

LINYU GU

FOREWORD: ON FELLOWSHIP—MORALITY AND RELIGIOUSNESS

I dedicate this short article to the Foreword of the present special issue on morality and religiousness. The longer form of this article, entitled “From Pragmatist ‘Religiousness’ to Cosmological ‘Non-Religiousness’: A Study of Fellowship,” was presented at the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*’s “International Symposium Series on Comparative Philosophy” under the theme title “Morality and Religiousness: Chinese and Western” in 2013.

In early 2013, Editor-in-Chief of this journal, Professor Chung-ying Cheng, proposed the above theme as well as provided a group of significant questions around the theme, which had thereafter led the *Journal* to seek a possible conference on morality and religiousness. Such fundamental, essential, and substantial thematic concerns of Professor Cheng had contributed not only to defining certain focus but also to opening far breadth of a potential conference, particularly regarding the relationship between moral life and religious faith in the contemporary era and its global issues. These deep thoughts nevertheless directly reflected the guiding structure of his thematic topics, around which the future conference had formed a genuine wealth of the sophisticatedly provocative discussions:

Is morality the measure of religiousness or does religiousness transcend moral judgment? Do religious faith and nondualistic experiences of tranquility of mind realize or go beyond the categories of right and wrong, and good and evil? Does ethics exclude religiousness or does ethics presuppose it and lead to religiousness? What is the role of religiousness in relation to secular and pluralistic forms of ethics? Is religious morality a genuine and key dimension of ethical life or is it a hindrance to realizing a just or rational society? How do we come to have the notion of God (or equivalent notion) and in what sense from a philosophical— theological point of view? How do we understand question of conceptual equivalence if there is one? What do we mean

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by transcendence? What is the distinction between external transcendence and internal transcendence? How does God relate to human religion or religiousness: Can we have religion and religiousness without God or its equivalent? How do religion and religiousness relate morality and ethics? Do we need a religious foundation for morality or instead a moral foundation for religion? How does Confucianism (Classical versus Neo-Confucian) relate to religion and religiousness and in what sense? How does Confucianism differ from Christianity and in what better defined essential way? How does Confucianism and Christianity relate to each other?

In the summer of the same year, it was a profoundly meaningful and prosperously brilliant collaboration while the China Institute of King's College London co-organized and cohosted the above proposed symposium entitled "Morality and Religiousness: Chinese and Western" with the editorial team of this journal. The complete sessions of the symposium took place at King's College London during August 14–15, 2013, alongside a historically festive occasion—the 40th founding anniversary of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Hereby to grasp this specific opportunity, I would like to once more express my warmest and deepest gratitude to Professor Xinzhong Yao and his colleagues at King's College London for their beautiful hospitality and remarkable support throughout all stages of the above conference.

Based on the inspirational presentations at the symposium, upon this journal's most collegial invitation Professor Yao has been continually devoting his precious time and distinguished expertise to the extensive amount of correspondence and the heavy editorial work of this special issue. Therefore, I furthermore would like to thank him for his diligent effort and extraordinary work, which have now brought these diversely rich and innovatively refreshing and scholarly interesting articles together in its sparkling completion.

Not at the least but at the most, my heartfelt thanks once again should equally belong to every single contributor of this special issue and every single participant of the symposium, and, every single colleague of both the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* and King's College London, who had offered generous assistance as well as insightful opinions in many different ways. Within this modest space, I hope I have not missed any other memorable individuals beyond the follows, who all deserve much more appreciation than these limited instances.

For preparing the invitation letter, I thank Professor Eric S. Nelson for providing various ground points for the composition. For communication and coordination, Professor Timothy Connolly had given tremendous hours to the major responsibilities to assure the successful participations and presentations, and I thank him for the orderly, efficient, and excellent work. I thank Professor Lauren F. Pfister for

impressively and invaluablely connecting this symposium to the special honor of holding a most encouraging and stimulating session: the dialogue between Professor Richard Swinburne and Professor Chung-ying Cheng on God, morality, and Confucianism.

