

LINYU GU

TIME AS EMOTION VERSUS TIME AS MORALIZATION: WHITEHEAD AND THE *YIJING* 《易經》*

In the present writing I argue that one of the unique contributions of Alfred North Whitehead's process metaphysics is its potential tendency to develop an integrated view of time and emotion, which can be improved by appropriating the moralistic dimension on time and harmonization in Chinese *Yi* 易 philosophy. From the *Yi* perspective, I propose that whereas Whitehead conceives that our primitive experience of time is the emotional harmony between physical and mental worlds, the Chinese thought of *Yi* (change) presents time (*shi* 時) as "ceaseless creativity (*sheng sheng* 生生)" of "human self-cultivation (*zi qiang* 自強)" in approaching a "harmonious unity of heaven, earth, and man" (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一). This position intends to exhibit that whereas both Whitehead and the *Yi Jing* 易經 contemplate time as the creative process of harmony, Whitehead does not pursue this process as the human self-transformation like that in Chinese philosophy. In Whiteheadian philosophy of organism, the practical activity of a creative man has no significant status and emphasis but becomes only an integral and equivalent part of the cosmos.

I. TIME AS EMOTIONAL CONFORMATION

1. *Time and Emotion*

"Actual occasions" or "actual entities" grounds the primary subject matter of Whitehead's philosophy. For Whitehead, the world is in a constantly processing state of flux, and this world is composed of "actual occasions." The life of an "actual occasion" is an attempt to achieve its goal or aim, namely, "subjective aim," in the way of constantly becoming and passing away. The growth of these "actual occasions" is termed "concrecence" by Whitehead, which is given

LINYU GU, Ph.D. in Philosophy, Managing Editor, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Specialties: process philosophy/theology/feminism, Chinese philosophy, modern Japanese thought. E-mail: linyu@hawaii.edu

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by the experiencing process of “actual occasions”—“prehension” or “feeling.” In the manner of “prehensions” or “feelings,” “actual occasions” achieve their “subjective aim.”

The nature of Whitehead’s process philosophy is a theory of emotional feelings in which the usage of the language of feeling intends to interpret the reality and the universe into the creative living processes. Whitehead, who developed his philosophy of feeling independently of his predecessors such as Hume, Leibniz, Bradley, Bergson, and James, has many of the same insights and arrived at many of the same conclusions especially with James. For Whitehead, emotion is fundamental because it is what human beings have in common with the rest of nature although human experience is characterized by emotion more than anything else. He says:

The primitive form of physical experience is emotional—blind emotion—received as felt elsewhere in another occasion and conformally appropriated as a subjective passion. (PR, 162)

In Whitehead, “emotion” is a series of feelings that go beyond a certain temporal moment, and completes the continuity of actual occasions by feeling the temporality. Robert C. Neville gives an explicit illumination of this Whiteheadian concept of emotion:

With energy and embodiment combined, it is possible to feel oneself part of the flowing, ongoing processes of nature and society. One derives one’s being from within the natural processes, and exhibits that being by responding to those processes.¹

Whitehead’s process philosophy is also regarded by Neville as the twentieth century’s most elaborate attempt to rethink the problematic of time.² The ultimate goal of Whitehead’s approach is to present a picture of time-structured process of the universe in creative experience. In this picture, time, with emotion, spreads its living creativity to the whole of reality: “The basis of experience is emotional.”³ If we borrow the term “two sides of time” from William W. Hammer-schmidt’s analysis of Whitehead⁴ namely, the “formal side” or structural side and “nonformal” or dynamic side, we would say that the importance of the nonformal side of time is remarkably investigated by Whitehead. Since Plato, the formal side of time, such as time-geometry, time-analysis, time-measurement, and so on has received large discussion whereas the nonformal side of time has been recognized only in little discussion. However, Whitehead originally suggests that time is emotional experience that exists in our feeling of time. Although Leibniz sees time as “orders” and “relations” to hold our perceptions in both subjective world and objective world, as a rejection of the perceptive experience, Whitehead suggests that our primitive experience of time is rather the emotional feeling itself.

2. *Harmonious Conformation*

Whitehead also points out that emotional feeling is a conformation that carries the ongoing flow of our temporal experience. He says:

In the conformal feelings the *how* of feeling reproduces what is felt. Some conformation is necessary as a basis of vector transition, whereby the past is synthesized with the present. (PR, 164)

The original meaning of “conformation” is that something takes a character from something else. Here, in rejecting perceptual experience, Whitehead offers a theory of conformal feelings, which suggests that we directly feel the movement of the past into the future in our temporal experience.

For Hume, we invite the future’s conformity to the past through the repeated temporal juxtaposition of similar sensations. However, Whitehead claims that we can not presuppose the temporal conformity in sensation but we can feel the conformity of the future to the past in our sense experience. In this way, the past and the future are synthesized and harmonized with the present through our conformal feeling. David L. Hall points out:

... the way of conformal feelings ... are, ... merely introductory to the principal means of bringing harmony into an occasion of experience.⁵

Time as emotion is not simply involved in the continuity of temporality but the continuity of feelings. In the feeling of time, our temporal experience appears rather as an emotional transformation from objectivity to subjectivity than the divisions of early and later temporal parts. We receive an interpretation of the temporal nature of the world because we emotionally feel and are involved in the flow of time, which transforms the past into the future in the way of conforming physicality to mentality, sociality to individuality, and time to self.

