DANIEL J. STEPHENS

CONFUCIANISM, PRAGMATISM, AND SOCIALLY BENEFICIAL PHILOSOPHY

The world is currently full of a disturbing number of serious and urgent problems that threaten to end the flourishing of our societies. In order for humanity to avoid such an end, we must have a way of thinking and being in the world that allows us to solve these problems, not merely as a matter of theory, but as a matter of action. This means that we would do well to develop forms of philosophy that lead not only to inquiry about these important matters, but to active solutions as well. This article will be an attempt to construct what I believe is one such method of philosophical practice, through a constructive engagement with Confucianism and pragmatism. This will involve a comparison that examines the similarities between Confucianism and pragmatism in regard to the ideas of knowledge, philosophy, religion, and education. This examination of similarities focuses on practicality, the experiential basis and focus of knowledge and philosophy, and the idea of philosophy as an individually transforming human practice. This article will also contrast these similar Confucian and Pragmatic ideas with several ideas prevalent in Western thought and culture in an attempt to construct a new philosophical methodology which aims to improve the state of the global community, as well as the life of the individual.[1]

The cultures and eras in which Confucianism and pragmatism gestated and thrived were very different. Pragmatism was developed by Americans such as Charles Sanders Peirce,[2] William James, and John Dewey in the early twentieth century as a corrective to the Western Enlightenment tradition and its practice of philosophy that largely ignored the problems of the people of the newly industrialized world. Confucianism began to be developed in China in the fifth century BCE as a corrective to the social degradation of the Spring and Autumn period of Zhou Dynasty China. What connects them, therefore, is not cultural or temporal, but ideological. The problematic addressed by both schools, as well as the solutions offered, are similar. As David Hall states in his article "Modern China and the Postmod-

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ern West": "In its strongest and most paradoxical form my argument amounts to the claim that classical China is in a very real sense *postmodern*."[3] Through his comparison between classical Chinese philosophy and the idea of difference in Derrida, Hall asserts the Chinese character of many Western postmodern philosophical movements. The philosophical problems that we face as a result of our modernity require solutions very close to those offered by classical Chinese philosophy, prompting Hall to state that ". . . we in the West are drawn closer to the classical Chinese modes of thinking in search of a counter-discourse in terms of which to critique modernity."[4] While Hall uses this observation to justify his own comparison of classical Chinese philosophy and Derrida, his observation gives equal justification to my project of bringing Confucianism into dialogue with pragmatism in an attempt to find solutions to certain contemporary problems.

In his 1917 article "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," John Dewey argues for a radical change in the aims of Western philosophers. At the core of Dewey's argument for change is a belief that the primary goal of any philosophical enterprise should be concern toward and applicability for human life as an embodied, lived experience. Dewey contends that philosophy as practiced by most Western thinkers is overly concerned with irresolvable metaphysical arguments of the past. He draws a distinction between the problems addressed within the philosophical community and those that arise in the nonacademic or general community of human beings. Dewey perceives a stark difference in the goals and needs of these two interdependent communities. His intent is not to criticize philosophy as ineffective or irrelevant, but rather to call upon the philosophical community to reconsider the questions and problems they choose to address. His article, then, "is not in intent a criticism of various solutions that have been offered, but raises a question *as to the genuineness, under the present condition of science and social life, of the problems*."[5]

According to Dewey, the dichotomy between the concerns of the philosophical community and the concerns of the general population is the result of the development of philosophy as a professional field to be simply taught and passed down through the generations without significant change. Western philosophy's unwavering concentration on the same metaphysical arguments leads to the division of philosophers into seemingly different schools of thought, creating the illusion of diversity, though all the while continuing to argue the same problems indefinitely as a result of shared, unquestioned commitments and presuppositions. Dewey contends that "Philosophy when taught inevitably magnifies the history of past thought, and leads

professional philosophers to approach their subject matter through its formulation in received systems."[6] This magnification of the history of past thought draws the focus of the philosophical community toward the minutia of past philosophical works, and away from real-life problems and questions.