Without any one of the following speakers, there certainly would not be the above event, the one that by all means appeared to be one of the remarkable milestones and one of the magnificent gifts to the 40th birthday of this journal. I wish to pay personal tribute to the significantly insightful presentations of these enthusiastic participants whose names were not yet brought about in the above occasions. They are (in alphabetical order of their surnames hereafter) Professor T. H. Barrett, Professor Nicholas Bunnin, Professor Anne Cheng, Professor Oliver Davies, Professor Ge Zhaoguang, Professor Richard King, Professor Richard Swinburne, Professor Xiao Wei, and Dr. Suzanne Xiao Yang. To make the current special issue all the more distinguishing and far reaching, I would like to give particular thanks to Professor Ping Zhang and Professor Brook Ziporyn for joining in this project and especially for their irreplaceable contribution to the theme.

To highlight such appreciation, I wish to express my fond and admirable thoughts to these colleagues and friends at the King's College London as well as in other regions in the UK, who had conveyed earnest effort and humble support to the conference or to myself: Professor John Broome, Professor Chen Bo, Ms. Vivienne Xiangwei Guo, Dr. Xiyi Huang, Ms. Aleksandra Kubat, Professor Karen L. Lai, Professor Sir G. E. R. Lloyd, Mr. Stephen Reid, Professor Pan Derong, Dr. Ralph Parfect, Professor Paul Standish, Professor Timothy Williamson, and Professor Zang Fengyu.

For both the current special issue and other ongoing projects of this journal and my own life journey in these past years, I wish to take this privileged moment to present my most hearty thankfulness to the high confidence, sustained faith, and precious friendship of many names above, alongside with the follows whose existence has been a genuine importance and ceaseless support in my world and to my work: Professor Günter Abel, Dr. Friederike Assandri, Professor Michael Beaney, Professor Daniel A. Bell, Professor Sébastien Billioud, Professor Edward S. Casey, Professor Lawrence Foster, Professor Bernhard Fuehrer, Mr. Cheng Hong, Ms. Renee M. Kojima-Itagaki, Professor Chen Lai, Professor Mathew A. Foust, Professor Joseph Grange, Professor Yong Huang, Dr. Xiyi Huang, Professor Xinyan Jiang, Professor Philip J. Ivanhoe, Professor Robert C. Neville, Professor On-cho Ng, Dr. Pan Song, Ms. Mirasy M. Pfister, Professor Xiaoyang Wei, Professor Yang Hongsheng, Professor Xiaomei Yang, Professor Jiyuan Yu, Professor Jinmei Yuan, Professor Qianfan Zhang, Professor Zhang Yunqi, and many others who are always on my mind and in my heart.

Needless to mention, for the enduring patience and tireless work and strongest shoulder, my wholehearted and most intimate gratitude by all means goes to our colleagues and friends on the team of *JOCP* at Wiley-Blackwell, whose involvement cannot be separated from every step of the *Journal's* growth, and herewith I am merely mentioning a few who are frequently responsible for the major, essential, and daily correspondence with this journal: Mr. Liam D. Cooper, Ms. Joyce Li, Ms. Michelle McCauley, Mr. Eric Piper, Mr. Frank Scott, and Ms. Margaret Zusky.

It should not be possible to mark an end to the above name list, namely a sentimental tribute. Instead, I should like to open this end into a beginning, namely a philosophical tribute to all people whose fellowship I owe to. Therefore, the following section presents a small study on the concept “fellowship.” This study is to give back my loyal esteem for and metaphysical understanding on “fellowship” to the above comrades and friends whose confidence, faith, and friendship are not only the source spring nurtured my day-to-day work but also the greater purpose for me to move on. In the meantime, the following thoughts on fellowship, morality, and religiousness should also be a most relevant tribute to this special issue as well as to all future issues in their endless progress of our boundless mind and heart.

The initial draft of this article was written for the presentation at the International Society for Chinese Philosophy Panel, entitled “New Topics: Chinese and Comparative Philosophy,” APA Eastern Division, 107th Annual Meeting, Boston, December 30, 2010. For using it in this foreword, herein I have condensed the length of the several previous versions and merely adopted an outline of my presentation in 2013's symposium under the title “Morality and Religiousness: Chinese and Western” at the King's College London.

The current study begins with one of the distinguished metaphors in the legacy of “Camelot,”¹ namely, “fellowship.” The goal of my discussion is to introduce and justify the metaphysical perspectives of the moral ideal on communal humanity. The above goal shall be achieved through comparing and contrasting the theological philosophy of three classical pragmatist thinkers and the cosmological metaphysics of Chinese philosophy.

