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Uncanny Encountering between the East and the West: The Search for Oriental Eyes

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I. Introduction

As intellectuals living in this post-modern, globalized era, we need to think seriously about the concept of discourse. According to the basic assumption of Occidentalism proposed as a counter discourse to Orientalism, no cultural performative acts contain any essentialist value in themselves. Thus the dialogic relationship ought to be reconstructed in order to disclose the functional meaning inherent in them. Viewed from this point, Orientalism is delicately interwoven with Occidentalist discourse where third world intellectuals arbitrarily misused their Western counterpart with a particular political purpose. In this sense, the act and process of inventing the 'other' is bilateral; both are appropriating their imaginary other with explicit political purposiveness. It is discernable that despite the surface difference between these two postcolonial discourses, the underlying mechanism leading toward their intended political interpretation in the real cultural arena seems homogeneous. In summation, it is the form, not the content, of thinking that determines the genuine performative effect of any particular cultural act. Thus, no comparative analysis between East Asian and Western cultures can be immune from the issue of discourse.

The tendency to think about and even imagine the surrounding world in terms of ideologically constructed forms of discourse, rather than devising particular forms of discourse based on the 'real,' obliges one to be aware of the very fact that that form of discourse is secretly intervening into every corner of daily life. (This argument presupposes the basic assumption that the 'world' is not materialistic in the sense that there exists no substantial entity inherent in it.) Following this argument, the validity

and rationale of any theoretical inquiries are more important than tentative solutions for them. Along this line, clarifying the significance of interpreting the world is necessary since understanding the 'real' can be neither separate from, nor directly connected to it. If so, then what should the significance of our hermeneutic act ultimately be? Considering all these complicated mechanisms associated with 'knowing,' holding diversified political views cannot but be reduced to the subject of 'culture' simply because culture by its own definition may indicate 'the accumulated layers of understanding the world.'

It is for this particular reason that any discussion of postcolonial issues should encompass a close theoretical examination of non-Western cultural assumptions, together with more explicit themes of Oriental/Occidental appropriation of the other culture. Strictly speaking, cultural distortion and/or appropriation are contingent to political purposiveness. Therefore, labeling them either as enlightenment projects or imperialist designs is not quite significant. (It may always happen that two mutually antagonistic political postures employ the precisely homogeneous narrative tactic. In that case, how to name the latter falls purely in the speculative realm, ever changing with no fixed substance.) Considering this theoretical assumption, truly essentialist efforts to transcend post-colonialism ought to begin with a search for different epistemological horizons, i.e., *the restoration of old forgotten eyes*. It is noticeable that contemporary literary trends are heavily loaded with socio-cultural issues. However, phenomena are, as Chuang Tzu indicates, simply "the guest of reality." In fact, debates on 'empty names' with no serious reflection on the base might quite possibly turn the critical function of literary study upside down.

Another theoretical assumption we can locate in postcolonial discourse is its interpretative positionality regulating the relationship between center and periphery. Should any ideological appropriation occur in the process of the peripheric Orient being relegated into the other by the Western center, similar kinds of ideological distortions will appear within the Occidentalism discourse. In other words, the East appearing in the imagination of the West or vice versa manifests politically (un)conscious acts. For this argument to be acceptable, however, there must exist an indisputable split between the thinking I and the imagined other. I am always thinking *about* the other, and that *preposition* inserted in between the words symbolically represents a time-honored epistemological paradigm, which has remained unchallenged

in the philosophical history of the West. Suppose I am here and am now thinking about the other as said earlier: Who then is that other? What renders me as 'I' and not 'the other'; how am I different from the other? Do we have to presuppose any unbridgeable gap between them?