Dewey sees this as a misuse of philosophical method, because in his view, philosophy has the ability to significantly impact the general populace. The ideas addressed by philosophy do have an effect upon the society at large, but the degree of this effect is directly related to how relevant the ideas are to the situations in which they are being discussed. Ancient Greek philosophy was attempting to address the problems of the time, but as our culture drifts further away from those specific conditions in which those specific philosophical ideas were formulated, the relevance of those ideas, and the problems from which they arose, diminishes. Dewey articulates this understanding by stating that ". . . the ideas philosophers discuss are still those in which Western civilization has been bred."[7] However, the world in which we live is constantly changing. In order for philosophy to maintain its effect, it must change as well or "it is likely to get more and more sidetracked from the main currents of contemporary life."[8]

Dewey's solution is to restructure Western philosophical methodology and concern with a focus toward relevant social issues. This change must take place not only for the benefit of society, but also for the benefit of philosophy itself. Dewey's vision of philosophy is that of a method of inquiry that is inherently connected to the conditions of social life.[9] Philosophy thrives when it has problems to face that come from our attempt to get along in the world as we experience it. Using philosophy then in turn helps society to solve those problems, thus ensuring that society will thrive as well. Clearly society and philosophy are, to Dewey, joined in a symbiosis. Thus, without the use of philosophical methods, society faces problems without solutions. Conversely, without concern for a properly robust set of "life conditions," philosophy withers and loses societal centrality as a field of study. Both society and philosophy face the negative consequences of their mutual divorce. Thus, philosophers must be cognizant of the impact of their work, and pursue both topics and methodologies that relate to and enhance social well-being.

This leads to the first relevant similarity between Confucianism and pragmatism: The idea that philosophy and knowledge must be concerned with the practical conditions of human life. Much like Dewey, Confucius sees that philosophic pursuits must not be mere ends in themselves, but rather a means toward creating a more favorable world:

> The Master said, "If people can recite all of the three hundred *Songs* and yet when given official responsibility, fail to perform effectively, or when sent to distant quarters, are unable to act on their own initiative, then even though they have mastered so many of them, what good are they to them?"[10]

According to Confucius, the purpose of philosophic thought and knowledge was the improvement of the human condition through the cultivation of the individual. Knowledge and understanding are not sought merely for their own sake, but rather as a means toward instructing the individual in his or her life. From this perspective, if we consider Dewey's commentary on the current trends in philosophy where "Persistence in the repetition of a work that has little or no significance in the life-conditions . . . that now exist is . . . reducing philosophy to a kind of highly professionalized busy-work,"[11] then a Western classically trained thinker would surely be looked upon by the Confucians as pursuing philosophic understanding along an improper path.

In the Analects, Confucius seems well aware of a distinction between practical and academic pursuits. There was a tendency among Chinese thinkers at this time to study with the sole purpose of becoming better scholars. Their scholarly pursuits were not motivated by self-cultivation or the development of a virtuous society. Within the Analects, Confucius shows disdain for such a tendency:

> The Master said, "Exemplary persons would feel shame if their words were better than their deeds."[12]

The meaning here is obvious, as a merely academic scholar would have very beautiful words, but the truly practicing philosopher engaged in embodying those words would act in an exemplary way. In explaining that scholarship must be focused on the improvement of the individual and the society, Confucius is calling for philosophy to perform the same duties that Dewey calls for philosophy to perform; mainly, to be concerned with life conditions.