3. *Self-Becoming as Self-Development*

Whitehead takes the process step to conceive the emotional process of actual occasions is to harmonize a past occasion with a future occasion, an individual occasion with a communal unity, and a subjective perception with an objective function. He states:

Thus all things are to be conceived as qualifications of actual occasions. ... *how* an actual entity becomes constitutes *what* that actual entity is. This principle states that the *being* of a *res vera* is constituted by its ‘becoming.’ The way in which one actual entity is qualified by other actual entities is the ‘experience’ of the actual world enjoyed by that actual entity, as subject. ... Process is the becoming of experience. (PR, 166)

Here we see that Whitehead's initial grasp of time as the emotion of conformal feelings is to show that the growth of an occasion is a self-development of becoming fulfilled and actualized. This process of becoming particularly finds the emotional experience in a creative act that internally transforms an occasion into the process of concrecent growth. For an actual occasion, the goal of its self-development is to achieve a novelty that contains a potential occasion. This concrecent phase of conformal feelings is a transformative stage that makes the self-development of occasions available and possible. In concrecence, a potential occasion is given its growth by many other occasions and transformed into an accomplished and actualized world. For Whitehead, this process of becoming brings about a conformal harmony between past and future, actuality and potentiality, and time and self. This process is also perceived by Whitehead as a process view of morality. He says:

Morality is always the aim at that union of harmony, intensity, and vividness which involves the perfection of importance for that occasion.⁶

In this context, the self-developing process of an occasion is a moral process to achieve the harmony between physical world and mental world, macrocosmic world and microcosmic world, and external world and internal world.

II. TIME AS MORALISTIC HARMONIZATION: A REINTERPRETATION OF WHITEHEAD

1. Timeless Moralization versus Timeless Emotion

Chinese *Yi* perspective on time as moralization and Whitehead's process approach on time as emotion, although from different approaches, similarly hold that time lies in the unitary experience of man and the universe. In this context, whereas Whitehead, based on his theory of dipolar contrast of physicality and mentality, suggests that the life of time is a nonlinear process of an occasion's self-becoming, the *Yi* thinking proclaims that the temporal experience exists in the timeless activity of human self-cultivation according to the *yin* 陰/*yang* 陽 mutual transformation. Hence, what I mean by the timeless process in the *Yi* philosophy and Whitehead indicates, on the one hand, a nonlinear process that transcends the three ages of past, present, and future into a unitary experience, and on the other, an internal process that transforms time from an external form into an internal creativity.

In Chinese philosophy, the *Yi* humanistic thought is applied in every aspect, which is based on the principle of *tian ren he yi*. As moral practice, *yi* is a timeless self-cultivation of performing virtuous action, namely, the action of creating a harmony between man and his natural and social environment. The *Yi* motif of humanism is to be revealed as the understanding of a human person finding himself in both his cosmological and communal world. It should be noted that neither Whitehead nor Chinese philosophy understands time as the external form or eternity but a cosmological process of internal transformation.

In light of what was discussed earlier, although Whitehead regards time as the emotional experience of conforming the objective world to the subjective world, this conformal unity of time and self is different from the *Yi* motif of the harmonious unity of heaven and man. In other words, whereas in the *Yi Jing* there is a moralistic harmonization between man and the universe, in Whitehead the harmonious conformation between physical and conceptual feelings of actual occasions is rather organismic. Based on the *yin/yang* theory in Chinese philosophy, the *Yi* motif of humanistic cosmology implies that the moralistic harmonization is cosmological as well as practical.

As one who aims to overcome the traditional externalistic understanding of time, Whitehead's process thinking presents an access to the East Asian thoughts in considering time as an emotional flow of creative becoming. For Whitehead, reality is a constant movement of emotion, which is composed of the harmonious experience among actual occasions. The central idea of this process approach is significantly elaborated in Whitehead's theory of conformation, which shows that the emotional harmony is the continuity of feelings. This harmony is undertaken in the way of conforming the external world to the internal world, namely, the conformation of physicality to mentality. In this conformity, the objective content is transformed into the subjective feelings, so that the subjective feelings and the objective world become a harmonious unity.

For the cosmological thinking of the *Yi Jing*, time is to experience the totality of man and his natural and social world in his self-cultivation:

. . . This creates the idea of time. Since it is the same heaven moving with untiring power, there is also created the idea of duration both in and beyond time, a movement that never stops nor slackens, just as one day follows another in an unending course. This duration in time is the image of the power inherent in the Creative. (IC, 6-7)

Time in the *Yi Jing* is presented as the power of creativity in a dual sense—on the one hand it is the action of the natural world and on the other it is the action of the human world. A *jun zi* 君子 (a superior and wise man) is the one who develops his higher nature through trans-

forming the creativity of the natural world into his own moral action. In this context, time for Chinese *Yi* tradition is incorporated with both cosmological and moral experiences of human existence. By comparing the *Yi Jing* and Whitehead, it must be noticed that, in Whitehead, although the external world is to be transformed into the emotional world of organism, this temporal process is not coordinated with a human self but an actual occasion. Here a human world in fact is overlooked and so thus a self as human existence is actually left out from time.

2. *Mutual Moralization of Harmonizing Yin with Yang*

Just as in Whitehead's doctrine of dipolar contrast, in Chinese cosmological thinking, *yi*, change, represents a dynamic wholeness of mutual, interrelated, and incessant creativity between *Yin* and *Yang*. The *Yi Jing* presents this idea in a famous commentary in chapter 11 of the *Xi Ci* 繫辭 (the *Great Commentary* or the *Yi Zhuan*):

There is in the Changes the Great Primal Beginning. This generates the two primary forces. The two primary forces generate the four images. The four images generate the eight trigrams. The eight trigrams determine good fortune and misfortune. Good fortune and misfortune create the great field of action (IC, 318)

The creative process of the world appearing in the Greek tradition is the motion of directed, regular, and lasting changes; however, in the Chinese tradition it is the process of undirected and unordered changes. In this Chinese view of the world creating, the primal force of the cosmos is not set up by a single image of power but a complex system of images based on the dipolar beginning of *yin* and *yang*.

The essential images of *yin* and *yang*, and eight trigrams have manifold meanings in symbolizing all things that create, happen, and change in heaven and on earth and so representing human affairs and activities in the world. The process of this creative movement is a unity of changes that is change toward its own original source—the cosmic forces of *yin* and *yang*. The flow of alternating interchanges between *yin* and *yang* shows a cosmological motion—*Dao* 道, which makes all changes and creativity possible. The *Dao* motion of *yin/yang* emphasizes the circulation of change by symbolizing a circular form of the Great Primal Beginning (*tai ji* 太極). *Tai ji* is a fundamental concept in Chinese cosmological thinking, which plays an important role in the system of images of the *Yi Jing*. On the basis of *tai ji*, the unity of the *yin/yang* polarity produces two opposite cosmic forces of change in the constant alternating process, from *yin* to *yang* and *yang* to *yin*. In this manner, the cosmic world is perceived as a ceaseless

creativity of *yin/yang* mutual movements, which shows a hidden understanding of time, which regards time as a harmonizing process of mutual, interrelated, and incessantly reproductive changes between the two forces of *yin* and *yang*.

