to mention another influential source, indicates that ancient Daoist thought had strong elements of ‘religious mysticism’, but goes on to add that ‘it was at least as strongly magical,

scientific, democratic and politically revolutionary' (Needham 1956: 35). In a similar vein the English historian of Chinese literature, Arthur Waley (1956: 59) associated the idea in Daodejing of what he saw as the incommunicability of dao doctrines with mystical thinking, a matter we shall return to below. While Daodejing is taken as a sacred text by religious Daoism (Daojiao), mentioned briefly above, it is a misrepresentation to see it as a religious text and a misinterpretation which finds it to be a treatise of 'metaphysical mysticism', as Chad Hansen (1992: 200-230) demonstrates.

Wang Bi (224-249), who is still considered to be one of the most important scholars of Daodejing, presents an interpretation in his influential *Laozi Zhu* (Commentary on Laozi) and *Laozi Weizhi Lueli* (General remarks on the subtle meaning of the Laozi) which forms the basis of all subsequent Chinese interpretations of Daodejing. In these texts the philosophical and political aspects of Daodejing are primary. Another interpreter, Han Fei Zi (280-233 BC), much earlier than Wang Bi, similarly regarded the Daodejing as a political text with strong natural law philosophical underpinnings designed to provide advice to a would-be emperor. The eminent modern-day translator and scholar of Chinese philosophy, D.C. Lau, acknowledges that there are passages in Daodejing which lend themselves to mystic interpretation but adds that on closer examination such interpretation evaporates. One kind of such passage concerns the account of the origins of the universe, which may possibly borrow language of 'some primitive creation myth', but in Daodejing 'has no longer any mythical significance' (Lau 1963a: xxix). The other kind of passage Lau refers to relates to yogic practices of breathing and similar techniques, which are relatively 'isolated' in Daodejing and practical rather than mystical (Lau 1963a: xxxix-xli). Lau's considered summary of the supposed mystical elements of

Daodejing is therefore to dismiss them as misinterpretations; the sense of the work, rather, is ‘only a rather down-to-earth philosophy aimed at the mundane purpose of personal survival and political order’ (Lau 1963a: xxxviii).

Many Western interpretations of Daodejing find in it a religious or metaphysical core insofar as the concept of dao is taken to be an ancient Chinese form of the Judaic-Christian concept of God. It is true that in Daodejing the idea is clearly presented that Heaven, Earth and Human kind follow dao (Laozi 1963: 37). But the concept of following in Daodejing is not in the form of religious devotion but rather adherence to something closer to natural law or at least consistency with natural forms and impulses. More pertinently, dao is neither attributed with a Godly power, nor indeed with any inherent or intrinsic capacities pertaining to an entity with existence in its own right. The capacities of dao are those that are natural forces in all things. It follows, therefore, that unlike God dao is not capable of interfering in the affairs of the world or intervening in human conduct. Dao adopts wuwei (not acting) and it does not possess or command. According to chapter 34 of the Daodejing (Laozi 1963: 38):

The myriad creatures depend on it for life yet it claims no authority. It accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit. It clothes and feeds the myriad creatures yet lays no claim to being their master.

In a similar vein, chapter 51 (translation based on Laozi 1963: 58 and moderated by author) claims:

Dao gives them life; de rears them; Things give them shape; Circumstances bring them to maturity. Therefore, the myriad creatures all revere dao and honour de. Yet dao is revered and de honoured not because this is decreed by any authority but because it is natural for them to be treated so.

The concept of dao in Daodejing does not refer to an abstraction, as with God, but to a concrete thing. It is not static, but moves with ceaseless motion, as in chapter 25:

There is a thing, amorphous and complete, born before Heaven and Earth. Soundless and formless, it stands alone, eternal, goes around and does not weary. It is capable of being the mother of the world. I know not its name, so I style it 'dao' ...Man models himself on earth, Earth on heaven, heaven on dao, and dao on that which is naturally so (translation base on Laozi 1963: 30 and moderated by author).

In these passages Heaven simply refers to the sky, weather and seasons, and Earth to the soil, oceans, landscape and what grows and lives on them (Moeller 2006: 17; Mote 1971: 21-3).

Another frequently encountered supposition is that Daodejing presents an account of the human condition which is comparable to Buddhism, especially in consideration of human desires. Buddhism regards desires as innate and residing in the individual, and it perceives them to be the cause of human suffering (Lai 2008: 237). Daodejing has a superficially similar view of desires insofar as it expresses reservation about them, but its position could not be assimilated with the Buddhist aspiration for individuals to exert conscientious and deliberate effort to remove all desire. Daodejing is not necessarily opposed to desire. Human experience is led by desires of various kinds and Daodejing acknowledges that it is through desire that individuals experience the world and learn about it.

The first chapter of Daodejing states: 'rid yourself of desires in order to observe [*dao*'s] secrets; But always allow yourself to have desires in order to observe its manifestation' (Laozi 1963: 5). Desire that is not subject to reflection or considered restraint, Daodejing warns, is self defeating. In chapter 3 is the idea that a

leader who practices wuwei avoids encouraging desires in the people at the expense of food and good health (Laozi 1963: 7); in chapter 12 Daodejing distinguishes between a world that is apprehended through the senses – ‘The five colours make man’s eyes blind’ – and through need – ‘the belly not the eye’ (Laozi 1963: 16). If an individual gives too much attention to desires which may be influenced by their sensations then they could be distracted from satisfying their needs. Chapter 19 advocates having ‘as few desires as possible’ (Laozi 1963: 23). The purpose here, though, is not to be rid of desire as such but to avoid the socially induced desires of distinction and other constructions which confine a person to society’s purposes and meanings, which render an individual socially subservient (Hansen 1992: 211). It is not natural desires to which Daodejing is opposed but those desires which are socially or conventionally defined which weaken or redirect the desires associated with natural human needs.

### **Daoism’s Enduring Impact in the History of Chinese Thought**

While Daodejing is the leading text of Daoism it predates Daoism as an identifiable intellectual movement by at least 200 years. Daoism or Daojia (the School of Dao) was constructed by historian Si-ma Tan in his Shi Ji when he retroactively designated a group of texts as constituting one of Six Schools, the other five being Confucianism, Legalism, Mohism, Logicism (School of Names) and Naturalism (Yin-Yang School) (Fung 1966: 30-31). Of these Six Schools only Confucianism and Daoism have had a continuing history of intellectual, cultural and political significance in China. Indeed, Confucianism was intermittently the ruling state philosophy during the Han Dynasty in the second century. In the form of Neo-Confucianism, since the Ming Dynasty in the fourteenth century, it was given official

sanction through state adoption and was consolidated as the philosophical basis of Imperial rule and administration up until 1911 when the Qing Dynasty gave way to the Chinese Republic. While Confucianism has become regarded as the quintessential representation of Chinese thought, especially but not exclusively by Western writers, its relationship with Daoism as a continuing influence on Chinese thought and conduct cannot be overlooked.

The dominant place of Confucianism in the history of Chinese thought is uncontested. Nevertheless, it has to be appreciated that the dominance of Confucianism has never been exclusive and that the importance of Daoist thought in Chinese history cannot be neglected. Indeed, Daoist thought has played a parallel role in its influence on many areas of Chinese social and political life, including painting, poetry, martial arts, traditional medicine, political thought, and philosophy. Its influence on Chinese culture in general is at least equal to that of Confucianism, even though that influence has not been achieved by institutional force and state sponsorship, as with Confucianism. It is possible to describe the capacity of Daoist influence in terms of its tenet doctrine of wuwei (action without effort). The ironic inversion mentioned in Daodejing, 'It is because it never attempts itself to be great that it succeeds in becoming great' (Laozi 1963: 39), may serve as a metaphoric account of the enduring significance of Daoism in Chinese culture, a sentiment captured more than two thousand years ago by historian Si-ma Tan when he wrote 'They perform little, yet their achievements are numerous' (quoted in Fung 1952: 175).

The significance of Daoism lies in its influence as an independent school of thought and at the same time in the way in which elements of it have been borrowed in the development of other schools of thought. It is this second type of influence that



will be highlighted in the discussion in this section. The influence that Daoist thought has passively exerted by the attractiveness of its ideas has been acknowledged by numerous commentators. Waley (1956: 84) remarks that Daoist thought ‘coloured the works of all other schools’. In discussing Confucian thought in particular Benjamin Schwartz (1959: 51) indicates that ‘[w]ithin the Chinese world of ideas Confucianism seems to blend at one of its edges with Taoism’. The philosophical impact of Daoism is succinctly summarised by Karyn Lai (2008: 72) when she writes: ‘Daoist philosophy accentuated the weaknesses of Confucian, Mohist and Legalist philosophies and prompted more thorough investigation of their fundamental ideas and values’.

The influence of Daoism on the development of Confucian philosophy can be readily demonstrated through consideration of Xunzi’s thought, for instance. As we saw in the previous chapter, Xunzi, with Mencius, was one of the original sources of the systematisation of Confucius’ thought. There are numerous instances in which Xunzi integrates elements borrowed from Daoist philosophy into his own elaboration of Confucian orthodoxy. It was noted in the previous chapter, when discussing the paradoxical characteristics of *xin* in Xunzi, that we first encountered the influence of Daoism on Xunzi’s writing. In the chapter On Nature Xunzi (1999: 535) says in paraphrase of a number of chapters of Daodejing in which *wuwei* is discussed, including chapters 2, 3, 37, 43, 48, 63: ‘Not to act, yet bring to completion; not to seek, yet to obtain – this indeed may be described as the work of Nature’. In particular, Xunzi’s statement mirrors the passage in Daodejing: ‘dao never acts yet nothing is left undone’ (Laozi 1963: 42; see also 6, 7, 50, 55, 70). Xunzi echoes the Daoist view that it is through not resorting to deliberate action that things may be completed.