William James held similar belief in regard to the divorce between practical thought and academic philosophy, focusing on the individual. James' observation was exemplified, according to himself, within the thesis of one of his own students, who:

> . . . began by saying that he had always taken for granted that when you entered a philosophic classroom you had to open relations with a universe entirely distinct from the one you left behind in the street. The two were supposed, he said, to have little to do with each other, that you could not occupy your mind with them at the same time.[13]

James' view of philosophy is markedly different from that of his student. He states in his lectures on pragmatism that "[t]he whole function of philosophy ought to be to find out what definite difference

it will make to you and me."[14] If the philosophic pursuits of the individual do not have an impact in his or her life, they are essentially meaningless. This is further evidenced in the second lecture of James' *Pragmatism*, where he asks "What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same things, and all dispute is idle."[15] This is not so much a critique of the stagnation that had occurred in Western philosophy noted by Dewey, but rather a critique of certain tendencies within the entire history of Western philosophy. He is not contending that philosophy should *once again* be concerned with life, but rather that ". . . philosophy had been on a false scent ever since the days of Socrates and Plato."[16] James contends that any and all of the old arguments and methods which lead not to a change in the way a person lives, but rather only to more arguing, should thus be discarded. Westerners in our postmodern condition must understand that we are still steeped in Greek tradition, and that our modernity is a modernity born from Greek ideas. Thus, our critique of our own modernity must inherently be a critique of these ideas.

As was stated by Hall, a viable critique of our modernity can be drawn out from classical Chinese thought. This is perhaps an explanation of why pragmatism's overall view of practically useful philosophy is in large part echoed by most, if not all, modern Confucian philosophers. Emerging not only from Confucius' views, but also from the way he himself is recorded to have lived, there is in Confucianism an idea that thought and learning are not simply activities or professions, but rather comprise a way of living. We must not only keep our philosophical problematic from separating from the concerns of everyday life, but individual philosophers must also be sure to not merely philosophize in their offices and lecture halls, but rather *live as philosophers* with an understanding that philosophy has the ability to make a relevant impact upon the life conditions of human beings.

Based on this principle, metaphysical speculation is not seen as a priority to either pragmatism or Confucianism. Questioning and asserting the absolute truth of abstract ideas simply does not create the same practical difference as discourse concerning life conditions does. Transformation can only take place when the philosophical ideas discussed have an effect upon a person's practical experience. This is perhaps why James' notion of this definite practical difference resonates in the Analects:

> Zilu asked how to serve the spirits and the gods. The Master replied, "Not yet being able to serve other people, how would you be able to

serve the spirits?" Zilu said, "May I ask about death?" The Master replied, "Not yet understanding life, how could you understand death?"])[17]

There was little point to Confucius in worrying about matters that had no basis in experience. While an understanding of the spirits as well as death may be important at some point, it was unreasonable to Confucius to place such concerns before experiential concerns. An individual must use his or her experience to guide his or her thought rather than ponder the unanswered questions in the sea of the abstract. This type of practicality was as essential to Confucianism as it was to pragmatism. It is also essential in developing a philosophy that will positively impact our experience.

I have presented, so far, the ideas that philosophy must be concerned with the conditions of real life, and that when our philosophical inquiry is so concerned, it becomes an indispensable element of human flourishing. This also includes an understanding that within the individual, philosophy must not be an atomistic activity, but rather integral to one's way of being in the world. We should thus consider philosophy an embodied human practice. A discussion of the Confucian idea of *ren* 仁 may now help clarify what type of embodied practice I am advocating that philosophy become.

Ren is an essential element of Confucian philosophy understood as the fundamental virtue of human beings,[18] often translated as benevolence, human-heartedness, and humaneness. This virtue is to be cultivated in the individual. The term *ren* is also used to describe a person who has attained a certain level of cultivation of her humaneness. In *Thinking through Confucius*, David Hall and Roger Ames attempt to create a greater understanding of this term through etymological analysis:

> We have argued that ([*ren*])[19] is the same term as person ([*ren*]),[20] but reflecting a degree of qualitative achievement. The difference in the graphic form representing this qualitative achievement is the simple yet significant addition of the numeral, "two" ([*er*])[21] . . . [indicating] that authoritative humanity is attainable only in a communal context. . . .[22]

The communal aspect of Confucius' idea of virtue is strengthened through this analysis, leading to the idea that *xue* 學, or "learning to be human,"[23] is a process of learning and transformation that is based in interacting with others. Dewey seems to agree with Confucianism that this kind of communal interactive learning is essential, stating that "[t]o learn to be human is to develop through the give-and-take of communication an effective sense of being an individually distinctive member of a community."[24] Virtue is studied and cultivated through communication and interaction with others that asserts one's indi-

viduality and relationality simultaneously.[25] Philosophical practice then, if thought of as this type of communication and interaction, becomes not only experientially based, but also an individual practice toward becoming a better person that has its basis in intersubjective, communal discourse.