Thus we can see that in the *Yi Jing* there is a fundamental affinity to Whitehead's cosmological theory of two processes of feelings. According to Whitehead, each actual occasion is dipolar in having a conceptual process as well as a physical process in the creative force of God.⁷ Whereas the *Yi* thinking regards time as a harmonious process of internal changes within the unitary forces of *yin* and *yang* of *tai ji* or Dao, Whitehead conceives time as a conformal process of internal feelings within the unity of physicality and mentality.

Both Whiteheadian cosmology and the *Yi* cosmology admit that the harmonious process of creative experience is a mutual movement between two polar forces, and for both doctrines, morality is based on the cosmological harmony between the two poles of *yin* and *yang*/physicality and mentality.

According to the *Yi Jing*, change is a mutual movement between *yin* and *yang*, which presents a nonlinear, unordered, and nondirected process on many different levels. Most of all, this seemingly chaotic harmony is found in the internal alteration of *yin/yang* movement. As shown in the Diagram of the Great Primal Beginning (*tai ji tu* 太極圖), in the totality of *yin* and *yang*, *yin* represents the darkness changing into *yang* in becoming bright and *yang* the brightness changing into *yin* in becoming dark, and so on. *Yin* and *yang* as opposites and complements are alternatively changes into each other in becoming a whole unity:

One *yin* and one *yang* in alternation is called *Dao*. To carry forward this is called the good, to accomplish this is called the nature of world.
(ZB, 141)

The alternative changes between *yin* and *yang* represents that the power of *Dao* is maintained in the way in which internal change completes the unity of *yin* and *yang*. The power of *Dao* emphasizes the internal change between *yin* and *yang* more than change itself. Hence the two primal powers of *yin* and *yang* are to be regarded as one unitary power but not the two separate ones.

In Whitehead's theory of conformal feelings, the internal movement between physicality and mentality in Whitehead can be perceived from the point of view of *yin/yang* alternation. For Whitehead, "conformation" indicates that the self-becoming process of actual occasions lies in the mutual development of conforming physicality to mentality, and present to past. As a fundamental concept, "conformation" implies that the process experience of actual occasions does not

exist in its genetic growth but in its internal growth. This internal growth is a mutual production between physical poles and mental poles, which reflects a dipolar characteristic of actual occasions. An actual occasion is an undivided experience in maintaining the two contrast poles, namely, the physical and mental poles, within a unity of "self-formation." In the concrescence of actual occasions, the physical feelings and conceptual feelings generate, integrate, and reproduce into each other as a whole movement of "togetherness." (PR, 189) This dipolar unity of physicality and mentality appears a parallel unity as that in the *tai ji* unity of *yin* and *yang*.

According to the *Yi Jing*, the world is a trinity of heaven, earth, and man, in which the three powers correspond to each other in one unity. Benevolence and justice in the human world are to correspond to the fundamental powers of *yin* and *yang*, and *rou* and *gang* in the cosmic world of heaven and earth. This suggests that as man experiences his surroundings he also experiences his being a part of the whole universe. Hence *yi* as a temporal process is rooted in human moralistic activity of self-cultivation, which is a creative process of harmonizing the external world into the internal world. As Chung-ying Cheng points out:

According to the philosophy of the *I Ching*, the world is the dynamic unity and unification of the *yin* and the *yang*, where the *yin* represents the receptive and the potential and the *yang* represents the creative and the actual. One can readily see that in time (the temporal) there is creative realization of being. . . . In light of this unity of time and being based on the unity of paradigmatic *yin* and *yang*, we will see a new meaning or new interpretation of the unity and unification of heaven and humanity . . . ⁸

In the *Yi* philosophy, cosmological thinking always carries a moralistic meaning whereas the moral practice always has a cosmological ground. As *yi* signifies a cosmical process of mutual, interrelated, and incessant changes, it also gives rise to a moral transformation of man's participating into the world. The achievement of this transformation is to become a *jun zi* who follows the way (Dao) of heaven and earth to develop himself by harmonizing the cosmic powers with his actions. In the creative force of *tai ji* or Dao, time appears as a course of mutual transformation between man and his world, in which through his understanding of the world, man cultivates himself into a *jun zi* or a great man who has superior wisdom.

In this internal course of harmony, both man and the world are parts of the one and there is no necessity nor absoluteness of separation between a cosmic world and a human world. When these principles are applied, man is formed in a unity with heaven and earth by comprehending and participating in the creative process of heaven

and earth, and thus man realizes his potential creativity in harmonizing and cooperating with heaven and earth. This is the fundamental way for a man to become a person who has the superior wisdom and thus to cultivate and develop himself toward the perfection of the universe. Therefore, according to the *Yi Jing* thinking, to achieve the perfection of the universe is to reformulate all things that happen in heaven and on earth in man's everyday life.

Nevertheless, no one should deny that Whitehead articulates an organismic cosmology of time in his process metaphysics, which can be reinterpreted by the way of Chinese *Yi* cosmology. However, there remains a significant difference between Whitehead's organismic cosmology and the *Yi Jing* cosmology. In the *Yi Jing*, the cosmological thinking is parallel to the moralistic thinking and thus the philosophy of the cosmos implies the philosophy of man, in which time is clearly assumed as the understanding of human moral activity. Throughout a moral self-transformation, man comprehends the change of the world in transforming himself toward the perfection of his world. In Whitehead's process theory, time is the primitive experience of actual occasions, which does not show the philosophy of man but the philosophy of actual occasions.