Han Fei Zi, the founder of Legalism in the second century BC, like Xunzi, developed a doctrine and school of thought which is opposed to Daoism but in doing so appropriated elements of Daoism and integrated them into his own system. In fact Han Fei Zi was the first person to write surviving commentary notes (1974: 326-447) on Daodejing. Modern scholars, including David Nivison (1999: 801) and Theodore De Bary, Wing-tsit Chan and Burton Watson (1960: 124), note that Han Fei Zi draws on the Daoist principle of wuwei and employs it in development of Legalist strategies of statecraft, as a tactic to be deployed by a ruler in governing a state. In the chapter On Dao Han Fei Zi (1974: 67; author's translation) writes: 'A wise ruler governs with wuwei, ministers do their duties with care'. According to Legalist thought it is the ruler's role to provide opportunities for wise men to offer advice and provide strategies to the ruler, and for the ruler to make decisions based on such counsel. Within this tradition advisors are directed to develop their full potential and the ruler's role is to assign duties according to their respective talents.

In the passage quoted above Han Fei Zi (1974: 68) continues by saying that the 'dao that a ruler follows should be unseen and unknown (by his officials), xu (vacuity) and jing (acquiescence), knowing his official's faults by concealment'. Although Han Fei Zi adopts the approach of wuwei, xu and jing from Daodejing his own understanding or interpretation of wuwei is directed to satisfaction of ruler's needs for secrecy and concealment of his own thoughts from his ministers so he might exercise full control of them. Wuwei in Daoism, on the other hand, is not an instrument of manipulation as with Han Fei Zi but rather entails that the ruler follows the natural course of things. Chapter 57 of Daodejing gives voice of the sage ruler in saying: 'I wuwei and the people are transformed of themselves; I prefer jing and the

people are rectified of themselves; I am not meddlesome and the people prosper of themselves' (Laozi 1963: 64).

By referring to elements of the treatment of knowledge and desire in Daodejing, Han Fei Zi (1939: 180) outlines a position which advocates that the ruler should prevent people from receiving education and developing critical judgment:

Therefore, government of the people, as is said in Lao Tzu's text, should suit the degree of motion and repose and save the trouble of thinking and worry. The so-called obedience to heaven means neither to reach the limits of sharpness and brightness nor to exhaust the functions of wisdom and knowledge. If anybody ventures such extremity and exhaustion, he will have to use too much of his mental energy. If he uses too much of his mental energy, then disasters from blindness, deafness, and insanity will befall him.

On a superficial level this passage captures ideas conveyed in chapter 3 of Daodejing: 'Therefore in governing the people, the sage empties their minds but fills their bellies, weakens their wills but strengthens their bones. He always keeps them innocent of knowledge and free from desire, and ensures that the clever never dare to act' (Laozi 1963: 7). But whereas the purpose of the passage from Han Fei Zi is aimed at strengthening the ruler's power over the people through limiting their capacity to think for themselves, the sentiment of the passage from Daodejing, rather, is oriented to oppose conventional, socially-defined knowledge and desires, social norms and conventions, and desires for fame and wealth, so that the state may run naturally without coercive action (Hansen 1992: 214). The purpose of the restrictions indicated in Daodejing, as one commentator has put it, is to 'avoid promoting the desires and knowledge of the people so that they will not create the

commotion of competing for enjoyment of life and domination of power' (Cheng 2004: 162).

The potency of Daoist thought continued to be felt even when Confucianism became the official doctrine of state during the Han dynasty. *Huai Nan Zi*, an influential philosophic book compiled by Liu An (179-122 BC), reveals the central role of Daoist thought at the time, even though the work draws widely on various schools of thought, including Confucianism, Mohism, Legalism, Ming school and Yin Yang school. *Huai Nan Zi* offers a systematic discussion of the concept *dao*, which is central in *Daodejing*. The account of *dao* in chapter *Tianwen Xun* of *Huai Nan Zi* (Liu 2002: 150; author's translation) is closely parallel to the account in *Daodejing*:

Dao starts from xu (vacuity). Xu gives rise to universe. Universe gives rise to qi, Yang Qi produces heaven and Yin Qi produces earth. Yang Qi is clear and forms easily, Yin Qi is opaque and forms with difficulty and thus is why heaven is formed before earth.

The description of the process of the formation of universe, heaven and earth echoes *Daodejing*, chapter 40 (Laozi 1963: 47): 'The myriad creatures in the world are born from you (being), and you from wu (non-being)'. Basing his account on the discussion of the formation of universe in *Daodejing*, *Huan Nan Zi* provides an elaborate discussion of *qi*. Another instance of the debt *Huai Nan Zi* owes to *Daodejing* is the fascination in the former with the concept of *wuwei*. *Huai Nan Zi* shows a clear understanding of the richness and dynamics inherent in the concept of *wuwei*, which is frequently mistranslated into English as 'non-action'. In chapter *Yuandao Xun* (Liu 2002: 46; author's translation) *wuwei* and *wu buwei* are insightfully expounded: 'Wuwei, means do not act beyond natural course; Wu buwei

means act following the natural course. Wuzhi, means do not change the natural course. Wu buzhi, means govern according to the natural course'. Huai Nan Zi captures very well these Daoist concepts it appropriates as its own.

In spite of the predominant place of Confucianism as a state or institutional ideology it has always existed alongside philosophical Daoism from which it consistently borrowed in order to maintain its vigor and relevance. Rather than continue following the historical interaction of Daoism and other philosophical currents, especially Confucianism, during the long period of Imperial China I want to now turn to the place of Daoism and especially Daodejing in the period when classical Chinese thought was all but eliminated, namely the recent past of Maoist domination from 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party established its political rule in mainland China, to 1976 when Mao Zedong died. During this period the state ideology of Marxism maintained a wholly monopolistic position relative to all other systems of thought. Campaigns against Confucianism in particular but also other schools of classical Chinese thought, including Daoism, were forcefully prosecuted during this period. The exchange between Western and Chinese thought, begun in the late nineteenth century and continued during the Republican period (1911-1949), was also halted in 1949 and Marxism-Leninism was the only body of Western ideas that could legitimately be studied in China. Nevertheless, even during this period Daoism could not be ignored, largely because 'the most significant feature of Daoist philosophy is its distinctive conception of opposition and dialectical reasoning' (Lai 2008: 72). In this sense it bore a curious relationship with China's new ruling ideology.

Marxism, derived from Hegelianism, stresses that conflict is a 'crucial objective element in reality, crucial in its role of advancing history to a higher stage

of development' (Cheng 1977: 221). The Marxist emphasis on conflict between opposites, in the form of opposition between a given state or condition and its negation or the opposition between two classes entails confrontation and implies exclusivity in the sense that while capitalism may historically appear to emerge from feudalism such emergence entails the overthrow of feudalism. Mao, as an exponent of Marxism-Leninism, saw opposites as detrimental to each other rather than complementary, and advocated the idea of the impossibility of compromise between different social classes. Differences between the two primary classes, the proletariat and bourgeoisie, according to Mao, are so great that there is no way to bring about a reconciliation of their views (Mao 1965: 355). A predominant slogan during the Mao period, 'Never forget class struggle', applied not only to social relations between classes but also to philosophy. Rather than being seen as mutually interdependent classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are understood as necessarily antagonistic and destructive of each other. In Mao's rendition of Marxist philosophy the concept of class struggle is seen as an instance of a general dialectic of opposition which applies to the realm of philosophy and even to relations between humans and nature who are seen as unavoidably involved in an oppositional struggle for domination.

In contrast with the official philosophy of communist China a key notion in classical Chinese thought is the idea of harmony between nature and human beings which insists on 'the unity of heaven and humanity' and also the idea that 'the myriad of things are one'. According to one interpretation, both Confucianism and Daoism recognise that 'conflict and antagonism are resolvable by human cultivation and human adjustment to nature which are within human power to achieve' (Cheng 1977: 218). This statement, however, overemphasises a correspondence between Confucianism and Daoism insofar as it implies that they have a similar conception of

harmony. In Confucian thought harmony is an achievable objective whereas according to Daoism harmony is always experienced as a temporary and recurring moment within a continuing flux of transformation and change. Nevertheless, in contrast to Mao's thought, it is true that both Confucianism and Daoism acknowledge that humankind's advantage in nature is achieved through cooperation with nature and not by domination of it.

During Mao's era, the thought of 'man's ultimate ability to defeat nature' became dominant. The harmonisation of cooperative opposition between humankind and nature was replaced by a disharmony of antagonistic opposites. Massive institutional and policy changes were made which were beyond nature's capacity to yield sufficient output. Due to these anti-nature movements China suffered the Three Years of Natural Disasters between 1958 and 1961 during which China experienced widespread famine in which between 20 and 43 million people died (Dikötter 2010; Ashton et al 1984). It is of interest that the Daoist dialectic in particular, which emphasises accommodation with nature rather than its domination, is increasingly used as a foundation of ecological or environmental ethics (Lai 2003). Indeed, the dialectical nature of the philosophy of Daodejing was the source of its continued presence in the intellectual landscape even during the Mao period.