With philosophy becoming a method with which a person cultivates his or her own virtue, philosophers can then easily impact their societies. Discussing the following passage may help bring this idea to light:

> Someone asked Confucius, "Why are you not involved in governing?" The Master replied, "The book of documents says:
>> It is all in filial conduct (*xiao*)! Just being filial to your parents and befriending your brothers is carrying out the work of government.
>
> In doing this I am employed in governing. Why must I be 'employed in governing'?"[26]

Being a good son and sibling is essential to the Confucian cultivation of virtue. One first learns to care for others by caring for one's family. A person then learns to care for other relatives, friends, schoolmates, mere acquaintances, and so on. This creates a natural progression in which the virtue attained through caring for one's family allows one to feel more humaneness toward one's friends, and the virtue attained from caring for one's friends allows one to care for one's mere acquaintances, etc. Filial conduct (*xiao* 孝) is the root from which a virtuous person grows, as community life is an outgrowth of family life.[27]

This understanding allows for an interpretation of the above passage in which the cultivation of virtue is all that is deemed necessary in the creation of a good society. Since cultivating virtue through practicing filial piety brings a person closer to a proper sense of relationship, that person will positively impact his or her society. Because this positive impact is taking place, there is no point in such a person taking on an official position of governance to try to benefit anyone. The essential point here is that a good society comes not from above with the proper governance, but rather from within, through all members of the society cultivating themselves as fully as possible.[28]

With the understanding of philosophy as the individually cultivating practice outlined earlier, the Confucian view of positively impacting the community through cultivation gives support to the possibility that one way to build a virtuous society is to have all members of our community become philosophers, in this new pragmatic Confucian sense of the term. It can be assumed through the earlier etymological analysis of *ren* that all humans do in fact have the potential to be cultivated simply by virtue of their being human.[29] There is, on this

understanding, no class of people that is above the rest and thus able to do philosophy, as the elite free men of ancient Greece felt themselves to be. All people possess the possibility of growth, though they may be at different stages of maturity in their cultivation, providing the immaturity necessary to allow for growth. To Dewey, ". . . when we say that immaturity means the possibility of growth, we are not referring to the absence of powers which may exist at a later time; we express a force positively present—the ability to develop."[30] This idea of human potential also functions as a harsh critique of Western modernity, as our educational systems function to teach people to be better unreflective employees and consumers rather than fully realized human beings (*ren*). Our idea of learning must turn closer to *xue*, or education as growth, and it must turn away from the current ideas of education as job-market training through the passive acquisition of knowledge.

In order for philosophy to become such a universal practice, it must not only have the pragmatic functionality I have outlined, but also meet people's needs in terms of the formulation of a cohesive and personally satisfying worldview. James asks, "Now what kinds of philosophy do you find to meet your need? You find an empirical philosophy that is not religious enough, and a religious philosophy that is not empirical enough to fit your purpose."[31] Bridging the gap between these two apparently antithetical Western traditions was one of the main pursuits of James' *Pragmatism*, and is essential for creating a postmodern West in which philosophy is a common source of personal and social transformation. A bridge can very easily be found in Confucianism. Truly, *ren* was not a substantial thing to which one could point. However, one could understand the experience of having been in the presence of an exemplary person (*junzi*), as well as understanding the feelings of compassion, love, and connectedness that accompany experiences related to the cultivation of *ren*. The following passage from the Analects also points to the subtle mixtures of rationalism and empiricism, experience and idea, and reason and faith that make the Confucian idea of cultivation an even more appealing paradigm of philosophic practice:

> The Master said, "From fifteen, my heart-and-mind was set upon learning; from thirty I took my stance; from forty I was no longer doubtful; from fifty I realized the [mandate] of *tian (tianming)*; from sixty my ear was attuned; from seventy I could give my heart-and-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries."[32]

The cultivation of *ren* (that led Confucius to become so moral that at seventy he did not so much as think of wrongdoing) is inherently performed throughout the experiences of the person's lifetime. Dewey's "immaturity" never goes away in any real sense, as cultiva-

tion is a lifelong process. This process is performed in order to gain a greater ability to have one's feelings correlated to what is right, or *tianming* 天命.[33] *Tian*, often rendered "Heaven," is to be understood in a very different manner than the Western idea of a transcendent realm of goodness inhabited by an omnipotent personal god. It has been argued by Hall and Ames that throughout the Analects, Confucius' notions of *tian* 天 and *tianming* are of an immanent rather than a transcendent nature.[34] As Hall and Ames explain:

> [*Tian*][35] is rather a general designation for the phenomenal world as it emerges of its own accord. [*Tian*] is wholly immanent, having no existence independent of the calculus of phenomena that constitute it. There is as much validity in asserting that phenomena "create" [*tian*] as in saying that [*tian*] creates phenomena; the relationship between [*tian*] and phenomena, therefore, is one of interdependence.[36]

This claim is supported by the following passage:

> The Master said: "I think I will leave off from speaking."

> "If you did not speak", Zigong said, "How will we your followers know the proper way?"

> The Master Responded, "Does *tian* speak? Yet the four seasons turn and the myriad things are born. Does *tian* speak?"[37]

Here, *tian* makes itself known through the workings of the natural world. *Tian* need not speak because it makes itself known through everything that human beings experience.[38] This understanding of *tian* in Confucianism is bound entirely with experience, yet is at the same time an ideal. It is an ineffable understanding that comes from experience as we empirically understand it. This notion of *tian* is completely in line with James' ideas on religious experiences, for he believed that ". . . were one asked to characterize the life of religion in the broadest and most general terms possible, one might say that it consists of the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."[39] James' unseen order can be thought of as *tianming*, which we ascertain as well as manifest through our experiences. The religious experiences that human beings have are based in our "natural" experiences. This allows for religious understanding to come to us through our practice of being human; in essence, from our lives. There is certainly, to both James and Confucianism, a spiritual element to life. This spiritual element, however, is not an absolute set of metaphysical truths, but rather something that supervenes over our "natural" experience in much the same way that the mind supervenes over the brain. Religious experiences require "natural" experiences just as the mind requires a physical mass of neurons. Spirituality to both pragmatism

and Confucianism is real, but must be obtained through the world as we can limitedly know it, that is, through our experiences. This view of religious experiences allows religion to become a part of the transforming philosophical practice that I am advocating. This allows our idea of philosophy to encompass the "needs" that James speaks of, never again to be superfluous to the general populace.

From this understanding of the necessity of experience, we can gain a greater understanding of *tianming* and the way in which it informs us of the rightness of our actions. We can find out what is right by testing our rationalistic moral ideas. The standard by which these moral ideas are tested is our experience of the effects of our actions. If desirable events occur in the world as well as within one's conscience as a result of acting in a certain way, then indeed we can ascertain that the propensity of *tian* is such that one should act in this manner. We must, however, make deep inquiries into our lives, our hearts, and our worlds if we are to gain such knowledge.

The notion of *tianming* is very different from the notion of right and wrong in Western tradition. Morality for the rationalists is generally attributed an absoluteness that is independent of its effects in the real world; something that is good is good absolutely, and something that is bad is bad absolutely. This absoluteness upholds itself to no judiciable standard. Thus, this rationalistic view of morality leads to the kind of irresolvable discussions outlined by Dewey, where questions of morality would be likely to stagnate, growing farther and farther away from the concerns of actual existence. The realm of moral understanding as described by Confucianism, however, creates a philosophical discourse related solely to experience, and is thus never superfluous. In this way, an exploration of *tianming* is an exploration of what works for people as opposed to what is "Right"; it is thus in its very nature opposed to the type of abstract debates that are so prevalent in the Western intellectual and religious landscape.