It is true that Whitehead draws the primary datum of human experience, but it is the "cellular activities"⁹ of actual occasions' self-becoming as organismic concrescence, which is not a particular human self-transformation of morality. Although the *Yi Jing* and Whitehead can be mutually interpreted and compared, the former emphasizes the notion of time as the understanding of man's moral practice whereas the latter emphasizes time as the organismic process of actual occasions. The internal course for the *Yi Jing* is the mutual transformation between man and the world within the unity of *tai ji*; however, being distinctive from this, the internal process in Whitehead is the transformation between the world of physicality and that of mentality of organismic experience. Lik Kuen Tong points out:

Now lying at the heart of Whitehead's ontology and cosmology is the idea of 'organic synthesis' . . . which defines the real essence of Creativity . . .¹⁰

This implies that, based on the undivided experience of physical and conceptual processes, the unitary activity in Whitehead is rooted in the organic growth of occasions' emotional feelings.

3. Interrelated Moralization of Harmonizing Community with Individuality

Moreover, *yi* presents an interrelated change that manifests the interrelationships of all things in the world through the inner powers

of *yin* and *yang*. This is also to say that in the power of *yin/yang* the cosmological configurations of all things are harmonized into the Great Primal Beginning. The creativity of *tai ji* is the origin and source of things produced, which are called *xiang*. The original source of change is the possibility of creating all forms whereas the forms represent and actualize the hidden power of the original source as well. Based on this understanding, the creative process of cosmic transformation is given in the *Yi Jing* as the circular arrangements of the trigrams in the patterns of Fu Xi and King Wen and the hexagrams in the pattern of Fu Xi. These diagrams exhibit the circularly harmonizing process of natural development of forms as a whole. Both circular forms show a wonderful harmony of the changes in the lines of the figures and changes of the universe and human society.

Within the system of interrelationships of all cosmic events, *yi* as change presents a harmonious framework of *Dao*, namely, the inner power of changes. In *Dao*, all movements are accomplished by one source:

In it are included the forms and the scope of everything in the heavens and on earth, so that nothing escapes it. In it all things everywhere are completed, so that none is missing. Therefore by means of it we can penetrate the tao of day and night, and so understand it. Therefore the spirit is bound to no one place, nor the Book of Changes to any one form. (IC, 296)

Although everything that happens obeys its position in heaven and on earth, according to *Dao* the differentiations and opposition are interrelated by undergoing the transformation of determinations.

Consequently, based on the mutual process of conforming physicality to mentality, for Whitehead, the internal relatedness of all actual occasions in the universe becomes possible, and the existence of God as the original creativity provides a “pre-established harmony” for this possibility. As such, Whiteheadian time involves an interrelated movement among actual occasions and harmonizes all processes of occasions into the unity of togetherness. At the same time, the mutual movement between physical and conceptual experience manifests the multiplicity of actual occasions. In this process, the multiplicity of occasions depends on its primary unity in an internal harmony. Here Whitehead holds that an actual occasion is always a many of one and one togetherness of many constituents. Hence while in the *Yi Jing*, the meaning of time is to harmonize all things and events in the world into the unitary movement of *tai ji* or *Dao*, Whitehead’s thought comes very close to this thinking.

Just as the *Yi Jing* shows the interrelated processes of hexagramic creation within the forces of *yin* and *yang*, Whitehead speaks of the complex relation, which shares the idea of considering time as the

internal changes among the interrelated progressions of hexagrams in the unity of *yin* and *yang*. Whitehead himself states:

Now in the philosophy of organism, passing beyond Locke's explicit statement, the notion of a real constitution is taken to mean that the eternal objects function by introducing the multiplicity of actual entities as constitutive of the actual entity in question. Thus the constitution is 'real' because it assigns its status in the real world to the actual entity. . . . it is some actual thing with its correlated actual world. This is the direct denial of the Cartesian doctrine . . . (PR, 59)

As a striking similarity in Whiteheadian cosmology, the creativity of God, just like the creativity of Dao, generates, penetrates, and coordinates all existences in the unity of two poles, namely, physical and mental poles. Therefore, creativity for both the *Yi Jing* and Whitehead is nothing apart from the interrelated processes of all creations in a unitary phase of physical and conceptual experience. For this, Chang Chung-Yuan profoundly points out:

When all particularities move into one, each particularity embraces all other particularities, together entering into the one. This doubling and redoubling process ontologically represents the great sympathy. When one enters into all, one embraces all particularities and enters into each. Such a process represents the great creativity, which is supported by all the vitality of sympathy. . . . The one is the source of creativity. From the great one are created all the glories of the world.¹¹

The cosmological view in the *Yi Jing* indicates that the harmonious characterization of the mutual movements between *yin* and *yang* is the fundamental pattern of the interrelating processes of changes among different situations and events of human actions and decisions. In this way, the interrelationship between man and his world is grounded in man's moral action: only when man's action happens in coordination with the harmony between *yin* and *yang* movements is it considered as a moral action.

The *Yi* cosmology can be said to be broadly based on the *yin/yang* principle, and thus the self-cultivation of a *jun zi* is to follow the laws of interchanges and interrelationships between *yin* and *yang*. This shows a close relationship between the cosmos and human actions by revealing a cosmological significance in understanding as necessary for morality. As the two sides of one dynamic unity, *yang* represents heaven, the creative, and the strong, while *yin* represents earth, the receptive, and the soft. The *yin/yang* theory maintains that *jun zi* as the superior and wise man must cultivate himself into having the virtues of heaven and earth. As the *Xiang Zhuan* 象傳 (the *Commentary on Images*) says:

The movement of heaven is full of power. Thus the superior man makes himself strong and untiring. (IC, 373)

The earth's condition is receptive devotion. Thus the superior man who has breadth of character carries the outer world. (IC, 389)

Qian (Heaven) is the strongest of all things in the universe. . . . The *Kun* (Earth) is the most devoted of all things in the world. (ZB, 161)

Just as heaven represents the untiring virtue of *jun zi*, the earth represents the devoting virtue of him. This position suggests that *yin* is the complement of *yang* but not the opposite because the earth does not conflict with the heaven but completes it.

Here, as applied to human actions, we come to see that the principle of *yin/yang* harmony is not only applied in the relationship between man and woman but also in one individual's self-cultivation in achieving the virtues of both heaven and earth. In a *jun zi*'s moral cultivation, the devotion side and the creative side must coexist in his action for the virtue of *yin* is as important as that of *yang*. The virtue of *yin*, just like the character of earth, represents the solidity and receptivity by which *yin* is able to carry and preserve all things that live upon it. Whereas *yin* as the character of devotion that bears all things including good and evil without exception, and in the same way a wise man should have the characters of breadth and sustaining power. The power of *yin* or earth enables a *jun zi* to support and bear all kinds of human affairs in his action.