An annotated bibliography of philosophical publications in the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1963 (Chan 1967a) provides an invaluable summary of the discussion of Daodejing during the first half of the Mao era, during the period of Socialist Reconstruction and just prior to the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966. The bibliography lists books and articles separately. During the period covered by Chan's bibliography 8 books were reported to be published on Daodejing (Chan 1967a: 22-24) and 37 journal articles (Chan 1967a: 129-45). Three issues seemed to

dominate consideration of the Daoist classic in the published discussion in China during this period, namely whether the text indicates a materialist or idealist outlook, whether the dialectic method is upheld, and also the heritage value of *Daodejing*. A summary of the 42 items in which the annotations are sufficient to report an assessment on these issues, although not all of them treated each of these issues, indicates that 21 items reported that *Daodejing* represents a materialist outlook and 13 that it represents an idealist outlook. Ten of the sources appreciated the dialectical nature of *Daodejing*. Those items that mentioned the heritage value of *Daodejing*, with the exception of 2 mentions of its continuing value, did so to condemn the work as representing a ruling class or reactionary outlook (7 items) and 2 of these took as evidence for this assessment *Daodejing's* principle of *wuwei* or non-action as indicative of a refusal to engage in struggle.

The discussion of dialectical method in the sources mentioned in the bibliography is particularly interesting for what it reveals of their interpretation of the *Daodejing's* approach to matters that occupy the same intellectual terrain as that of official Chinese Marxism. Of the 10 items that mention *Daodejing's* dialectical method only 2 are unequivocally appreciative of it, and that is because they see it as continuous with Marx's dialectic (Chan 1967a: 22). The remaining 8 items qualify their appreciation of the ancient dialectic largely on the grounds that it ignores struggle (Chan 1967a: 131, 138) or overlooks contradiction even though it may emphasise opposition (Chan 1967a: 131, 132). In the Maoist lexicon 'struggle' and 'contradiction' are more or less synonymous, and their absence – in the view of these authors – render the dialectic in *Daodejing* both primitive and idealist (Chan 1967a: 23, 132, 135, 137).



The measure of Daodejing adopted in this thesis, however, is not how closely it represents the Maoist notion of dialectic. Another concept, ‘paradoxical integration’, which is a dominant concept in Daodejing, while not denied in the official Chinese discussion is not properly understood by it while it is seen through the prism of its own Maoist conception of dialectics.

The type of assessment of Daodejing found in the publications of 1949-1963, reported above, has continued in more recent Chinese discussion. The dialectical nature of Daodejing has been emphasised in sources published during the 1990s (Gao and Gong 1995: 14-18; Ren: 1995: 7; Wang 1998: 7-9), reflecting the continuing influence of Mao Zedong Thought on interpretations of classical texts. Dialectics, according to this point of view, holds that opposites support each other, that in developing to its extreme possibility one thing turns into its opposite form, and that a thing develops cyclically (Gao and Gong 1995: 14-18). While such relationships may appear to be discussed in Daodejing the concept of dialectic set out by these authors fails to capture the complexity and detail of paradoxical integration.

A Confucian rather than Daoist basis of paradoxical integration has been claimed in an important paper by Ming-Jer Chen (2002: 182), who holds that paradoxical integration is an aspect of the Confucian ‘middle way’ philosophy (zhongyong). Yet it is difficult to locate the concept of paradoxical integration in either Confucius’ Analects or in the classical Confucian canonic text Zhongyong. It is, however, a concept that is given repeated expression throughout Daodejing, as we shall see below. The term zhongyong is made up of two Chinese characters zhong and yong. Chen Yi (Zisi 2007: 82), an influential Song dynasty thinker, interprets ‘zhong’ to mean ‘being neutral’ and ‘yong’ as ‘being steady and unchanged’. The zhongyong philosophy, correctly attributed to Confucius, advocates neutrality,

stability and the avoidance of extremes; in it one is encouraged to not act beyond accepted norms so that balance in conduct can be retained and harmony achieved.

While the emphasis of zhongyong lies in the striking of a balance in which excessive, inclement or even strong and forceful actions are discouraged, paradoxical integration, on the other hand, does not prohibit such possibilities. It sees them rather as not infringements of proper relations but as transitory and unavoidable aspects of relationships in general. The concept of paradoxical integration in this sense is embedded throughout the discussion of Daodejing; in which a rich set of dynamic relations concerning opposites is embraced.

Location of the concept of paradoxical integration in one philosophical tradition, Daoist, rather than another, Confucian, cannot be permitted to detract from the larger point, however, that the concept has a presence in a more general Chinese culture, partly through the structure of Chinese language itself and not merely the diffused influential nature of Daoism in the long history of Chinese thought. It is important to notice that a number of frequently-used Chinese words are made up of two characters which together indicate apparently contradictory ideas. For example, duo (many) and shao (few) are combined in duoshao to mean 'how much' and the characters nei (inside) and wai (outside) together become neiwai meaning 'everywhere'. The word maodun (contradiction) is formed by joining the characters mao (spear) and dun (shield), and in a similar way shen (life) and si (death) are combined in forming the concept of shensi (turning point). The Chinese engagement of contrast within single concepts is perhaps most evident in wei-ji, the word for crisis, which is formed by two characters wei (danger) and ji (opportunity), therefore expressing the Chinese view that adversity and opportunity are inextricably linked in a dynamic relationship. Each of the terms here expresses a paradoxical integration.

The argument has been made that paradoxical integration is a characteristically Chinese concept, in sharp contrast with the Aristotelian notion of contradiction which underpins so much Western philosophy. Yet it must be acknowledged that the apparent contradiction between these terms and the approaches associated with them has become rather a paradoxical integration itself, with elements of each tradition not only influencing the other but having an emergent presence in each.

It is of particular interest that the concept of wei-ji, sketched above, which is in contrast with the predominantly Western idea that a thing is only itself and not its opposite, has recently been given expression in Western management studies by Albert S. Humphrey, an American business and management consultant, in his development of a model of strategic analysis he calls SWOT which stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Humphrey makes no reference to Chinese sources which operate in terms of wei-ji - the idea that crisis provides opportunities as well as risks – but SWOT brings to mind not only contradictory or paradoxical elements but, by integrating them in strategic analysis, introduces possibilities that both a narrower Aristotelian and also Confucian zhongyong or middle way approach would fail to recognise. Western managers can be trained into appreciating the value of SWOT's perspective of paradoxical integration. They may even be sensitised to it by aspects of Western folk culture, as indicated in the phrase 'every cloud has a silver lining'. Nevertheless, the development of SWOT analysis and the idea of opportunities in crises have been reinforced in management studies through the use of Chinese classical sources, especially Daodejing and also Sunzi's The Art of War (Lee and Ko 2000), in which the concept of wei-ji is explicit and developed in the application of the notion in practical and concrete cases.

## **Paradoxical Integration in Daodejing**

It was noted above that there are a number of possible readings of Daodejing, including self-cultivation, religious, proto-scientific and political. Also, it is frequently argued that whereas Confucianism, for example, is a preeminently social approach to the human condition, emphasising the over-riding significance of relations between persons, philosophical Daoism – the Daoism of Daodejing – emphasises natural relations and the connection between humankind and nature. It has already been argued that the most consistent reading of Daodejing acknowledges that it is principally a political text. In what follows it will be shown that it is also a text whose argument addresses relations between persons although not in a moralising and norm commanding way, as in Confucius, but in a social scientific way which attempts to understand emerging relations between persons rather than insisting on what those relations should be, as in the Confucian tradition.

In order to demonstrate the appropriateness of the approach outlined above the methodological contribution of Daodejing will be highlighted in the following discussion. Indeed, it will be shown that the methodology of paradoxical integration can be located in every aspect of Daodejing and that this methodology literally saturates the text. This methodological aspect of Daodejing, as an exposition of paradoxical integration, has seldom been noted in the existing literature except in so far as acknowledgements have been made regarding the approach in Daodejing to opposition and dialectic, as noted above, in both Marxist and philosophical commentaries. But these acknowledgements fail to appreciate the way in which paradoxical integration operates through practically every concept in Daodejing and ignore the richness of the relations of opposition captured by the multiple forms of

the concept of paradoxical integration. In the following discussion it will be shown that the core concept of dao in Daodejing is itself an instance and expression of paradoxical integration, as is the relationship between this concept and its associated concept of de. The various distinct forms of paradoxical integration treated in Daodejing will then be considered.

In the first chapter of Daodejing the concept of dao is introduced. Not only is it the key concept of the whole exposition, it is presented as inherently paradoxical. The opening proposition asserts: 'The dao that can be described in language is not the constant dao; the name that can be given is not its constant name' (Laozi 1999: 51). It is generally acknowledged that the claim here is that language is an inadequate instrument for describing reality, that the names it provides to things are insufficient to capture those things, and also that language 'freezes' objects which change, and language itself fails to note or track such changes. While language is used to account for a thing and delineate its features it tends instead to hold constant in thought what has already changed in reality.