Why a moral ideal such as “fellowship” is to be revisited herein? Today's high speed of scientific achievements is both insinuatingly and immensely devouring our harmonious ties which had once upon a time beatified the bondage of human souls. In such bondage, the fellowship highlights our human soulful journey in the moral spirit of unitarity, solidarity, loyalty. . . . “Camelot” would not effortlessly relive today, and its shine and essence and enlightenment must be timelessly, ceaselessly, and forever valued and aspired and pursued. Or else, we are jeopardizing not only the loss of “Camelot” but also the loss of our soul.

Such loss intrigues us against which we fight: the moral beauty of our fellowship has dislocated its greater quality and forms and directions. And therefore it eventuates a deeper disconnection not in our electronic modernity but among our moral souls. The wholesome value of our well-being is torn: on the one hand, modern maneuver has benefited us a most intimate connection regardless of our being geographically apart; on the other hand, the more intensively close we are to one another technologically, the less we spiritually bound to one another in shared causes.

The irony is that such separation among our souls expels the modern science from its own product, namely a novel alienation, which reduces our “expected” togetherness into our “unexpected” apartness. As theorists, it is time to urge ourselves on revisiting and reviving and reflecting of “fellowship.”

My study of fellowship aims at its metaphysical analysis, which is an anticipation of three classical American pragmatists and their emphasis on the significance of community. I shall therefore propose the metaphysical importance of communal “experience” to be a process of unifying and synthesizing and connecting our separate human selves who are blocked by a variety of “walls” such as individualism, egoism, sexism, prejudices, politics, plagiarism, and so forth.²

Through my analysis of William James,³ Josiah Royce,⁴ and a Whiteheadian scholar Joseph Grange,⁵ I shall come to complement them in comparing their pragmatist perspectives with Chinese cosmology in the *Yijing* philosophy, in order to conclude: the endeavors of the three pragmatists all put forward themselves toward a theological end.^{6,7} That is, they are achieving a religious harmony in God’s pre-established ideal community of fellowship.

The pragmatist contribution, nevertheless, has quite thoroughly and deeply and provocatively corrected the Cartesian dualism of dichotomy, and in doing so, it is metaphysically not only appealing to saving human lost souls but also refreshed and renewed and rediscovered the I–Thou relationship with an affectionate eye. That is, to see that our communal fellowship is to be embraced by a unified oneness, in which God’s creation is immanent in each individual experience of our own.

However, the question remains: while in God’s primordially given harmony we have reunited, we may still be strangers to God Himself and God to us, for that it is a one-direction harmony (at the cost of humans shepherded by God) rather than a mutually reachable connectivity. In another word, the theological root of the above pragmatists continues to present a new form of separation which is perhaps more fundamental, that is: the religious disconnection between the divine and the human, the God-given harmony within the divinity and

the humanistic community within created beings. In our modern world's illness, our loss in enormous technological wars may find a peace in God's hands but may not find an equal and mutual and comrade-like "fellowship" with God Himself.

While these above three pragmatism's struggles were in play on my screen, however, towards the final moment of putting down the curtain for this foreword, one day I was most obliged to receive an immediately needed as well as timelessly precious gift from Professor Robert C. Neville—his trilogy on philosophical theology: *Ultimates: Philosophical Theology, Volume One*,⁸ *Existence: Philosophical Theology, Volume Two*,⁹ *Religion: Philosophical Theology, Volume Three*.¹⁰ It would be certainly unfair and absolutely hasty for my current discussion to claim any endeavors of solid exploration or any forms of thoughtful inquiries or any depths of fuller argumentation, whilst I could not wait diving into the sea of Neville's gigantic volumes at this moment. Nevertheless, regarding my above general diagnosis on pragmatists' strategy and treatment of the time-honored inquiry into God and the world, One and Many, I assume it would be fairly fair and not necessarily hasty for this short passage to applaud Neville's "better development" of Whitehead, against many versions of metaphysical pluralism:

A better development of Whitehead is to say that past occasions retain their own achieved reality regardless of whether they are taken up in subsequent occasions, and hence every new unification creates a new one, which makes for an enlarged many, which in turn incites a new unification.¹¹

This "better development," in the setting of our today's global life and perplex issues of humanity, has no doubt should incite our most salient concern as well as has opened any schools of pragmatism's prospects by discerning a harmony of an enlarged many within a new unification.