Therefore, the *Yi Jing* points out that *jun zi* must be the example of combining the virtues of both the creative (*yang*) character and the devoting (*yin*) character for cultivating himself into a "strong and untiring," as well as a receptive and devoting, gentleman. From this point of view, moreover, the *Yi Jing* sees the interchange (*yi*) between *yin* and *yang* as the source power of birth, producing, and creating. The creative harmony between *yin* and *yang* is regarded as the process of producing the goodness as this production carries the meaning of birth, love, and raising. *Yin* and *yang* as two polar forces of the universe are the sources of a superior man's supreme virtue in the harmonizing movement of Dao. The power of Dao is to maintain the constant transformation between the polar forces by bringing out the growth of a wise man's self-cultivation.

Coincidentally, Charles Hartshorne comments on Whitehead's metaphysics, that expresses a similar characteristic with the *Yi Jing*:

Whitehead draw . . . the primary nonhuman (and nondivine) datum of human experience. . . . And at one stroke it explains both how we know subhuman reality, and how we are causally influenced by such reality. . . . Whitehead seems to be the only philosopher to note the universality of societies in the cosmos, at all levels; also,

and best of all, he is the first to see that what is called an individual in common life (and much philosophy) can only be understood as a form of sequence of particular actualities socially inheriting a common quality from antecedent members; and that personality itself is a special temporally linear case of such social—that is, sympathetic—inheritance.¹²

These comments have shown that, according to Whitehead's organic philosophy, the human body as an occasion is nothing but the most necessary portion of our social environment with other living beings or other occasions, in which each occasion lives in its own life. In this case, for Whitehead, time is the process of a living being undergoing the relational changes of the "societies" of actual occasions; each living being arises through the social relations to others in its process sequence of one in many and many in one.

For Whitehead, as for the *Yi Jing*, experience is dipolar, which are the contrasting yet interrelated powers of one whole experience. In Whitehead, each actual occasion is dipolar in having a conceptual as well as a physical feeling, and a complexity of these feelings harmonizes the two reverted poles into a balanced synthesis. In such a case, the creative feelings arise from the contrast between physical and mental poles, and this contrast maintains both the immediate present and the relevant future in one unity. Time then is an interrelating process of synthesizing physicality and mentality into an ongoing passage of diverse feelings.

Nevertheless, what Whitehead maintains about the harmony of polarities is basically an organic togetherness of consciousness. Although his metaphysics is suggested as the philosophy of creativity, this creative process is no more than the organic concrescences of actual occasions. Time then is the harmonizing movements of physical and mental feelings in contributing the temporal life of reproducing occasions. But in the *Yi Jing*, the *yin/yang* polarities are directed to the interrelating processes of human activities, which coordinates a human self with his society. Therefore, although Whitehead recognizes the interrelating opposites between the two poles of physicality and mentality, he does not establish the affinity between humanity and reality in terms of exploring human self-cultivation as that in the tradition of the *Yi Jing*.

From the standpoint of the *Yi* perspective, a superior man's self-cultivation is to manifest the cosmic harmony between *yin* and *yang* in his moral practice of harmonizing himself with his social relationships, that is, his relationship with family and society. Although here family represents the laws obtaining within the household, it is to be largely transferred to the outside life for keeping the state and society in order. In this sense, when family (*Jia Ren* 家人) is in order, all the

social relationships of mankind will be in order. As the fundamental relationship of the universe is the relationship between *yin* and *yang*, the foundation of the family is the relationship between husband and wife.

According to the cosmological laws of *yin/yang* position in nature, husband and wife take their proper places in the family, when the husband has duty outside of the family the wife has the primary importance inside of the family. This is the tie that holds the whole family relationships. Meanwhile, within the family there is a need for a strong authority that is represented by the parents. The relationships between elder and younger brothers or sisters will also be in the correct order. These social relationships found within the family are then to be carried over to the relationships in society and country. In this context, the family is the native soil on which the practice of moral duty is made through natural affection. Within a small circle, a basis of moral performance is created and is to be widened to include human relationship in general.

Consequently, *Tong Ren* 同人 (Fellowship with Men) exhibits an example of family relationships performed in a widely social sphere of other human individuals. The Fellowship with Men suggests that the true fellowship among men must be based upon a universal concern of order and harmony. The private interests of individuals do not create lasting and firm fellowship among men. True fellowship is to reach the goal of humanity by accomplishing the strength of moral harmony. Because the fellowship is to lead to harmony, so a persevering and enlightened leader is needed, who is a man with clear, convincing, and inspiring aims to organically arrange all fellowships in the community or society. Just as the harmonious arrangement of diagrams in the patterns of Fu Xi, the above family and social relationships appeared in the *Yi Jing* deal most of all with the positions and roles of human beings in society, which is based on cosmic harmony. In this framework of relationships between people and the world, the cosmic forces of *yin/yang* harmony fundamentally imposes on a person when he seeks his place within humanity.

Within the tradition of classical American philosophy running through thinkers such as Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, and John Dewey, Whitehead developed the social and interrelated character of actual occasions. He proclaims that the world of actual occasions is a group or a togetherness of relationships that is termed by him as “social order”:

A ‘society,’ in the sense in which that term is here used, is a nexus with social order, and an ‘enduring object,’ or ‘enduring creature,’ is a society whose social order has taken the special form of ‘personal order.’ (PR, 34)

Accordingly, one of the central points of Whiteheadian time emphasizes that each actual occasion is a social process constituted by its predecessors and successors, and past and future. Thus the life of a private individual occasion must be endured in the public relationships with other occasions in order to form a social harmony. In other words, a member of occasions shares the similarities of other members in this social process. For Whitehead, an individual occasion is a special kind of social process which is to be found in a society; and a society also enjoys an individual process when it is constituted by many individual occasions. Here Whitehead points out that the world is not a static event but a creative process in which one arises from the society of many and many enters into one complex unity. In this living process, each occasion contributes and interrelates to each other, and thus together composes the universe.