It is not only the paradox that things are both identified by language and misdescribed in language that is indicated in chapter 1 of Daodejing. The second sentence of the chapter claims: 'Nameless, it is the origin of the myriad things; named, it is the mother of the myriad things' (Laozi 1999: 51). This indicates a different type of paradox. What is not named is not known and in that sense does not exist, but named things may have efficacy and be responsible for effects. This is no longer the paradox of language but of generation. The idea, that the nameless gives rise to the named, is repeated later in the text. In chapter 40 dao is referred to in terms of wu (non-being, nothing) and you (being, something): 'The myriad things in

the world are born from you (something) and you is born from wu (nothing)' (translation based on Laozi 1963: 47 and modified by author). The generational capacity of dao as wu which produces you is in the interaction of oppositional forces, and through such interaction something might be produced that had not previously existed. Here paradoxical integration is reminiscent of the Hegelian dialectic in which a thesis and its antithesis produce a synthesis. According to chapter 42:

The dao begets the One; the One begets two; two beget three; and three beget the myriad things. The myriad things, bearing yin and embracing yang, form a unified harmony through the fusing of these vital forces (Laozi 1999: 135).

It is the interaction of the opposing forces yin and yang which facilitates the production of the myriad things.

It can be seen from this brief discussion that in Daodejing the concept of dao is itself a paradoxical integration of nameless and named, nothing and something, yin and yang. In Antonio Cua's (1981: 132) words, dao is a 'harmony of opposites', or in terms of the present discussion, a paradoxical integration. In conceptualising dao in this way Daodejing departs from previous traditions in Chinese thought, which shall be briefly discussed here. It also is quite distinct from those treatments, predominantly Western, which see dao as a supernatural, God related concept. This problem will also be briefly treated.

The concept of dao is widely represented in Chinese philosophical traditions (Zhang 2002: 11-26). It typically refers to a path or way of moral truth, as the summary concept in a system of normative thought. Confucius (1979: 86) saw dao in terms of the pursuit of virtue in self conduct, benevolence in relation to others, and

the arts in recreation. This idea of dao as a path to be followed is not the one developed in Daodejing. Rather, in the latter work dao is not a command or a rule of conduct but paradoxically appears as both a particular type of entity and also the direction of a process. Lau (1963a: xx-xxi) says that here dao can be described as ‘a completely independent entity’ and also as ‘the way followed by the inanimate universe as well as by man’. Charles Fu (1973: 369) argues that according to Daodejing the concept of dao encompasses at least six dimensions: ‘(i) Tao as Reality, (ii) Tao as Origin, (iii) Tao as Principle, (iv) Tao as Function, (v) Tao as Virtue, and (vi) Tao as Technique’. There is evidence in the text to show that dao refers to the beginning and origin of the world (Laozi 1963: 5, 18, 47, 49, 59), the natural law by which the universe works (Laozi 1963: 6, 8, 37, 58), the internal order through which society operates (Laozi 1963: 12, 22, 35, 39, 53, 55, 66, 69), and the ideal way for life practice (Laozi 1963: 20, 28, 42, 60, 61). It is possible, therefore to see dao as ‘both the ultimate reality and the paradigmatic principle for life’ (Lai 2008: 77).

In none of these senses, however, is dao understood as equivalent to God in the Judaic-Christian sense. The concept of tian (heaven) in the Chinese cultural universe is seen as part of the natural world, with no implication of transcendental, supernatural or metaphysical properties. In the Chinese sense, as Moeller (2006: 17) notes, heaven ‘is not something transcendent, not something beyond or after this world, but the center of the world’s functioning’. This is because heaven in the Chinese cosmology is a part of nature, not a supernatural thing, and incorporates the natural environment of the sky, weather and the seasons. The operations of the universe, according to all Chinese philosophy and not only philosophical Daoism, are

as a natural course, in which the Judaic-Christian absolute and detached God simply has no place. Indeed, the dao inherent in the natural course of things is the obverse of an unchanging God. Hansen (1992: 208) captures these qualities of dao when he says that it ‘is not inherently a mystical concept, but it is natural and totalistic – and paradoxes lurk near by’. Not only is the concept of dao an instance of paradoxical integration but the relations between dao and its correlative concept de is also paradoxical.

The text of Daodejing is made of two parts, Dao, comprising 37 chapters, and De, comprising 44. Whereas dao is typically translated as ‘the way’, de is mostly translated as ‘virtue’, but not in the moral sense. De can be understood as indicating the virtue or nature of a thing, because it is in ‘virtue of its [de] that a thing is what it is’ (Lau 1963a: xxxvii). Another dimension of de is captured by Waley (1956: 31, 32), who holds that de ‘is bound up with the idea of potentiality’ and that it means a ‘latent power, a “virtue” inherent in something’. In order to avoid confining de to conventional interpretations as morality or virtue as a value, Waley translated it as ‘power’, and in his translation of Daodejing, first published in 1934, rendered the title in English as *The Way and its Power*. In a similar endeavour to avoid moral undertones, Moeller (2006: 42) translates de as ‘efficacy’. What is not clear in these considerations, however, is the relationship between the two concepts dao and de. It will be shown that not only are dao and de indispensable in understanding the text but also in paradoxically defining and supporting each other.

Lau’s (1963a: xxxvii) view is fairly typical in the literature insofar as he holds that that the concept of de in Daodejing ‘is not a particularly important one and is often used in its most conventional senses’. Like the majority of commentators,



Lau focuses his discussion almost wholly on the concept of dao and fails to give equal attention to de, which is its due.

There is a line of interpretation which holds that the relationship between dao and de is that of generality to specificity, or, as Roger Ames (1986: 331) has it, dao denotes the universal while de a particular. A refinement of this outlook claims that dao provisions de, in the sense indicated by Fung Yu-lan (1952: 180) when he says that de 'is what individual objects obtain from [dao] and thereby become that they are'. This position is set out more fully by Chan (1963: 11) when he says:

te is Tao endowed in the individual things. While Tao is common to all, it is what each thing has obtained from Tao, or its te, that makes it different from others. Te is then the individualizing factor, the embodiment of definite principles which give things their determinate features or characters.

The apparent metaphysical tone of this account is avoided when the relationship between dao and de is seen as that between field and focus, as in David Hall's (1987: 169) conceptualisation of it, in which the whole is comprised of particulars while the character of a particular is determined by its context which is the whole. The relation between dao and de, then, is not only interdependent and dynamic, rather than being mutually exclusive and reducible, as Lai (2000: 145) notes, but neither concept is dominant over the other. The complete interdependence of dao and de is indicated in the fact that dao endows de with its essential qualities, and it is through de that dao is concretely represented and individualised. The relations between them, then, are, both contrastive and also interdependent (Lai 2008: 85), with the particularity or de paradoxically contributing to the whole or dao, and at the same time the whole or dao can be seen as manifest through the elemental component or de.

It is important to clarify the relationship between the concepts *dao* and *de* in *Daodejing* because it constitutes an instance of a more general manifestation of contrasting couples that can be located throughout the text. Sagacity is contrasted with ignorance (Laozi 1963: 23), self-effacement with illustriousness (Laozi 1963: 27), the female with the male (Laozi 1963: 33), the submissive with the powerful (Laozi 1963: 50), and so on. A common feature of the treatment of such contrasting couples in *Daodejing* is an apparent preference in the text for the lower term in the couple. Although he misses this fact in the relationship between *dao* and *de* Lau (1963a: xix) notices that in general in *Daodejing* ‘the lower terms are thought of as far more useful’. Schwartz (1985: 203) agrees with this view when he says ‘[i]n all cases, the first term of the dyad is definitely “preferred”’. According to this line of interpretation, then, the soft, undefined and fluid are given philosophical priority over the hard, the clearly defined and the solid. This is to say that in *Daodejing* a stand is effectively taken on the relative value of the things referred to, preferring one over the other.

The position stated above maintains that in its treatment of the items presented in a number of couples or dyads *Daodejing* supports the lower or weaker side against the higher or stronger side. This interpretation is widely represented in the literature and indicates a good deal about the social perspective and political stand of *Daodejing*. Without overturning this view but adding a methodological dimension to it Hansen, however, has noticed that:

The emphasis on *wu*, submissiveness, the Yin, female, dark, water-like values is not there because these distinctions are constant. It is there only as a

heuristic corrective to our conventional presuppositions of what has positive value (Hansen 1992: 225).

In this passage Hansen contributes two important qualifications to the more conventional reading of the treatment of contrasting qualities in Daodejing. First, the conceptual dyads should not be seen as referring to enduring relationships. Indeed, it is frequently mentioned in Daodejing that there is no constancy in things themselves or in the relations between things. The easy becomes difficult, the weak become strong, each state or condition is necessarily temporary and yields to a different and frequently contrasting state or condition (Laozi 1963: 6, 70, 71, 83). The second thing that Hansen mentions, which is implied in the first but less frequently noted in the literature, is that the conventional or prevailing perception of worldly qualities can benefit from an agnostic debunking perspective, and this Daodejing provides.

The point to take from this discussion is that Daodejing points not to the moral virtue or social value of subordination over domination, as a political reading of the text supposes, but to the paradox that the limitations of insufficiency, for instance, may not be greater than the problems of abundance. But even this reading of Daodejing is incomplete. The method of the text is not simply to locate and identify paradox. It is to provide a comprehensive account of the unending process of paradox in paradoxical integration. The term 'integration' in the concept 'paradoxical integration' indicates not a resolution of or solution to any given paradox, but the non-contradictory or non-destructive correspondence of opposites in a single thing or event at a given moment in time. Paradoxes are never finally resolved, according to Daodejing, but continually reproduced in the unending flux and process of the world.