Regarding this issue, the *yin-yang* theory maintains a strikingly heterogeneous posture. For instance, *yin* hides the root of *yang* whereas *yang* hides the root of *yin*. In other words, what constitutes *yin* lies in its other, *yang*, and therefore it would be totally erroneous to think about these conceptual pairs separately. Any attempt at drawing a hierarchical line between the two is doomed to fail. Why then the two different names? Remember, as Chuang Tzu stated earlier, that names are the guest of reality. Nominal distinction occurs simply as an expedient means to evoke truth. The fingertip indicating the moon cannot be mistakenly identified as the moon itself. By the same token, reality always stays away from words and language. To put it another way, the ultimate meaning of *yin* will be constantly postponed and the same argument will be held true with *yang*. In summation, *yin and yang exist in our mind*: the one which is prone to make distinction and discrimination. However, they do not exist in reality in the sense that there exists no such thing as *yin* and *yang* as independent, substantial entities. (See 「figure 1」 which serves as the theoretical basis of this argument.)

East Asian and Western ways of thinking are two heterogeneous forms of viewing the world, which can never be separated from the subject of epistemology. As a matter of fact, current academic trends in the field of humanities such as postmodernism or totality issues are with no exception functioning based on the particular *a priori* form of positing the relationship between 'I' and the 'world.' Nevertheless, it seems that we may not be able to freely take sides with any particular interpretative trend. Rather, we should be aware of the true nature of ideologies, i.e., a belief system by which our experience as an imagined community becomes possible. Keeping this in mind, the gap and difference existing among different ways of thinking should be treated in mutually supplementary terms. Choosing efficient solutions for the current socio-cultural problems is totally an individual matter. However, there seems no doubt that a full-fledged investigation regarding the East-Asian mode of thinking will enable us to acquire a new epistemological horizon. This paper plans to critically illuminate 'modernity' issues in terms of Taoist philosophy. Critical

reflection on the problems of Chinese and Western modernity will help reinforce the theoretical validity drawn from the discussion on *Chuang Tzu*. In conclusion, possibilities of viewing 'I' and the 'world' on another epistemological dimension will be briefly discussed.

II. In-depth Analysis of Chuang Tzu's Thought

This section examines the in-depth grammar of Taoist thought by way of examining the philosophy of Chuang Tzu, and thereby attempts to propose a new epistemological paradigm. In many respects Chuang Tzu upturns what we believe is correct from the modernistic point of view. For instance, as the inherited tradition in China was culturally and politically appropriated by May Fourth intellectuals under the pretext of the enlightenment project, Chuang Tzu is enunciating that exactly the same sort of epistemological reversal occurs at the place where the vanguards of a new cultural movement turns old China's tradition into the other. As a matter of fact, the little quail appearing in "Free and Easy Wandering" never understands P'eng's spiritual realm; however the same thing comes true with P'eng's incapacity to recognize the little quail's world. Relativistically speaking, there exists a difference between great knowledge and little knowledge; this surface difference, however, is annulled in the sense that they are both restricted and dependent beings. In other words, as P'eng makes fun of the little quail based on its bigness (great knowledge), so does the little quail, on the basis of its smallness (little knowledge). Thus, it boils down to the fact that the attempt to designate the object as the other from 'this' point of view is inevitably interlinked with his/her becoming the other when seen from the opposite perspective.

This particular message is reiterated in "Discussion on Making All Things Equal." According to the author, any comments made to appease the quarrels are in essence intensifying the existing quarrels. Therefore, the true way to solve the problem lies in realizing that all arguments stem from no argument at all. On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, an examination of the underlying grammar of Chuang Tzu's philosophical thought is given below.

Expedient Means and Negative Modes of Speech

Narrative modes in *Chuang Tzu* basically include the following: allegory, anecdote, and random talks. The way Chuang Tzu discloses the *Tao*, however, depends primarily on the Derridian device of so-called 'différance' and aesthetics of 'silence.' At the beginning of the "Discussion on Making All Things Equal," Yen Ch'eng Tzu-yu asks his mentor Tzu-ch'i of South Wall regarding 'the piping of Heaven(天籟)' that serves as the root of 'the piping of men'(人籟) and 'the piping of earth'(地籟). Tzu-ch'i thus answers:

"Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?"