Whitehead's unique contribution that distinguishes himself from the philosophical traditions in the past is convincingly represented in his doctrine of feelings. Viewed from this theory, an actual occasion is multifariously dual, both physical and mental, both macrocosmic and microcosmic, both becoming and perishing, both many and one, and both social and personal. For this Whiteheadian social inquiry, Steve Odin provides a significant remark:

Whitehead emphasizes the *social* as an ultimate philosophical category. Similar to both Dewey and Mead, Whitehead conceives of the self as social in that it arises through a dynamic process of interaction between an individual organism and its social environment.¹³

From the perspective of Chinese philosophy, the above statement on Whitehead is rather a description on the harmonious interrelationship between the universe and human being in the philosophy of the *Yi Jing*. Based upon the dipolar thinking, both Whitehead and the *Yi* tradition see an individual oneness as rooted in the social and communal ground of many others.

Nevertheless, a fundamental difference between a Whiteheadian aesthetic society of organism and a moral society of humanism in the *Yi Jing* is to be particularly noticed. For the philosophy of *Yi*, heaven, earth, and man are in a unifying trinity that makes a human self relate to its cosmic and social surrounds. This point of view is particularly represented in the circular symbol of Fu Xi's pattern that provides the primary relationships between an individual and its totality. The *Yi* symbolic way of thinking is to explore the human relationships in the existential situation of man's participating into his social and natural world. Chung-ying Cheng points out:

. . . we can see how the *Yijing* symbolism leads to a formulation of metaphysics from its well-formulated symbolic system of dynamic

relationships. This means that the *Yijing* formulates a metaphysical system rooted in the existential/cosmological/practical experiences of man which can be extended into ethical/axiological/onto-cosmological/cosmo-ontological/episte-mological *concepts* and categories.¹⁴

The above *Yi* motif of thinking represents a different orientation from that of Whiteheadian philosophy of organism in which social relationships mainly indicate a serially ordered society of actual occasions.

4. *Ceaseless Moralization in Harmonizing Dao with Zi Qiang* 自強 (*Self-Cultivation*)

In understanding change as the alternating changes of *yin/yang*, four seasons, and all events in the world, time in the *Yi Jing* is perceived as the creative process of reproduction and re-creation. This is what the *Xi Ci* says “*Sheng sheng zhi wei yi* 生生之謂易 (The ceaseless creativity is called *yi* [change]” [ZB, 141]). The ceaseless principle of this creation underlines that change finds its power only in the things it creates, just as things find their creativity in the process of creation itself. However, *yi* as the re-creating process is not simply a process of returning to the original place but continuously growing into a renewed process.

As emphasized by the *Yi Jing*, the process of change is a self-creation in which *tai ji*, the unity of *yin/yang*, presents the process of *Dao* that gives rise to both the source of changes and the process of changes. In the powers of *yin/yang*, the action of the derived forces of all things is to complete the creative movement of production and reproduction:

The Changes is a book
From which one may not hold aloof.
Its tao is forever changing—
Alternation, movement without rest,
Flowing through the six empty places;
Rising and sinking without fixed law,
Firm and yielding transform each other.
They cannot be confined within a rule;
It is only change that is at work here.
(IC, 348)

Within this context, the *Yi* theory of time is marked by a harmonizing movement of reproduction that is led by *Dao*.

The text of the *Yi Jing* says about the eleventh hexagram, *Tai*: (above: *Kun*; below: *Qian*) *Tai* (peace and contentment): The small goes away; the great comes. Good fortune. Success . . . No plain not followed by slope. No progress not followed by return. (ZB, 18)

The *Tuan Zhuan* 彖傳 (the Commentary on Hexagrams) judges this:

In this way, heaven and earth penetrate each other and all beings transform into each other. Upper and lower exchange and all their wishes communicate. The *yang* is contained inside whereas the *yin* appears outside and so do the strong and the soft. (ZB, 92)

In this hexagram, the trigram *Qian* is in lower position but tends to move upward and the upper trigram *Kun* tends downward. This hexagram suggests the idea of setback by emphasizing a potential strongness and prosperous coming up. The exchanges and transformation between heaven and earth, and *yang* and *yin* means that the reproductive movements are brought by the potential progress of returning. The idea of “return (*fan* 返)” in the *Yi Jing* implies that setback is a great approach to going forward.¹⁵ Therefore, a constantly returning movement as change is not simply backwards but reproducing, which do not depart again from the original position but from the new place of “peace” and “contentment.”

The central concern on time in the *Yi Jing* is the concern of *yi*, and by *yi* the *Yi Jing* indicates a fundamental idea of *sheng sheng* as stated in the *Great Commentary*. Lik Kuen Tong asserts:

The Chinese expression here—*sheng sheng*—implies ‘incessant activity,’ which I think is basically what Whitehead has in mind.¹⁶

It is true that both the *Yi Jing* and Whitehead’s cosmology see that the reality of changes is within an incessant creativity of internal processes. The idea of *sheng sheng* as a constant process of reproduction shows a striking similarity with Whitehead’s approach, which claims that the creative becoming is provided by the reproduction of actual occasions of the past. In this manner, time exists in the reproducing process of returning from the present to the past, from the conceptual feelings to the physical feelings, and from potentiality to actuality.

Whitehead writes:

The novel actual entity, which is the effect, is the reproduction of the many actual entities of the past. . . . A simple physical feeling enjoys a characteristic which has been variously described as “re-enaction,” “reproduction,” and “conformation.” . . . And yet there is always change; for time is cumulative as well as reproductive . . . (PR, 238)

From these expressions, we can see that “conformation” is the manner through which the becoming processes of actual occasions are reproduced throughout their past feelings. However, an actual occasion does not simply grasp the data from the past but is conformed to the past with its present experience. It is a renewed process constituted by a conformal returning from mental feelings to physical feelings, from potentialities to actualities, from the future to the past, and vice versa.