However, this is not equivalent to stating that *tianming* implies relativism. There are elements of certainty and universality that come with understanding *tianming*. We can all safely assume through all of our experiences that it is not right to beat one's parents; however, this moral truth is not an absolute. Rather, *tian* informs us constantly through our actions. The truths that *tian* shows us should be thought of in much the same way as the pragmatic notion of truth, wherein something is true only insofar as it meaningfully makes sense of our experiences. There is no way to gain answers other than through living. Absolute "Truth," then, becomes the limit toward which we can get closer and closer, but can never reach. *Tianming* points us in a proper direction, but with an understanding that there is no final destination of absolute moral truth at which we will eventually arrive.

This is why becoming a moral person was a lifelong quest to Confucius.

The understanding of moral cultivation as an ongoing process opens up an understanding of the role of action in Confucianism as being practical for the purposes of cultivation. *Li* 禮, understood to be ritual propriety, has a role in cultivating *ren* in a person, which in turn strengthens a person's understanding and adherence to *li*, creating a mutual relationship between action and virtue. Thus, maxims taken as rules in Confucianism are only there to serve a pragmatic purpose. People's actions, guided by the rituals, cultivate virtue inside of them, which then usurps the written ritual code as the person's moral guide. In discussing filial conduct, for example, Confucius makes no claim about its absolute goodness, but rather explains that it serves a practical, developmental purpose of allowing a person to practice *ren* through the *li* performance of honoring one's parents. It is thus the pragmatic effect that it has on the moral development of a person,[40] and not the abstract notion of goodness found in the traditional West, that urges us to hold filial conduct and any other moral guidelines as proper. Rules are merely tools used for the developmental end of becoming an exemplary person (*junzi* 君子). Approaching rules in this way should allow for many enflamed Western arguments to cool. The focus upon the correct casuistic answer regarding issues such as abortion, gay marriage, and euthanasia would cease to be an issue as we began to focus not on the debate over what is definitely "right" or "good," but rather on slowly cultivating a better self and a better society while making use of the moral rules that we already accept.[41]

With such a great focus on human action, Confucian views on free will and determinism can easily be combined with those of pragmatism to add an essential element to a conception of beneficial philosophical practice. In "The Dilemma of Determinism," William James lays out the logical argument for the pragmatic idea of free will, casting aside absolute claims of the "truth" about freedom. Determinism claims that any action that takes place was predestined to take place and thus could not have happened any other way. Determinism is, to James, a denial of the possibility that other outcomes could have occurred. There is, however, no basis for making this denial and indeed such an idea is essentially useless. What point is there in saying, after I decided to eat a grapefruit rather than an orange, that I could not have eaten the orange? In my experience, was I not encountered with this choice? James belittles determinism on this point to a *Machtspruch*, "a mere conception fulminated as a dogma and based on no insight into details."[42] This suggests the idea that people must act as if they have free will, for we are presented with possibilities. Any claim

about the inexistence of "real" freedom of choice is a claim about a conception of "real" that goes beyond the scope of our experience. Such a claim has no basis in our pragmatic reality, and should thus be discarded.

The way in which Confucius' views on determinism are similar to pragmatism's is evidenced in the Analects:

> The Master said, "It is the person who is able to broaden the way (*dao*), not the way that broadens the person."[43]

The person is able to broaden the way because action and experience present to the individual the proper way that they should align themselves with their world, which can also be thought of as the heaven on earth that is represented by *tian*. The person then is able to manifest in the world, through action, this proper way. This, therefore, must involve the making of personal choices, essentially entailing a transcendental argument against determinism. If there were a deterministic element in Confucianism, this passage would surely assert that the person is broadened by the way. Such a statement would be at odds with everything that Confucianism and pragmatism stand for. Belief in personal choice is a necessary condition for meaningful action, and meaningful action is fundamental in cultivating virtue and manifesting more desirable experiences.