Meanwhile, Neville has indeed also alerted that there is a potential muddle and ambiguity in the mind of Whitehead as well as at the heart of many Whiteheadian scholars', as their "metaphysical pluralism" is interpreted into the external Many which have no role in the divine One.¹² In another word, according to such Whiteheadian process metaphysics, if God takes upon the past, present, and future of all actual occasions, there would have left no space for plurality to emerge except God himself alone as the only real entity. If I understand Neville quite closely, his challenge has happened to pointedly aim at one of my same targets to the above pragmatists: they have not escaped from their remarkable self-contradiction, that is: in the unified Oneness of God's pre-established community of divine harmony, how a fellowship of communal Many find a chance to achieve?

On the other hand, in our dawn of the 21st century and the global harmony of plurality, a Chinese metaphysical perspective may contribute an advantage to pragmatists (as well as to Continentals or others). *Tian ren he yi* 天人合一 (unifying cosmic universe [namely, heaven and earth] and human world)¹³ in Chinese cosmology would eventually be able to propose a naturalistic as well as humanistic balance between science and humanity. It is to be noted: hereby “heaven” does not carry the same “Heaven” in the orthodox Christianity. Therefore, a non-religious metaphysics such as Chinese philosophy can be a much more convincing solution: it is a human concerned and natural and fellow-like enlightenment. Such is a cosmology of fellowship which dissolves the inhuman or religious extremist or environmentally unfriendly or scientifically polluted ... unbalances and disconnections and exclusiveness of our contemporary life.

I propose: Chinese philosophy is a non-religious “cosmological humanism” and it is not only prosperous in harmonizing the nature/science/technology with human fellowship but also fulfills the “fellowless” aspiration between God and His creatures.

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ENDNOTES

1. Norris J. Lacy, “Camelot,” in *The New Arthurian Encyclopedia*, ed. Norris J. Lacy (New York: Garland, 1991), 66–7. Retrieved July 4, 2012, from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camelot>.
2. As Edward S. Casey and Mary Watkins sigh in their book: “...the deeper human wounds that the wall’s continuing existence causes.” (*Up Against the Wall: Re-Imagining the U. S.-Mexico Border* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014], 7.)
3. Refer to John R. Shook, ed., *The Essential William James* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2011).
4. Refer to Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995).
5. Joseph Grange, *Eloquence Arising: A Theory of the Human Soul* (Albany: State University of New York, 2011). The version that I had accessed to was the manuscript form which was provided by the author himself.
6. The metaphysics of both Whitehead and Royce are conceived as pragmatism. For this perspective, please refer to Sandra B. Rosenthal, “Continuity, Contingency, and Time: The Divergent Intuitions of Whitehead and Pragmatism,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Pierce Society* 32, no. 4 (1996): 542–674. <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/27794985?uid=3738032=uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21102172919033>; and “Josiah Royce,” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/royce/>, first published August 3, 2004; substantive revision September 22, 2011.
7. I thank Mathew A. Foust’s presentation which inspired my attention to Josiah Royce and his philosophy of loyalty. Foust’s presentation was titled, “The Centrality of Loyalty in the Teachings of Confucius and Josiah Royce” (presented at the ISCWP group session, Annual Meeting, American Philosophical Association Eastern Division, New York, December 29, 2009).

8. Robert Cummings Neville, *Ultimates: Philosophical Theology, Volume One* (Albany: State University of New York, 2013).
9. Robert Cummings Neville, *Existence: Philosophical Theology, Volume Two* (Albany: State University of New York, 2014).
10. Robert Cummings Neville, *Religion: Philosophical Theology, Volume Three* (Albany: State University of New York, 2015).
11. Robert Cummings Neville, *Ultimates: Philosophical Theology, Volume One* (Albany: State University of New York, 2013), 177. However, I reserve my doubt on “Whitehead’s texts are ambiguous with regard to how they are to be interpreted in this way” (ibid.) and further my debate in a separate study.
12. Ibid.
13. My interpretation.