The concept of paradoxical integration, then, is arguably the most significant feature of *Daodejing*, even though seldom systematically treated or appreciated. In the following section of this chapter three distinct forms of paradoxical integration that are given expression in *Daodejing* will be outlined and then discussed in the context of social analysis.

### **Forms of Paradoxical Integration and Social Analysis**

The types or forms of paradoxical integration identified in the following discussion are first, ‘interdependency of opposites’ (*xiangfan xiangyi*); second, ‘generation’ (*xiangfan xiangsheng* or *xiangfan xiangcheng*), or one thing becoming something else; and third, ‘reversal’ (*fanzhuan*), or one thing giving access to its opposite. These distinct forms of paradoxical integration are particularly relevant for social science analysis, as we shall see, but they are not the only ones that could be identified in the text of *Daodejing*. Apart from the fact that each of the three types discussed here could be divided into additional distinct forms, giving rise to a greater number of types, a focus on aspects of relations not highlighted in the following discussion would locate different types of paradoxical integration. For instance, the paradox of *wuwei*, indicating that the non-interventionist activity of rule-ship enhances productive governance (Laozi 1963: 6, 55), is essential for understanding *Daodejing*’s political theory – and the *laissez-faire* market economy – but not so important for social analysis, and therefore not pursued here. The three types of paradoxical integration identified here will be discussed in turn.

The paradoxical integration of ‘interdependency of opposites’ refers to the ways in which each element of a pair of opposed things requires the other element of

the pair for its meaning or purpose. This type of relationship is indicated in Daodejing through a number of images. Social positional differences, which would ordinarily be seen as opposed and mutually exclusive, are noted in chapter 39 to require each other: ‘the superior must have the inferior as root; the high must have the low as base’ (Laozi 1963: 46). As well as indicating such social structural paradoxes of opposites in interdependent integration, socially relevant categories are also shown to be mutually supportive while being semantically opposed. Chapter 2 states that:

[as soon as people] knew beauty as ‘beauty’; at that moment ‘ugliness’ was already there. Once all knew goodness as ‘goodness’; at that moment ‘not good’ was already there (Laozi 1999: 53).

Moral and aesthetic categories, according to Daodejing, acquire their meaning partly through the co-relative categories to which they are opposed. This is not necessarily an argument about the nature of ethics or aesthetics, but rather Daodejing provides a statement concerning the mutual dependence of contrastive terms for their meaning.

The importance of background in providing the meaning or sense of a thing is indicated further in chapter 41 when it is stated that ‘the sheerest whiteness seems sullied’ (Laozi 1963: 48) in the absence of a contrasting dark background to provide definition to the white object. The image here is a simple one but its meaning is profound which indicates that the mutual dependence of opposites is not aberrant but a necessary aspect of social processes and meaning. Other instances of the paradoxical integration of ‘interdependency of opposites’ can be found in Daodejing, including the idea in chapter 36, that to weaken a thing it must first be strengthened (Laozi 1963: 41). But this particular statement can be interpreted also to indicate that

one thing may become something quite different, even opposed. This is the second type of paradoxical integration, of generation, to be summarised here.

The paradoxical integration of generation is concerned with the way in which one thing can become something else, especially its opposite. In its most general form this paradoxical integration is expressed in Daodejing in the statement that ‘Something and Nothing produce each other’ (Laozi 1963: 6; see also 47). This abstract claim has three different types of concrete expression in Daodejing, namely in terms of functionality, development and consequence. Paradoxical integration of generation through functionality is indicated in the literal functionality of ‘nothing’ or absence in chapter 11, but the implication of the statement, as it becomes clear, is broader in so far as things that have no meaning or purpose by themselves can in combination function to generate a meaningful and purposeful object. The chapter opens with the words: ‘Thirty spokes share one hub’ (Laozi 1963: 15). A hub, however, is an empty space, but when an axel is inserted in the space it has the function of making the cart move forward. Similarly, the empty space made by kneading clay, when put to the purpose of storing or cooking, provides ‘use of [a] vessel’, as cutting doors and windows in walls will ‘make a room’. By adapting an empty space to a ‘purpose in hand’ then a cart or a pot or a room are created (Laozi 1963: 15). In finding a purpose for something that thing becomes something else.

Paradoxical integration of generation through development is a form of a unity of opposites quite different from what is produced by functionality. Daodejing frequently refers to the dynamism and complexity of natural things, to the fact that dao is ‘broad’ and reaches to the ‘left as well as [to the] right’ (Laozi 1963: 39). In Daodejing natural things include those things that ‘naturally’ occur in society, such as industrial skills, and laws. While a thing may develop of its own accord its

relationship with other things is likely to change as a consequence. Indeed, in that sense a thing may develop from one thing into its opposite. Thus in chapters 63 and 64 is the caution to act in a timely way, ‘to deal with a situation before symptoms develop’ (Laozi 1963: 71) because ‘difficult things ... have their beginnings in the easy; big things ... in the small’ (Laozi 1963: 70).

As well as the fact that something may develop from being a positive (or negative) thing in its relationship with a person into a negative (or positive) thing, it is also possible that a thing will paradoxically generate its opposite as a consequence of its operation. In this case a fixed human subject does not encounter a thing which changes through its internal dynamic or development, but rather the intrinsic or fixed properties of a thing generates its opposite as a consequence of its operation in a given social context. This is partly the paradox of unintended consequences, but the consequences in the case of generative consequence are paradoxical because they are negative outcomes of an ostensibly positive development which must be re-evaluated once the consequences are known. In chapter 18, for example, it is indicated that ‘when cleverness emerges there is great hypocrisy’ (Laozi 1963: 22), and in chapter 57 that ‘the better known the laws and edicts the more thieves and robbers there are’ (Laozi 1963: 64). Cleverness and law are typically regarded as things that are to be valued in their own right. But when they are contextualised in terms of their full consequences for society an irresolvable paradox is revealed which requires a reconsideration of the original evaluation.

The paradoxical integration of ‘reversal’ refers to the way in which one thing gives access to its opposite. The opposition between the elements of this paradoxical integration is one of unlikely complementarity. The opposition between the elements of the paradoxical integration of ‘reversal’ is not necessary, as with the

‘interdependency of opposites’ nor is it the result of a transformation of one element into something else, as with ‘generation’. Here the integration of the elements in the paradox of ‘reversal’ derives from the fact that human agents exercise a strategic choice in using one element to access its contrary. Indeed, the point is made in Daodejing chapter 40 that this is a core aspect of its philosophy: ‘Reversion is how the dao moves forward, weakness or softness is the means it employs’ (Laozi 1963: 47; 1999: 130). In order to achieve a purpose, one may apparently move away from one’s goal, in overcoming an adversary one may be strategically compliant; in neither case is the goal forsaken or ultimate strength absent. As Angus Graham (1989: 228-229) notes: ‘The reversal smashes the dichotomy of A and B; in preferring to be submissive the sage does not cease to be oriented towards strength, for he recognises that surviving by yielding to a rising power is the road to victory over it when its climax is past’. The paradoxical integration of reversal, as stated in chapter 22, indicates how ‘stepping aside keeps one’s wholeness intact. Bending makes one straight’ (Laozi 1999: 88).

The strategic dimension of reversal is essential in Daoist military thought, indicated in Daodejing chapters 68, 69 and 73, in which non-contention and avoiding the enemy are shown to be the paradoxical means of achieving military victory (Laozi 1963: 75, 76, 80). This position is developed and given full exposition in China’s classic military hand-book, Sunzi Bingfa or Art of War (Tao 2000). But the application of reversal is by no means confined to the military arena or strategic considerations that arise in conscious deliberation over means to achieve particular goals or purposes. In Daodejing it is shown that the paradox of reversal may come from the choices inherent in a value position or a general social orientation. In chapter 22 the non-assertive demeanor of the sage is the source of his efficacy: ‘He



does not show himself, and so is conspicuous; he does not consider himself right, and so is illustrious' (Laozi 1963: 27). Even more remote from deliberative decision itself, the need for strategic reversal is in the changeability of circumstances noted in chapter 58: 'it is on disaster that good fortune perches; it is beneath good fortune that disaster crouches' (Laozi 1963: 65). The strategic requirement of flexibility in such circumstances, as noted in chapter 76, means that one must be supple or pliant rather than hard, stiff or conventionally strong in order to overcome disaster or any other force that is resisted, opposed or generally needing to be dealt with (Laozi 1963: 83; 1999: 184).

The paradoxical integration of reversal is most clearly expressed in those chapters of *Daodejing* in which submissiveness, non-assertiveness and weakness are indicated as strategic choices in overcoming hardness and strength. In the circumstances of subordination or changing fortunes the need to overcome the existing strength or power of an adversary provokes the choice of adopting the opposite orientation of compliant softness. The adoption of such an approach, of employing non-assertive means, in turn provides access to the power of patient perseverance and ultimate strength which serves in the end to exercise real power over the other. Very similar phrases, concerning how the submissive and weak can overcome the hard and the strong, are used in chapters 36, 43 and 78 (Laozi 1963: 41, 50, 85) to make this point. In the last of these chapters the image of water is used to show the force of the paradox of strategic reversal, for there is 'nothing more submissive and weak than water' and yet 'for attacking that which is hard and strong nothing can surpass it' (Laozi 1963: 85). It was noted above that *Daodejing's* strategic reversal of force and submission, power and weakness does not indicate a preference for submission and weakness. It indicates rather an acknowledgement of

the importance of an appreciation of the paradoxical nature of each of these things and the inherent possibility of reversal in all socio-political situations.