This is not to say, however, that either pragmatism or Confucianism asserts a total freedom of the human being, endowed with a control over everything. To do so would also be against our experiences both of the notion of causality and of the way in which we see events unfold over which we have no control. There is a harmony between fate and choice that we cannot help but experience in our lives. Not only do the pragmatic and Confucian views on fate and choice direct the focus of philosophy away from the argument about determinism, but they also lead us to an understanding that human action is essential to creating favorable situations in our world, while at the same time allowing us to accept the relative impotence that every human being experiences. This helps a person to act in a way that has efficacy, while allowing his or her worldview to make sense of the events that affect his or her life.

John Dewey noted a need for the focus and methodology of philosophy in the West to undergo a dramatic change. No generation of human beings has faced a more immediate crisis than the one we face today. If we are to thrive, we need to change the way in which we perform philosophy. This need comes from the separations that naturally occur as a result of the manner in which philosophy has traditionally been practiced in the West. Philosophy separates from life, philosophers separate from the masses, and an individual separates his or her philosophical concerns from his or her regular life concerns.

By incorporating the ideas presented in Confucianism and pragmatism, we can create philosophy that mends these separations, bringing philosophy back into our everyday lives to be practiced by humanity. No longer will philosophy ask questions that the masses not care about. No longer will the masses see philosophy as a superfluous intellectual pursuit. With a method of philosophical practice that focuses on impacting our experience and our world, philosophy can become a practical tool in the quest to cure social ills through the cultivation of all members of our society. This should be our aim as philosophers, which truly means that this should be our aim as members of the human community. As was once written by John Dewey: "One may hope surely that the theoretical enterprise herein presented will bear practical issue and for good. But that achievement is the work of human beings as human, not of them in any special professional capacity."[44]

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Endnotes

1. This article is an attempt at what I would call a constructive synthesis, something I see as one possible method in comparative philosophy. The comparisons drawn are then not done for their own sake, as my goal is not simply to prove that Confucianism and pragmatism are similar; my point is rather that the two have ideas that have a compatibility such that can be used together to construct a conception of socially beneficial philosophical practice.
2. In this article, it is the particular brands of pragmatism advanced by James and Dewey that I want to bring into dialogue with Confucianism, and I therefore do not mention the work of Peirce. Peirce's pragmatism was different from what James advocated, as Peirce himself argued, and it clearly differed from Dewey's. However, I would be remiss not to point out that many of Peirce's ideas influenced James and Dewey, such as the idea that a belief is a rule for action. Thanks to Professor Chung-ying Cheng for pointing out how remiss I would be to not give him due credit.
3. David Hall, "Modern China and the Postmodern West," in *Culture and Modernity: East–West Philosophic Perspectives*, ed. Eliot Deutsch (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 59.
4. Ibid., 67.
5. John Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," in *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy*, ed. John J. Stuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 446.
6. Ibid., 445.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 446.

9. This is a prescriptive statement, but it is not without a descriptive element. Philosophy is inherently connected to life conditions for Dewey because of, and only because of, the fact that he sees philosophy as a method of inquiry that is meant to bring about change in the individual and his or her society.

10. The Analects of Confucius 13.5, translated by Roger T. Ames and Henry W. Rosemont, Jr., in *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998). All further passages from the Analects used in this article come from this translation, although a few have been slightly altered to reflect more common, less theory-laden renderings of certain key terms, on the advice of Professor Chung-ying Cheng.

11. Manuscript in John Dewey's papers housed in the Special Collections of Morris Library, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, in John J. Stuhr, ed., *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 434.

12. Analects 14.27.

13. William James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," in *Pragmatism*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1981), 14.

14. William James, "What Pragmatism Means," in *Pragmatism*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1981), 27.

15. Ibid., 26.

16. William James, "The Continuity of Experience," from *A Pluralistic Universe*, in *The Vision of James*, ed. Stephen Rowe (London: Vega Publishing, 2001), 98.