The dialogue between the two characters concerning 'the piping of Heaven' 'the piping of men,' and 'the piping of earth' abruptly stops here. On the surface, Tzu-ch'i proposes a question upon the question raised by his disciple at the end of his reply, and thus curiosity doubles. However, the delicacy and subtlety of Chuang Tzu's philosophy lie in this; that he said something 'un-sayable' by way of not saying it. In consequence, the *Tao* being preserved due to *différance* and silence; the reader is able to glimpse at its aura via what is stated. Another example can be found where the fraud of spatio-temporal concepts is being revealed:

"There is a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing."

The former part in this quote represents the deconstruction of temporality; the latter, by the same token, denotes that of spatiality. Overall the narrative device of *différance* is employed here not so much for its own sake as a negative mode of speech to deconstruct our fixed idea. In summation, they serve as an expedient means to say something unsayable.

The Fraud of Sensory Conviction

In this section, Chuang Tzu discloses the fallacy of sensory conviction

that is accommodated with no doubt. What is believed to be the most real and obvious is no other than mere subjective bias as shown in the following example:

“If a man sleeps in a damp place, his back aches and he ends up half paralyzed, but is this true of a loach? If he lives in a tree, he is terrified and shakes with fright, but is this true of a monkey? Of these three creatures, then, which one knows the proper place to live? Men eat the flesh of grass-fed and grain-fed animals, deer eat grass, centipedes find snakes tasty ... which knows how food ought to taste? Men claim that Mao-ch’iang and Lady Li were beautiful, but if fish saw them they would dive to the bottom of the stream ... which knows how to fix the standard of beauty for the world?”

What Chuang Tzu indicates in the above quote is related to the three particular sensory consciousnesses: i.e., the faculty of the body, the consciousness of tasting, and visual consciousness. Put in ordinary terms, these three correspond to the concepts of residing, eating, and beauty. According to the logic proposed in this argument, our concept of beauty is not based on the object of our aesthetic appreciation, but exists in our subjective cognitive faculty. In other words, the beauty of the object has, in fact, nothing to do with the form or appearance of the object, and therefore we can never secure the clue to objectively characterizing our judgment of beauty. The basis of our sensory conviction thus becomes deconstructed.

The Reversal of Dream and Reality

Via the deconstruction of sensory conviction, Chuang Tzu tries to examine the problem of dream and reality. In the philosophy of *Chuang Tzu*, the apparatus of the dream functions in two different ways. On the one hand, it is referring to the dream that we experience in sleep; on the other, it sees life itself as a dream. In this way we can never tell if we are in a dream unless we are awakened from it. Then how we can be aware of the true nature of life should it be nothing but a dream? We may locate some clues on the basis of the following figurative statement: “He who dreams of drinking wine may weep when morning comes; he who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt.”

The above quote indicates that what is experienced in our dreams is empty. (Joy is replaced by sorrow; sorrow is replaced by happiness. In other words, both joy and sorrow in dreams possess no substance.) However, we can only realize the empty nature of the dream when we are awake. In this respect, the apparatus of a dream denotes the cognitive reversal of being and non-being. Therefore, as long as we are attached to the illusory being as something real, man can never be liberated from the invisible iron prison-house that he has constructed. It is this epistemological reversal that Chuang Tzu was trying to rectify through diverse narrative tactics. According to him, most people are sweating and laboring to the end of their days and never seeing their accomplishment, utterly exhausting themselves and never knowing where to look for rest. Can Chuang Tzu not help pitying them?