It is important to indicate that the paradox of reversal does not point in the direction of a recurring or repetitive cycle, as some traditional interpretations maintain. Nor does it derive from an idea in Daodejing that, as unintended consequences follow any action, then the best strategy to achieve a purpose is to do the opposite of directly attempting to reach a goal, as Xiaogan Liu (1998: 219-220), maintains. Nor, even more pessimistically, is the paradox of reversal engaged out of the belief that ‘taking action will necessarily result in failures’, as Ren Jiyu (1995: 10) supposes, and that ‘for this reason ... the negative means of “nonaction” [will avoid] dangers created by transformation’. As we have seen above, the concept of reversal in Daodejing is orientated to the awareness that no matter how solid and strong the politically and socially powerful might be, their circumstances will change, and in that change strategic opportunities for reversal can be found.

It can be mentioned in passing that the Daoist paradox of reversal has for nearly 3,000 years given comfort and psychological support to generations of Chinese people. The paradox of reversal teaches that even the most difficult times will manifest a course of development in which effortless actions that follow a natural or unfolding process can achieve change without forcing unnecessary risks. This approach, then, offers a course toward victory or success without unnecessary loss or self-destruction. That the paradox of reversal has been a historically important element of Chinese culture is noted by Dan Lusthaus (1990: 207) when he says that it ‘was frequently seen throughout China’s history as a strategy for subversion, which in a sense it is. What is suppressed and forced under will eventually overcome. This is as much a psychological fact as a political reality’.

It has been shown in this section that the concept of paradoxical integration drawn from Daodejing can be operationalised in terms of at least three distinct forms, what are called here ‘interdependency of opposites’, ‘generation’, and ‘reversal’. This is not an exhaustive typology but it is a particularly useful one for social analysis. This last claim can be supported by showing the ways in which the approach to paradoxical integration set out here is already practiced in social theory, even though incompletely. The argument is not that there is awareness amongst social scientists of Daodejing as a source of social science methodology. Rather it can be demonstrated that the concepts of paradoxical integration described here, although not the terms used here nor the sources drawn upon in this discussion, but certainly the concepts, have in effect been critically applied by major social scientists in important publications. In what follows two publications indicating the importance of paradoxical integration will be considered.

Social science and cultural studies at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first could not avoid the impact of information technology, the enormously increased flow of goods and services between countries and the deregulation of financial and labour markets within major economies in the formation of a globalised world in which networks and trans-nationality displaced local identities and bounded cultural mores and tastes, as discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis. The predominant image of the social world inherent in these globalisation theories is one of disappearing social boundaries which have been overcome by global flows and networks. But the linear projections that underpin much of globalisation theory ignore the paradoxes inherent in all social developments and the integration of those paradoxes in a multifaceted and complex social world in which opposites are interdependent, generative of each other and in which reversal is

always likely. Aspects of such paradoxical integration have been highlighted in an important paper by sociologist Bryan Turner (2007: 287) in which he shows that 'globalization paradoxically produces significant forms of immobility for political regulation of persons alongside the mobility of goods and services'.

The concept of 'enclave society' developed by Turner is not an alternative to the concept of globalisation but to the characterisation of the global world in terms of mobility (Urry 2000), trans-nationality and cultural cosmopolitanism. Following Ronen Shamir (2005) Turner (2007: 290) argues that in addition to forms of mobility globalisation also involves 'closure, entrapment and containment' (see also Fulcher 2000: 434-435). Turner (2007: 290) defines 'enclave society' as one in which:

governments and other agencies seek to regulate spaces and, where necessary, to immobilize flows of people, goods and services. These sequestrations, exclusions and closures are: (1) military-political; (2) social and cultural; and (3) biological. To describe these processes that seek to exercise governmentality, often in extreme form, over populations by enclosure, bureaucratic barriers, legal exclusions and registrations, we can invent the general idea of modern 'enclavement' as a set of strategies and tactics for both domestic and international regulation.

It can be seen that the theory of enclave society Turner develops is wide ranging and it is not possible to treat all of its dimensions here. Those aspects of enclave society that directly relate to paradoxical integration will be discussed below.

In advancing the concept of enclave society Turner points to a number of contradictions and paradoxes. The opportunities provided by the increased mobility within a globalised world for the movement of criminal activity, for instance, disease, illegal migration and political terrorism across borders gives rise to the need

for states to increasingly engage techniques of containment (Turner 2007: 290), thus there arises in the progression of globalisation itself, with its attendant consequences ‘a profound contradiction between the economic requirements of flexibility and fluidity and the state’s objective of defending its territorial sovereignty’ (Turner 2007: 288). This logical contradiction which Turner identifies he appropriately describes as ‘the paradox that globalization also produces new systems of closure’ (Turner 2007: 289), which is an instance of what was identified above as a paradoxical integration of generation. This general paradox of globalisation is associated with a number of particular paradoxes which Turner identifies. Two in particular will be outlined here.

A ‘central paradox of labour migration’, Turner (2007: 293) says, is that while the ‘labour markets of the advanced economies depend on high levels of migration’ the resulting global migration of the twentieth century ‘has played a major role in the emergence of an enclave society’. The need for migrant labour arises through the aging population of advanced economies and the reluctance of local workers in those economies to perform unskilled and dirty labour. The influx of large numbers of foreign single male workers in European and North American cities has led to a perception that migrant-dominated suburbs in those countries are areas of ‘poverty, prostitution, disease, drug offences and violence’ (Turner 2007: 289). At the same time, Turner continues, the ‘relationship between illegal or irregular migrant status and crime is particularly problematic’. The paradox indicated here and the state response to it of repression and containment is dramatically symbolised in the riots in 2005 which began in the Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois which is characterised by its large population of Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan migrants, and which quickly spread to other Parisian communities and then nationally

(Schneider 2008). The paradox of the global movement of migrant workers and their high incarceration rates, residential constraints and subjection to restrictive policies in the receiving societies arises in part from the pressures on Western governments from disaffected electorates to limit the rights, including welfare rights, of foreign workers (Turner 2007: 293-4).

An associated paradox which Turner (2007: 295) identifies comes out of the contradictory relationship within the modern state between ‘multiculturalism and migration, on the one hand, and order and sovereignty, on the other’. The modern state has economic interests which arise from the need to maintain economic growth and therefore facilitate the economic elite’s need to maintain flexible labour markets. This is partly achieved by encouraging labour migration. The modern state also has political interests that relate to a different section of the population than the economic elite, namely the electorate from which all modern governments seek the votes they require to hold office. An unintended consequence of the satisfaction of its economic interest is to produce ‘cultural diversity through labour migration’, which in turn undermines the state’s political interest in maintaining a ‘moral unity’ (Turner 2007: 295). Turner sees this contradiction as responsible for the state’s ‘priority to security over welfare and to public order over civil liberties’ which marks the behavior of states over the past decade or more in Europe, America and Australia. In the enclave society Turner (2007: 300) portrays how cultural differences become ‘institutionalized and produce fragmented, isolated, and underprivileged social groups’ with a realistic prospect for members of such groups of ‘a life in prisons, detention camps, inter-state zones, departure lounges and a variety of other intermediate, quasi-legal arenas’.

Turner's account of the 'enclave society' is a clear reminder that social developments, such as globalisation, cannot be simply characterised in terms of one of their consequences, such as mobility. A secondary characteristic of globalisation, which mobility generates and is therefore paradoxically integrated with it, which began to emerge in most advanced societies in the closing decades of the twentieth century, has been identified by Turner as the immobility of 'enclavement'. A quite different example of paradoxical integration is identified by the American sociologist Alvin Gouldner (1955) in a now classic discussion of bureaucracy. Like Turner, Gouldner identifies developmental trends which mainstream writers have either ignored or downplayed. Gouldner appreciates that within the development of bureaucracies paradoxical trends emerge and that opposite elements may exist interdependently.

Gouldner's article reviews and criticizes contemporary theories of organisation and bureaucracy. His complaint is that rather than adequately explain the social imperatives of organisation and the counter trends they are subject to 'the modern theory of group organization is [marked with] pessimism and fatalism' (Gouldner 1955: 498). After showing that bureaucracy cannot be seen as an expression of an organising propensity in human nature Gouldner goes on to discuss structural-functionalist approaches to bureaucracy and then turns his attention to the tradition of bureaucratic theory associated with Robert Michels. Michels was an early twentieth century sociologist who formulated the 'iron law of oligarchy' which claims that 'a system of leadership [in formal organization] is [universally] incompatible with the most essential postulates of democracy' (Michels quoted in Gouldner 1955: 503). In his discussion of Michels' approach to organisation theory Gouldner in effect indicates the significance of what has been identified above as the

paradoxical integration of interdependency of opposites and of generation in order to properly understand the processes of bureaucratisation.