17. Analects 11.12.

18. There are differing views on *ren*, as Mencius sees such virtue as an intrinsic part of human nature that is able to be corrupted, rather than something that must necessarily be cultivated throughout a person's lifetime.

19. Rendered *ren* in Pinyin, as opposed to the Wade-Giles *jen*. First entry for *ren* in glossary.

20. Rendered *ren* in Pinyin, as opposed to the Wade-Giles *jen*. Second entry for *ren* in glossary. This is the only instance of this word in the article.

21. Rendered *er* in Pinyin, as opposed to the Wade-Giles *erh*.

22. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 115–16.

23. Peimin Ni, *On Confucius* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2002), 81.

24. John Dewey, "Search for the Great Community," in *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy*, ed. John J. Stuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 507.

25. This can also be thought of in terms of individuality *as* relationality, where one's personhood is entirely dependant upon the others that he or she encounters. Obviously each person will be a member of a different exact set of relations from everyone else, creating individual personhood.

26. Analects 2.21.

27. See Analects 1.2.

28. At first, my interpretation may seem to conflict with the hierarchy found in Confucian views of societal structure, but this hierarchy and the rectification of names (where a father is a father, a son a son, a ruler a ruler, and so on) are dependant upon the cultivation of virtue. A ruler is a ruler because of what he or she does for the community simply as a result of the level of excellence that he or she has attained, and thus need not necessarily "rule" in a classic monarchical sense.

29. Someone could in fact contend this statement, but I would refer him or her to Analects 7.30. *Ren* is not remote, and all are capable of aspiring to it.

30. John Dewey, "Education as Growth," from *Democracy and Education*, in *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy*, ed. John J. Stuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 491.

31. William James, "The Present Dilemma in Philosophy," in *Pragmatism*, ed. Bruce Kuklick (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1981), 12.

32. Analects 2.4.

33. *Tianming* is often rendered mandate or decree of heaven. This tends to imply agency in *tian*, and invokes an understanding of commandments from God. This is why I quite enjoy the Ames and Rosemont translation, "propensity of *tian*," not so much as a

rendering of the meaning of the phrase "*tianming*," but as a philosophical position on how we come to know the mandate of heaven. This allows for the showing of *tian* as the divine way the world should be that makes itself known through our experiences, without giving that same way an absolutistic commandment status. It also allows for an easier understanding of the idea that we bring *tian* about through our actions. A comment from Professor Chung-ying Cheng helped me to clarify the distinction between my thoughts on the concepts themselves and my conception of them.

34. This is of course a complex and controversial issue in Confucian studies. I find myself agreeing with Hall and Ames because, to me, their reading helps to avoid the importation of Western background assumptions.

35. Rendered *tian* in Pinyin, as opposed to the Wade-Giles *T'ien*. The same goes for the rest of the passage.

36. Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, 207.

37. Analects 17.19.

38. Leading to the *main* point of this passage, that example is the best way for people to convey their thoughts on morality. I am extracting the underlying ideas on *tian* that Confucius uses to make this point.

39. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Penguin, 1982), 53.

40. This is different from "pragmatic expediency" as we normally think of it, with self-interest and a complete "ends justify the means" mentality. Pragmatic expediency is always relevant to some purpose. For something to be expedient in the context of a developmental moral practice is different from being expedient in the context of a person's self-interested life. My thanks to Professor Chung-ying Cheng for pointing out to me exactly how important it was that I clarify this point.

41. This is not to say that answers to these issues will not come about, but rather that cultivation, and not arguing, has a good chance of eventually solving them. Also, there are several factors that enter into a *true* discussion of these complex issues, that far surpasses how "right" or "wrong" they are. For instance, abortion would cease to be an issue in a society that did not create conditions in which a pregnancy would be a seemingly unbearable burden. Creating such a society could be accomplished through cultivation, but never through entrenched arguments over whether or not abortion is right.

42. William James, "The Dilemma of Determinism," in *Pragmatism and Classical American Philosophy*, ed. John J. Stuhr (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 219.

43. Analects 15.28.

44. John Dewey, Introduction to *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2004), XXV.