The allegory of Chuang Chou[Chuang Tzu] becoming a butterfly in his dream represents the conclusion of “Discussion on Making all Things Equal.” Chuang Tzu in this episode posits no distinction between the butterfly in Chuang Chou’s dream and Chuang Chou, the dreamer, thus we find a free and easy transformation between the two stages. This argument becomes plausible simply because their true essence is empty. The concept of the “Transformation of Things” at the end of this chapter somehow deconstructs all dichotomous ways of thinking prevalent in modern Western philosophy. The barrier between I and the world, subject and object, reality and dream disappears. However, despite this logic of the “Transformation of Things,” the potential problem has not yet been completely solved. Don’t we still have to assume the presence of ‘I’, the subject who cognizes this process of ‘transformation’ while remaining aloof from all these cyclical processes? Moreover with the presence of ‘I’, the subjectivity, the world confronting it inevitably appears.

For the free transformation between things to be possible, both Chuang Chou and the butterfly must disappear simultaneously. After all, the “Transformation of Things” in *Chuang Tzu* represents that ultimate epistemological stage that cannot be expressed in words. It is words beyond conceptualization which are employed here only as an expedient means to express something unsayable. With this issue of ‘unsayability,’ the complex philosophical discussion in *Chuang Tzu* is switched to the theme of ‘being.’ The core of Chuang Tzu’s philosophy camouflaged under the layer of allegory, anecdotes and humor is now unveiled.

III. The Problematic of Chinese and Western Modernity

In order to discuss modernity issues in modern Chinese literature, the conceptualization of the word 'modern' ought to be first made. Redefining the purely chronological term in the manner of literary or political history mostly accompanies diverse ideological struggles. In the case of China, the term modern (xiandai) has been widely circulated, encompassing the period beginning from May Fourth to the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Within the context of modern literary history, however, quite a few terms have been simultaneously used by scholars including 'new literature' (xinwenxue), 'contemporary literature' (dangdai wenxue) or twentieth century literature, each with particular ideological connotations. This paper is unable to elaborate on the various literary debates related to this issue. However, subtly unveiling those ideological layers generating the aura of modernity, together with careful observation of the process through which the term modern acquires particular cultural/political connotation, seems quite necessary.

Being 'modern' during the May Fourth period was often equated with the writer's attitude towards man and the world; the form and content of his/her writing were used as yardsticks by which critics may detect whether the text was modern or anti-modern. But who is to decide the rules in the game? In the discussion of modern Chinese literary history, critics note certain literary trends or fashions common to modern literary texts such as: tendency towards subjectivization, lyricism, discovery of self, experimental use of new narrative forms, use of vernacular language, change of spatio-temporal concepts, etc. However, what remains problematic is to explain those literary texts which do not quite suit the aforementioned modernity framework. As a matter of fact, Perry Link argues, with convincing statistical data, that those popular stories usually referred to as 'Mandarin Ducks and Butterfly' have had far wider readership during the May Fourth period as compared with those of 'modern' fiction. Based on this empirical fact, it may be assumed that modern literature was not so much a time-based concept as an ideologically constructed one. In other words, designating certain literary trends as modern turns out to be in itself the politicization of art and literature.

It may be possible to elaborate on this argument based on the subject of periodic division in literary history. Critics usually designate the May

Fourth period as the beginning of modern Chinese literature; how then can we name our contemporary literature, which is detached from it by almost a century? A tentative solution for this is to invent new names that can be used to refer to 'here and now.' The basic strategy in this quasi-political act of naming is to sort out the common features inherent in the so-called 'modern' literature, whereas literary historians ought to locate differences between 'modern' and 'pre-modern' literary texts. The logical pitfall, however, lies in these questions: why two canonical texts written during the different time periods ought to be compared on the basis of their differences; why those features common to both modern and pre-modern texts are excluded in this comparative study and simply seen as insignificant? A tentative conclusion would be that the rendering of otherness is ideologically contingent on 'difference.'