In his discussion of Michels and other authors who follow Michels in discovering the oligarchic tendencies in modern organisational society Gouldner (1955: 506) notes a paradox that these authors ignore:

When, for example, Michels spoke of the 'iron law of oligarchy', he attended solely to the ways in which organizational needs inhibit democratic possibilities. But the very same evidence to which he called attention could enable us to formulate the very opposite theorem – the 'iron law of democracy'. Even as Michels himself saw, if oligarchical waves repeatedly wash away the bridges of democracy, this eternal recurrence can happen only because men doggedly rebuild them after each inundation.

Gouldner points out that Michels and those social scientists who adhere to his approach give their attention to only a single aspect of the process underlying social organisation. In considering only the sources of bureaucratic stability they ignore the contrasting forces of change and contestation. When Gouldner (1955: 506) says that there 'cannot be an iron law of oligarchy, however, unless there is an iron law of democracy' he is implicitly acknowledging the paradoxical integration of interdependency of opposites and of generation.

Since Gouldner wrote this article there has been increasing recognition of the importance of opposites in organisational tendencies. Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn (1988), in arguing for a theory of change in organisation and management research, utilize the concept of paradox to indicate that apparent contradictory and exclusive opposites in fact operate simultaneously in bringing about organisational change. And yet the absence of a more general appreciation of paradoxical



integration in the methodology of the social sciences permits a continuing dominance of logical projection or extension in social theory, which provides opportunities for occasional corrections, as in the essays of Bryan Turner and Alvin Gouldner, discussed above.

## **Conclusion**

Whereas Aristotle's law of contradiction contrasts with the theory of opposites or paradoxical integration in Daodejing it would be naïve to treat these two as responsible for a simple polarisation of contraction and exclusion between Western and Chinese thought. It has been noted in passing in discussion above that in Europe and America the influence of Daoist principles in philosophy, management practices, organisational theory, military strategy and sociology can be identified, even if those principles are not always self-consciously acknowledged. Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, one of the most important philosophical works of the twentieth century, drew heavily on Daodejing (Parkes 1990b), as indicated in chapter 4. SWOT analysis in management is augmented through the application of Chinese classical resources, especially Daodejing and also *Art of War*. It has also been shown that sociological analysis may develop a mode of argument parallel to paradoxical integration without itself having contact with Daoist thought, as in the examples of Turner's 'enclavement' and Gouldner's critique of the iron law of oligarchy. The success of these cases in supplementing narrower conventions supports the proposition that the concept of paradoxical integration deserves close attention in social theory.

The concept of paradoxical integration operates by transcending contradiction in both the Aristotelian sense of the impossibility of opposites and the Hegelian-

Marxian sense of the elimination of opposites. Marianne Lewis (2000: 773) notes that:

Conceptualizing paradox entails building constructs that accommodate contradictions. Rather than polarize phenomena into either/or notions, researches need to use both/and constructs for paradoxes, allowing for simultaneity and the study of interdependence.

Whereas recent developments in Western research and theory indicate that there is dissatisfaction with the traditional Aristotelian view that opposites necessarily exclude each other the conventional approach nevertheless remains in place even if occasionally challenged. The concept of paradoxical integration drawn from Daodejing is therefore significant in providing a methodological basis for re-orientating thinking in modern social sciences.

The notion of paradoxical integration entails that opposites are not necessarily mutually exclusive but that they can exist interdependently. It also indicates that opposites do not necessarily negate each other but that they may generate and produce each other. Opposites are capable of functioning in a cooperative and collaborative relationship. Instead of undermining each other they have the capacity to provide access to each other. The vitality of the notion of paradoxical integration also lies in its recognition of transformation in that opposites do not remain unchanged and that one thing may be transformed into another. The counter-intuitive relationships that constitute paradoxical integration and the concept of reversal internal to it extend and challenge conventional views concerning the lower terms of the couple 'strong and weak', subverting and countering social conventions concerning established norms and rules.

The notion of paradoxical integration demonstrates the enduring significance of philosophical Daoism and suggests a legacy which could have enormous benefits for the development of social theory outside China.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion of this thesis is also the conclusion of a personal journey which parallels the arguments set out in the chapters above. Opportunities provided by globalisation brought me to Sydney from China seventeen years ago. I grew up in a China dominated by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966 to 1976 and its aftermath. By the early 1980s China had increasingly begun to re-enter the circuits of globalisation, and through this movement a process of transformation was initiated that is still unfolding. My education in China brought me into contact with the English language and literature. After arriving in Australia I trained to be a teacher. Having now taught for more than ten years both mathematics and Chinese language at a Sydney high school, as well as teaching part-time in the School of Humanities and Languages at the University of Western Sydney in courses on Chinese language, literature, cinema, traditional thought and culture, I came to realise that elements of China's intellectual heritage could potentially strengthen aspects of the more analytic and abstract form that is characteristic of Western thinking. While agreeing that these two traditions often operate from quite different assumptions, it became clear to me that aspects of Chinese thought were not simply different from the English-speaking world's intellectual styles but that the differences could complement each other; in particular, Chinese concepts could provide dimensions of sensibility which would enhance an understanding of the issues dealt with by disciplines developed in Western traditions.

While my experience of globalisation is of course recent it is by no means an historically new phenomenon, as shown in chapter 1. It has, however, become a pivotal topic of academic discussion since the 1990s. This has promoted an upsurge of theorising about globalisation. The predominant conceptions and treatments of globalisation in these discussions have to a large extent been concerned with its economic dimensions (Robinson 2001; Sassen 1991; Sklair 2002) and also its consequences for popular culture (Appadurai 1990; Appadurai 1996; Berger 1997; Featherstone 1995; Hannerz 1990; Meyer 2000). These are not surprising focuses of research and commentary since globalisation is experienced in terms of the international mobility of workers – unskilled, skilled and professional – and of finance capital and consumer goods across the globe, and also the expansion and seeming homogenisation of popular culture across regions and national boundaries. What is less discussed, however, are the flows of knowledge and therefore the asymmetric dispersion of knowledge production which affect societies and cultures at a deeper level. Those aspects of globalisation which typically draw attention, including the advent of trans-national economies and popular culture, are not separate from the complexions of knowledge production and flows. This extension of knowledge into economy and culture is noted by Gerard Delanty (2005: 5) when he says that '[w]e are living in a society which is as much characterized by the production of knowledge as anything else'. Indeed, as he emphasises in another source, knowledge 'is central to the information economy, to telecommunication systems, to technological systems, to politics, to everyday life' (Delanty 2001: 152). The contribution to the discussion of globalisation made by this thesis is in the way in which it directs attention to the question of knowledge flows in general and the consequential conceptual transformations in particular which have far-reaching

political, cultural and intellectual significance, but which have not previously been extensively studied nor given a central place in discussion of globalisation, either historically or in the present-day context.

It is easy to form a sense that there is geographic dispersion of knowledge and information which occurs through global processes that is random or unstructured. It is shown in the discussion in chapters 1 and 2, however, that a pattern of geographic dispersion emerges in which theories, concepts and methodologies employed by social and cultural researchers globally are predominantly generated in North America and Western Europe and disseminated to the rest of the world. The universities and institutions with internationally influential impact, primarily situated in the metropole of political and economic power concentrations, become intellectual depots which attract international scholars and students who then become conduits through which such knowledges are diffused to their countries of origin. In this situation they are potential intellectual entrepreneurs, a function and practice outlined in chapter 3.

The purpose of the thesis is not to lament the asymmetrical distribution of knowledge under globalisation but rather to consider the means through which it operates. Globalisation in its present form is not perceived in this thesis as a completed and closed process but as one that is on-going. The significance of this perspective lies in the vision that globalisation provides opportunities or channels through which new circuits of knowledge production might be forged. The conceptual tool of ‘paradoxical integration’, which is developed in this thesis, is exercised throughout in the sense that negativity can be turned into positivity, that an unfavourable present situation can lead to favourable future prospects and problems can be transformed into solutions. Possibilities and opportunities arise for the

incorporation of non-Western concepts into dominant theories. The discussion of the thesis has focused exclusively on Chinese concepts, for reasons that are indicated throughout. The point to make here is that through the application of foreign concepts into mainstream theory the problem of asymmetrical knowledge flows is addressed from a critical but constructive point of view and, what is more significant, existing theories are not only revitalised, transformed and augmented but also their sophistication is enhanced. This critique of an asymmetric distribution of knowledge flows does not fall into the confinement of a democratic appeal for a 'fair share' of theories and ideas from different cultures to be represented as 'global knowledge'. Rather, the approach adopted here opens up possibilities for alternative or new perspectives to be developed in understanding social and cultural relationships, procedures and processes through an incorporation into existing theories of concepts which can 'add value' to the common stock of social theory.

Scholars such as Raewyn Connell and Arjun Appadurai question the universality of Western theory and call for the democratisation of social and cultural studies. Connell in particular indicates the potential for the development of a globalised social science by drawing on a number of intellectual traditions including Islamic, Indian, Latin American and African. Rather than simply advocating the possibility of extending Western theory through democratic inclusion of notions and concepts from non-Western sources this thesis goes further to show how an integration and reformulation of mainstream or Western theory can be achieved and how 'indigenous', in this case, Chinese concepts can be utilised in the development and transformation of social science. Through the mutation of non-Western concepts incorporated into social theory the resulting formulations can no longer be characterised simply as Western or metropolitan.