Given this, in the growth of an actual occasion, its conformal phase as the basic and dominant phase unites the physical and mental poles into a oneness that *can* be expressed by the circular diagram of *tai ji* in the *Yi Jing*. In other words, the *tai ji* diagram may be applied as a diagram of “conforming” two poles into one unity in Whitehead. With this application, we may compare the power of Whitehead’s God with the power of *tai ji*, and the creativity of becoming with the creativity of *Dao*.¹⁷ In Whitehead’s cosmology, God is an ultimate actual occasion with two natures, namely, primordial nature and consequent nature. The former constitutes the conceptual poles of occasions and the latter formulates the physical poles. The concept of God can be paralleled with the holistic characteristic of *tai ji*, which comprises *yin* and *yang* two poles just as God is comprised by his primordial nature and his consequent nature. In the two natures of God there are two primary poles, the physical and mental, which are two primary pairs of contrasting characters to be conformed to each other. Through this primary conformation, the universe is continually created into the processes of societies of actual occasions and societies of such societies.

From the view of *tai ji*, these Whiteheadian societies of occasions could be seen as forms to present a reproductive creation of process becoming. It is a movement in which both physical and mental poles alternatively take the place of dominance in the experience of actual occasions. In doing so, while the mental feelings become dominant, the societies are introduced by novelties; and while the physical feelings are in the dominant place, the harmony of societies are formed. Therefore, in the realm of God’s creativity, the processes of physical feelings and mental feelings are reproduced by each other, and the societies of actual occasions are generated in the process of creative becoming.

From the view of the *Yi* cosmology, the motion of *Dao* never comes to a stop because it is a circulating reproduction of uninterrupted continuity. Just as the continuity of change is the eternity of the universe, the superior man’s moral activity is also a re-creating course in which a new beginning is joined with every end. For the *Yi Jing*, the cosmic re-creation of four seasons is the unconscious course of the natural power; however, this power influences man’s conscious actions. The alternating ways of the four seasons show how day and night, winter and summer, and past and future constantly flow into each other, and how heaven and earth influence each other and thus how the past prepares the future and the future unfolds the past. In applying these principles to a person’s self-cultivation, a person’s inner being can be realized by the cosmic movements in transforming an individual sphere into the universal sphere.

The circular reproduction is another important feature of understanding time in both the *Yi Jing* and Whitehead.¹⁸ By “circular reproduction,” both Whitehead and the *Yi Jing* imply an internal movement representing the mutual, interrelative, and re-creative process of dynamic experience. This circular process is rather cumulative than cyclic, epochal than static, and novel than repeating. Whitehead’s organismic emotion of time presents an incessant flow in which a new actual occasion is always reproduced by its own original feeling that is inseparable from itself.

The significant feature of reproductive process in Whitehead’s philosophy of organism exhibits that the very nature of emotional feelings of actual occasions is a continual re-creation in the growth of new possibilities. In this everlasting course of temporal feelings, there is always an originaive urge existing in the mutual growth between mental pole and physical pole. The mental pole of an occasion becomes actual through the growth of a physical pole, and therefore two passages require each other and constitute a living process in which past, present, and future are formed into one circular form just as the Diagram of the Great Primal Beginning in the *Yi Jing*. Whitehead states:

The community of actual things is an organism; but it is not a static organism. It is an incomplection in process of production. . . . It repeats in microcosm what the universe is in macrocosm. . . . It is a process proceeding from phase to phase. (PR 214)

The essence of time then in Whitehead is an ongoing continuation of the past into the present and the present into the future, which presents the organismic experience of temporality.

Although Whitehead recognizes the emotional level of living organism and extends the idea of experience to the terminology of “emotion” and “feeling,” his interpretation of the circular reproduction of creative becoming does not have the concern of a human self as the agent of self-cultivation in order to transform a moral man into his cosmic world. From this position, in being differentiated from Whitehead’s organismic view, Chinese cosmology provides the primary ground for moral principles, in which a self-transformation lies in the creative continuity between heaven and man.

In the *Yi Jing*, *shi* presents a timeless process of change that enables people to initiate and participate in the change of the cosmos rather than merely observe it. By acting in this harmony, a person finds his ceaseless and endless transformation of self-strength in the creative power of heaven and earth. Starting from the above *Yi* thinking on the relationship between a superior man’s self-strength and the restless power of heaven, the later Chinese philosophies have greatly articulated and developed this idea of time. In regarding time as creative

activity, both Confucianism and Daoism specify morality as the force of cultivating the human self in order to reach the harmony of man and his world.

However, there is a need to emphasize that this reproductive process of creative experience always signifies a newness and refreshment, as described in Joseph Grange's analysis of Whitehead's idea of creativity:

It will never be present in exactly the same way again. . . . It is what Heraclitus meant by "*panra rei*," the endless flux of things. It is the source of the never-ending freshness of the world. It is the origin of its own being. . . . It is what the Chinese call *Tao*. It is the source of the endless novelty that marks our natural and urban regions.¹⁹

Indeed, such a vision suggests a significant similarity between Whitehead and Chinese philosophy. In sharing the harmony between an individual's growth and the endless course of this growth in the *Yi Jing* philosophy, Whitehead's process metaphysics also recognizes that an actual occasion exists in its participating in the ongoing process of creative experience.

In asserting that subjective perception is in fact realized in a "superjective" reception, Whitehead originally proposes that without emotionally participating in the creative life, no occasion or event can last. This position demonstrates a conformal harmony in bringing an occasion's self-development together with the creative course of a living, refreshing and renewing life. Nevertheless, it is not that this harmony runs through a single life of an occasion, rather, this harmony lies between a single life of an occasion and its social continuity of many other occasions. Here the harmony introduces both living originality and everlasting creativity into the whole process life of an actual occasion. However, this harmony demands that an occasion does not just perceptively mirror its reality but practically involves in its social environment that is the original and constant source of an occasion's development. For Whitehead as well as for the *Yi Jing*, harmony is a change that circularly and reproductively conforms the beginning to the end, the past to the future. For both, this reproduction is not a simple repetition but a creative circulation involving an actual participation that constantly brings about a new experience. Apart from a dynamic involvement, for Whitehead, the life of an occasion will not achieve a consistent, renewing, and living experience. As for the *Yi Jing*, a great man's moral achievement is practically harbored in his incessant self-cultivation of transforming himself into the creative course of the universe.