The May Fourth literature basically accommodates the modernity ideology of the West. Furthermore, in the process of the term modern being redefined into a value concept, various ideological struggles occur surrounding the word. Rectification of naming (正名) now becomes an important portion of the enlightenment project. In addition, those modern intellectuals were compelled to create a sense of otherness in modernity where tradition within this context turned into a barrier to be negated. Of course, tradition can never be objectified as a thing in the sense that one can never dissect time. However, it is precisely due to this inseparable nature of time that those modern Chinese intellectuals were able to appropriate modernity by means of manipulating it. Modernity now becomes an ideology, a political view, and a particular attitude of viewing the world.

Should it be historically factual that the so-called anti-modern fiction had secured wider readership during the May Fourth period as compared with those modern stories, what then served as the underlying apparatus where the minority were sublated as 'modern' while the quantitatively dominant trend was banished to the margin as anti-modern? This could, for convenience sake, be ascribed to ideological power struggles. However, with the vantage point of temporal distance, the obligation is to raise another important question related to this issue: who can be designated as the true winner in this master-slave dialectical struggle? Regarding this issue, the form of modernity must be scrutinized, herein the ideology of form turns out to be constantly wavering. Strictly speaking, the concept of otherness is an arbitrarily devised one within this center-periphery vertical structure,

thus its surface hierarchical relationship can never stay firm and constant. In summation, modernity becomes an unstable, empty signifier with no significance.

With this argument, this paper proposes that the term modern is a concept, the essence of which ought to be verified within the epistemological context. Reading modern Chinese literature in terms of modernity is logically tautological, which becomes no different from, let's say, that the red apple is red. Logically, redness obtains its attribute by means of its difference from not-being-red. In other words, the attribute of redness is decided not on the basis of its being red but is given from its other, the true nature of which becomes not 'not-being-red.' As a matter of fact, we can never tell how to define 'redness' as it is. This argument can be applied toward our discussion of beauty/ugliness, light/dark, good/evil, and so forth. Overall words and language have no finalized meaning despite the fact that we, quite surprisingly, construct our surrounding world based on names and language. What then is the true nature of the world that we're living in?

The philosophical dilemma of modernity ideology in the West was to prove that an individual being contains certain *indivisible* qualities in itself distinct from others, thereby the concept of 'individuality' is formed. Nonetheless, one can locate that attribute in each existing being, provided that such dubious concepts as individuality are acknowledged as valid and real. When we dissect roses, for instance, into leaves, branches, petals and so forth, would the ultimate essence of the rose be revealed? Similar problems occur in literary criticism as well. Critics of the Twentieth century widely shared the premise of T.S. Eliot, who proclaimed that 'a poem should be treated primarily as poetry and not another thing.' Its implication was to segregate texts from their extra-literary elements such as authorial intention, (auto)biographical data and so forth; instead pure 'literariness' ought to be the primary concern in literary criticism. Nonetheless, no critic was able to identify the genuine essence of literariness, separate from, and independent of, history, religion, politics, and so forth. Seen from this point of view, the theoretical ground of 'New Criticism' precipitated, quite paradoxically, the downfall of it.

Along this line, it may be further argued that any effort to rigidly define words and names becomes 'political' in a broad sense. Hegel, for instance, characterized Chinese and Indian history as stagnant, lacking the driving

force propelling progress. With this hypothesis, he comes to the peculiar conclusion that China is a nation with no history. From a critical standpoint, Hegel was appropriating history by way of defining the word, the meaning of which, in essence, is un-definable. A similar example is encountered when Goethe coined the term 'world literature.' By 'world literature,' he simply meant literature of Western Europe on the basis of his own narrowly (and arbitrarily) defined meanings of 'world' and 'literature.' We may notice here that via the dexterous hands of the two modern giants, the Euro-centric world view is subtly constructed. No postcolonial arguments, based on the aforementioned examples, are necessary. It would be slightly off the point, considering the main subject of this paper. However, it seems undeniable that the world would get to be *re-presented* before our cognition of it. Even the objective depiction of the world occurs partly as the subjective experience of the mind. On the basis of this theoretical hypothesis, the true nature of modernity can be revealed with our realization that it is ideologically constructed, the form of which can be deconstructed only with the paradigmatic shift of viewing the world.