The direct applicability of Western theory to non-Western regions has been questioned by a number of writers who argue for the recognition or development of local theory and method to meet local needs. Few of these, however, have explored the possibility of the general applicability of concepts of non-Western origin to the further development of Western-sourced theory in a global context. This thesis demonstrates that there is such a possibility by showing the potential of selected Chinese concepts to reveal an intellectual competence and research capability which have general applicability and significance in the advancement of a more global social science. The thesis argues for conceptual innovation and refinement of social and cultural theory so that previously neglected or partially explored elements can be identified, and then understood more fully so that the explanatory and analytical power of existing theory can be strengthened.

The case study in chapter 2, of the Chinese concept of *guanxi*, provides an empirical analysis of knowledge flows in a contemporary situation. The review of 214 refereed journal articles, in which *guanxi* appears as a key term, confirms the continuance and persistence of asymmetrical knowledge flows in social and management science. While there is a significant apprehension of the Chinese concept of *guanxi* in research reported in English-language journals the theoretical discussion in these papers remains unaffected by the heuristic possibilities of the concept. This finding supports the argument of chapter 1, namely that broader implications of non-Western concepts are overlooked by mainstream theories and therefore opportunities are not utilised for the intellectual expansion of these theories. The thesis does not simply focus on a criticism of the asymmetrical distribution of knowledge flows, however. Chapter 2 proceeds to discuss the potential contribution to the social sciences through theoretical modification or



transformation by arguing that the nuanced properties and characteristics of a concept such as *guanxi* can refine and invigorate social theory because of the particular understanding of trust, mutual obligation and reciprocity it opens up. The thesis therefore makes a contribution to the literature by demonstrating that it is necessary to consider how foreign concepts can facilitate the achievement of theory development. But the thesis does not only do this. The method developed in chapter 2 provides a means of incorporating Chinese concepts into mainstream theory which is applied in later chapters. Not only this chapter, then, but the thesis as a whole proposes an approach and technique which shows how foreign concepts may be integrated into dominant Western theories.

Any discussion of the assimilation of foreign concepts into a different intellectual culture is required to identify the mechanisms through which concepts are ‘diffused’ from one context to another. Chapter 3 makes a contribution to our understanding of these processes by identifying and examining the role of ‘intellectual entrepreneurs’ in knowledge transfer. The concept of intellectual entrepreneur is developed in order to explain the way in which foreign concepts were adapted by Chinese intellectuals from the mid-nineteenth century. At this time China was under incursion from foreign powers. The historical encounter between China on the one hand and Europe and America on the other is examined in order to identify the processes through which alien concepts are incorporated into existing theoretical frameworks, which are themselves transformed in the process. The argument of the chapter indicates that foreign theories and concepts which are successfully assimilated are neither automatically received into Chinese culture nor simply imposed on Chinese people by foreign force. Chinese intellectual entrepreneurs made a conscious effort to select particular concepts from Western resources which they

thought would help strengthen and advance China. Not only did they carefully make selections of concepts drawn from foreign ideas but combined them with appropriate Chinese concepts. In this process both the foreign and local concepts were transformed and a new set of concepts were formed through a synthesis of both foreign and local ones which were often quite distinct from the original concepts. European and American notions were not simply transplanted to Chinese soil but instead were integrated and synthesized with elements of China's intellectual heritage. In this way the foreign ideas in question ceased to be merely alien. This is because by being adapted to the local cognitive framework and value system they integrated aspects of the original context which is in turn revitalised through the infusion of new elements.

The discussion of the processes through which foreign concepts were diffused into China reveals the general mechanisms by which concepts from one culture are appropriated and then assimilated into a receiving culture, a process through which the receiving culture is itself transformed. The nature and activities of intellectual entrepreneurs are identified in the chapter, which highlights their endeavours to overcome the resistance of the receiving culture. Intellectual entrepreneurs are the key players in this process who initiate, facilitate and carry out conceptual transformation and amalgamation that accompanies and realises cultural borrowing. Intellectual entrepreneurs effectively utilise foreign ideas and synthesise them with already existing ideas in order to address immediate and local problems. In doing so, however, they generated enduring intellectual and cultural change. Foreign ideas are adapted to a new context and crucially the resistance of the receiving culture or framework is overcome through the efforts of intellectual entrepreneurs. The contribution made by the thesis in part lies in its identification

and illumination of these mechanisms through which the diffusion of concepts from one culture to another occurs. The identification of the role of intellectual entrepreneurs and the treatment of the processes they initiate has wide future application in understanding social and cultural change through inter-cultural concept transfer.

While foreign ideas were integrated into Chinese intellectual traditions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – a process which still continues – the Chinese intellectual heritage paradoxically remains distinctive. This is a broader issue which is discussed in detail in chapter 4. Once again the methodological value of the notion of paradoxical integration is manifest. The long historical processes that resulted in the sinicisation of Buddhism, discussed in the chapter, confirm the role of intellectual entrepreneurs in the diffusion of new ideas and the chapter provides additional case material. But the additional questions raised by considering the difficulties Buddhism faced in becoming integrated into Chinese culture point to the paradox of a profound transformation in the Chinese intellectual, religious and cultural landscape on the one hand, which was achieved, on the other, through the endurance, persistence and dominance of a distinctive framework that can be described as the Chinese intellectual heritage. The identification of this framework and the understanding that it is not a ‘thing’ but rather a ‘process’ of a paradigmatic nature, makes an important contribution to the study of cultural persistence and change. The particular intellectual contours of the Chinese intellectual heritage which continue through time include a focus on the concrete and practical rather than the abstract, in a perception of interconnectedness and a concern with how different or opposed things co-exist interdependently. The facilitating context of relative geographic isolation, an empire-wide agrarian economic base with little need of overseas trade, and particular

properties of social structure and language are shown to provide a framework in which characteristic patterns of intellectual and cultural change occur. The Chinese intellectual heritage, therefore, is more a persisting manner of change than an enduring and singular set of ossified ideas or practices. In this way transformations in Chinese culture paradoxically draw upon enduring properties of a Chinese intellectual heritage which provides the means through which such change is achieved.

The distinctive properties of the Chinese intellectual heritage identified in chapter 4, including the preference for concreteness rather than abstraction and interconnectedness rather than separateness, indicate the qualities that Chinese concepts can bring to the development of social theory. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 provide clear and detailed demonstrations of how concepts carefully selected from the Chinese intellectual heritage can augment, reorientate and revitalise social and cultural theory. These chapters show how integration of Chinese concepts into mainstream social theory enhances the explanatory powers of the latter and enrich both the breadth and depth of its apprehension of social phenomena. In this way the theories in question are transformed.

In each of these three chapters a particular concept is examined, its background elaborated and the value of applying it to the issues dealt with by social theory demonstrated. It is not necessary to here repeat what is shown in these chapters about the concepts of face (*mianzi*), heart-mind (*xin*) and paradoxical integration (*fanhe*). The general conclusion to draw from this discussion is that both substantive and methodological innovation is possible in social theory through the integration of selected Chinese concepts in analysis, comparison and explanation. In each of these chapters there is not only a discussion of the particular concept under

consideration but also a meaningful contribution to the discussion respectively of self and self-image, emotion and rationality, and approaches to complex social trends and processes that contributes to the progression of relevant conversations in social theory. It is worth dwelling on the concept of paradoxical integration in this context, because in many ways this notion summarises the concerns of the thesis in its entirety.

The notion of paradoxical integration is drawn from Daodejing, an ancient text which some writers, following Joseph Needham (1956), see as a statement of proto-science in early China. The concept provides a durable methodological tool for understanding complexity and difference in social processes and thereby encourages a re-orientation of thinking in modern social science. It does this by both sensitising us to similar existing treatments in social theory that otherwise are not noted for this characteristic approach and also by encouraging a direct consideration of how difference and apparent contradiction in social developments might be understood and theorised. The counter-intuitive qualities embodied in the concept of paradoxical integration, and its associated concepts of internal relations discussed in chapter 7, challenge conventional approaches and reorientate understanding in a manner that leads to continuing re-evaluation of received wisdoms, subverting and reshaping social perceptions and thought. These ideas have the capacity to contribute to social theory well beyond their traditional applications.

The present thesis has developed an approach to conceptual transfer in theory development and gives prominence to alternative way of characterising social phenomena. Other Chinese concepts such as wuwei (effortless action), ziran (spontaneity, so-it-be, natural flow of things), qi (energy flow) and so on could be similarly developed for re-conceptualisation of mainstream theories. The exploratory

work conducted within this thesis points the way to future investigations in which concepts drawn from other cultures, apart from Chinese, can be selected, integrated and diffused into standard or mainstream theories. This thesis has demonstrated by method and example the means through which concepts from other cultures can be responsible for a re-invigoration of empirical research and theory construction. The range or scope of the theories brought into this endeavour can be amplified and their depth of analysis can be extended, depending on the format of research and exposition and also the intentions of the researcher. The present thesis, though, has shown that alien concepts need not be outsiders in theory development and that the goal of social theory to extend explanatory powers may be attained by incorporating non-standard concepts, drawn from other cultures.

Concepts are the cells that theories are constituted by and through which they have intellectual and ultimately social life. Conceptual innovation and refinement invigorates theories and enhances their competence and their capacity for identifying, understanding and explaining social and cultural phenomenon, relationships and characteristics. The project carried out in this thesis may serve the purpose of stimulating and encouraging subsequent research that draws on and integrates concepts from other cultures to lead to an improved, refined and reinvigorated approach to social analysis that will affect the quality and direction of knowledge flow.

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