Nevertheless, while Chinese cosmology greatly emphasizes the considerations of the harmonious connection between a man's incessant self-development and the incessant change in reality, Whitehead

instead articulates a theory of organismic creativity. Although Whitehead also sees a social and cumulative togetherness as the source of reproductive experience, he does not understand this social process as the process of transforming a human self into a moral world. In Whiteheadian organismic continuum, each new moment of an actual occasion's development reflects a new totality of social relationships to other occasions. For this reason, social environment constitutes an individual occasion that is reproduced and renewed in its relations with other occasions. Likewise, the *Yi* cosmology believes that human self and the world are in a constant process of interaction, in which the community experience gives rise to an individual's creative achievement. But unlike Whiteheadian social thought, Chinese thinking does not perceive the world from an organismic view but from a humanistic view.

One important feature of the contemporary study on Whitehead is the recognition of the resemblance between Whitehead's philosophy and Chinese philosophy. These studies mainly focus their efforts on the comparable features between Whitehead and Chinese philosophies, which are the features of cosmological, conceptual, or scientific resemblance. However, I would like to propose that besides comparing the similarities between the two systems there is a fundamental differentiation to be highly noticed. As for the *Yi Jing*, the cosmological structure of diagrams intends to provide the means of transforming and cultivating human virtue and mind. In the case of Whitehead, although he explicitly defines the interrelationships between an individual self and its social context, there is no attempt for him to facilitate a harmony between human existence and human environmental surroundings.

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Honolulu, Hawaii

ENDNOTES

1. Robert C. Neville, *Reconstruction of Thinking* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), 182.
2. Robert Cummings Neville, *Eternity and Time's Flow* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 39.
3. Alfred N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 176.
4. Hammerschmidt says in his book *Whitehead's Philosophy of Time* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1947), 100: "The interweaving of the formal and the non-formal aspects of time is a union of a pair of opposites essential to nature."
5. David L. Hall, *The Civilization of Experience: A Whiteheadian Theory of Culture* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1973), 97.
6. Alfred North Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 14.
7. In his book, *Creativity and Taoism: A Study of Chinese Philosophy, Art, and Poetry* (New York/Evanston/London: Harper Colophon Books, 1963), 55–56, Chang Chung-

- yuan believes that Dao as the ultimate creativity of changes is a similar concept with the creative God in Whitehead. On the one hand, I agree that both Dao and the creative God are immanent in all changes without actions, on the other, however, according to Lao Zi, Dao neither can be named nor can be spoken (Lao Zi, chapter I), but God in Whitehead is still carried with a name from a religion though has its different interpretation.
8. Chung-ying Cheng, *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 10–11.
 9. The term “cellular activity” is used in Charles Hartshorne’s article “Whitehead’s Metaphysics,” in his book *Whitehead’s Philosophy: Selected Essays, 1935–1970* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 16.
 10. Lik Kuen Tong, “The Concept of Time in Whitehead and the *I Ching*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 1, nos. 3/4 (Dordrecht/Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974): 382.
 11. Chang Chung-yuan, *Creativity and Taoism* (New York/Evanston/London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1970), 70–71.
 12. See his book, *Whitehead’s Metaphysics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), 16.
 13. Steve Odin, *The Social Serf in Zen and American Pragmatism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 178.
 14. Chung-ying Cheng, “Chinese Metaphysics as Non-Metaphysics: Confucian and Daoist Insights into the Nature of Reality,” in *Understanding the Chinese Mind: the Philosophical Roots*, ed. Robert E. Allinson (Hong Kong/Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 191.
 15. Based on the *Yi Jing*, the above movement of Dao is also articulated by Lao Zi (600 BC–?): “There was something heterogeneously formed, predating Heaven and Earth in Its birth. Soundless, formless, it resolves without pause. This can be considered the mother of the universe. I don’t know its name; constrained, I would designate it ‘Tao,’ and if forced to assign it a name, I would call it ‘Great.’ ‘Great’ means ‘passing,’ ‘passing’ means ‘distance,’ and ‘distance’ means ‘returning.’” (Ch’en Ku-ying, *Lao Tzu: Text, Notes, and Comments*, trans. Rhett Y. W. Young and Roger T. Ames [San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1977], 142).
 16. Refer to his article “The Concept of Time in Whitehead and the *I Ching*,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 1, no. 3/4 (June/September, 1974): 379.
 17. God in Whitehead as Dao in the *Yi Jing* has a nontemporal characteristic, which is an everlasting side. Whitehead proposes: “In all philosophic theory there is an ultimate which is actual in virtue of its accidents. It is only then capable of characterization through its accidental embodiments, and apart from these accidents is devoid of actuality. In the philosophy of organism this ultimate is termed ‘creativity’; and God is its primordial, nontemporal accident . . . the philosophy of organism seems to approximate more to some strains of Indian, or Chinese, thought, than to western Asiatic, or European, thought. One side makes process ultimate; the other side makes fact ultimate” (PR, 7). The nontemporal side of Dao in the *Yi Jing* is called *bu yi* (nonchange), just as Whiteheadian God is the “pre-established harmony” and order for the processes of actual occasions, the *Yi Jing* emphasizes that nonchange is the reference and background, through which change is made possible. There must be some fixed point to which the change *can* be referred to a definite order. This ultimate frame of reference for all changes is the nonchanging “Heaven is high, the earth is low, thus the Creative and the Receptive are determined. In correspondence with this differences between low and high, inferior and superior places are established” (IC, 280). Since the nonchange is not the focus of this article, further discussion of this is omitted.
 18. However, here the circular reproduction of creative experience in both Whitehead and the *Yi Jing* does not involve the issue of time in Indian philosophy, in which some arguments hold a cyclic and unreal conception of time to interpret the place of time in Indian thought.
 19. Joseph Grange, *Nature: An Environmental Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 15.

ABBREVIATIONS

- PR Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York/London: The Free Press, 1978).
- IC The *I Ching*, trans. Richard Wilhelm/Cary F. Baynes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- ZB *Zhu Xi, Zhou Yi Ben Yi* (The Original Meaning of Zhou Yi), trans. Su Yong (Beijing: Peking University, 1992).