May Fourth anti-traditionalists were trying to read 'cannibalism' in between the lines of Confucian texts filled with 'morals and virtue.' This type of reading represents the ideological tactic to rendering 'tradition' into the otherness of modernity. Within the context of the modern enlightenment project, the concept of 'cannibalism' is appropriated at two slightly different levels: on the one hand, it is used as a catalyst to widely spread anti-traditionalist thinking; on the other, tradition itself is held responsible for cultivating cannibalism.

Strictly speaking, that Lu Xun was locating the 'eat-man' motif within the context of Chinese tradition represents a vivid example of politics being aestheticized. To justify his semantic reversal from Confucian morals to cannibalism, Lu Xun employs the narrative apparatus of irony throughout the story of "A Madman's Diary." However, ironical reading can be applied equally towards Lu Xun and his followers: as May Fourth intellectuals were trying to grasp the phantom of cannibalism from China's tradition, so the traditionalists consider those modernists their other by using such derogative terms as *yanggou*, literally meaning 'Westernized dogs.' In this respect, the concept of 'cannibalism' which used to be conceived of as the symbol of modern iconoclastic drive turns out to be a buoyant signifier. Chuang Tzu satirizes this in a figurative manner: 'But waiting for one

shifting voice [to pass judgment on] another is the same as waiting for none of them.’ The following section illuminates the philosophy of Chuang Tzu with respect to the postmodern project of our time.

IV. Postmodernity and the Restoration of Hun-tun

The basic writings of *Chuang Tzu* end with the episode of Hun-tun, which in some sense contains the overall theme of the entire book. It reads as follow:

“The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu [Brief], the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu [Sudden], and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun [Chaos]. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. “All men,” they said, “have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn’t have any. Let’s try boring him some!” Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died.”

Certain terms and names used in this quote include subtle cultural connotations described henceforth based on Ho T’u (the Yellow River Map) (See figure 2). In Ho T’u, North and South represent winter/water/death and summer/fire/life respectively; so are the symbolic meanings of the South and North Seas. In addition, the names of emperors such as ‘Shu’ and ‘Hu’ connotes a brief period of time, thereby Chuang Tzu intimates the momentary nature of human life. Then how can the motif that these two emperors met with each other in the territory of Hun-tun be convincingly interpreted? As discussed previously, Chuang Tzu presupposes that life and death are adjacent to each other; they are mutually interrelated concepts. Therefore, without life there is no death. They are conditional beings, a sort of pseudo ‘real’; the essence of which is Hun T’un.

Following this basic premise that life and death are both rooted in Hun-Tun, the latter may be said to be *transcendent* of both life and death. This argument becomes plausible when we cross reference the Hun-Tun motif

together with the passage in the previous chapter “The Great and Venerable Teacher” where the author pronounces that “that which kills life does not die; that which gives life does not live.” It seems contradictory to state that Hun-Tun is here serving as the womb of life and death while it is transcendent of both of them. At this particular point, it may be hypothetically assumed that Chuang Tzu, via this episode, was trying to disclose the realm of ‘being’; the true essence of which remains beyond our dichotomous conceptualization. Seen from this point of view, any attempt to grasp Hun-Tun grounded on binary concepts such as life/death, being/nonbeing, good/evil and so forth would be proven irrelevant simply because of the non-regulative nature of being. In summation, the act of boring seven holes on Hun-Tun may be interpreted as a speculative conceptualization of being where the rigid form dictates over the content. Would it be too much should we interpret the Hun Tun allegory in terms of the problematic of modernity where scientific and rational thinking unconsciously distort the real?

Ironically man can cognize based on distinction and discrimination; furthermore Hun-Tun must die in order for us to be aware of our being alive. However what if life and death are fraudulent while Hun-Tun is the truth of being? Should it be the case, isn't our putting Hun-Tun to death for the sake of life quite likely to end up with precisely the opposite consequence? It would be prudent to cautiously propose that the basic writings of *Chuang Tzu* might be characterized as a solemn elegy dedicated to the death of Hun-Tun; but prospective critics of modernity cannot but be aware of his dexterous hand to restore Hun-Tun from his death leaning on various narrative tactics.

Reading *Chuang Tzu* today includes several risks in themselves. One of them is that those norms that we take for granted are deconstructed at the most fundamental level; furthermore accommodating his way of thinking may easily be identified as the advocacy of anarchist values. Pragmatically speaking, can his thought of so-called ‘action of non action’ and ‘free and easy wandering’ virtually assume the redemptive role of saving man from various diseases, war, hunger, and other sufferings that are widespread in our time. However, putting this skepticism aside for a while, we need to think carefully about the true essence of the world: i.e., can we prove its existence independently from our cognition? Should it be true that the world that we're living in demonstrates not so much materialism but speculation, it

cannot but be reconstructed a posteriori via our particular epistemological eyes. Seen from this perspective, any critical attempt to sublimate or critically overcome those pathological remnants of modernity should begin with our careful investigation of those invisible eyes, which have been secretly facilitating that crude and inhumane rational of social Darwinism.

The discussion of Hun-Tun in our time is semantically interwoven with the restoration of the new, forgotten eyes. This academic task proclaims to propagate, on the surface, another epistemological spectrum of cognizing the world. When the task of demystifying the widely-spread modernity ideology becomes complete, however, Hun-Tun will again submerge under the unconscious realm of being. *Chuang Tzu* overall is valid only as a counter discourse of (post)modern ideology constantly creating and appropriating the phantom image of the other. It is needless to say that Hun-Tun will disappear with our disillusionment with the other.

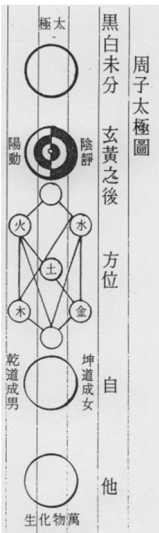


Fig. 1. T'ai-chi T'u

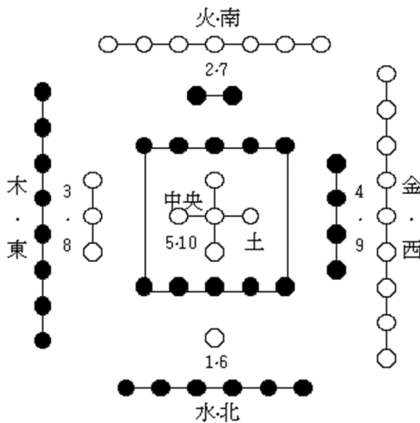


Fig. 2. Ho T'u

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Abstract

East Asian and Western ways of thinking are two heterogeneous forms of viewing the world, which can never be separated from the subject of epistemology. As a matter of fact, current academic trends in the field of humanities such as postmodernism or totality issues are, with no exception, functioning based on the particular a priori form of positing the relationship between 'I' and the world. Along this line, careful thought needs to be given to the true essence of the world: i.e., can we prove its presence existing independently from our cognition? Should it be true that this world that we're living in demonstrates not so much materialism but speculation, it cannot but be reconstructed a posteriori via our particular epistemological eyes. Seen from this perspective, any critical attempt to sublimate or critically overcome those pathological remnants of modernity should begin with our careful investigation of those invisible eyes which have been secretly facilitating that crude and inhumane rational of social Darwinism. This paper serves to critically illuminate '(post)modernity' issues in terms of Taoist philosophy. In conclusion, the possibility of viewing 'I' and the world on another epistemological dimension will be briefly discussed.

Keywords: being, (post)modernity, ideology, the Other, epistemology, discourse

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