

Study on Life Meaning in Oriental and Western Philosophy

Si Chen

Department of Psychology
Jiangnan University
Wuhan, China

Zhiyong Fu

School of Marxism
Wuhan University of Science and Technology
Wuhan, China

Abstract—From the view of hermeneutics, the meaning of the text is not fixed. It will always be infinitely open to the authors and interpreters with the changing meaning the co-creation of these authors and interpreters. The phenomenological slogan is “back to the things themselves”. Then we can put aside the traditional authoritative interpretation of the classical texts and go back to the text itself directly. The deficiency is the key to understanding the original sin, but it is not about the ethical and legal evil, although this evil is attributable to humanity’s deficiency. The deficiency means humans have an inherent or innate finiteness. People cannot be omniscient; all people have to die eventually and suffer diseases, pains or poverty etc. It is human's fate. Young people are often troubled by nihilism and all Chinese and western philosophy give answers to this question.

Keywords: nihilism, deficiency Confucius, Heidegger

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper will criticize so-called “cultural Christianity”. Cultural Christianity refers to “the intellectuals who have experienced changes of individual beliefs”.¹ They do not doubt the Bible or Christ's words and deeds, but have a different understanding from traditional Christians. This paper will, therefore, seem inconsistent with the orthodox view. The paper is divided into four parts, in the introduction. I discuss the meaning of “sin” in Christian context and take the deficiency of humanity as the key to understanding “original sin”. The first part is called “The Lost Generation: Value-Nihilism”, I will discuss the nihilism which young people often have in Mainland China. The rest are the main parts of the paper; I will argue it respectively as regards both Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy.

This paper will use the methods of phenomenology and hermeneutics to explore some related texts. From the view of hermeneutics, the meaning of the text is not fixed. It will always be infinitely open to the authors and interpreters with the changing meaning the co-creation of these authors and interpreters. The phenomenological slogan is “back to the things themselves”. Then can we put aside the traditional authoritative interpretation of the classical texts and go back

to the text itself directly? This paper will attempt to answer that question.

II. SIN AND DEFICIENCY

I will first discuss the meaning of “original sin” in Christianity and in which sense we can use the word “sin”.

From an etymological point of view, the original meaning of “sin” in ancient Greece is “deviation”. In English, “sin” means “the breaking of a religious or moral law”²; “Crime” is another word which is similar to sin, it means “offence for which one may be punished by law”³. Generally speaking, most people in China take the meaning of “crime” as the Christian “sin”. It is an incorrect understanding; we should understand it in the original sense. “Sin” is the human’s deviation from God, and the English version of the Bible uses “sin” in this sense. Crime means evil, that is to say, deviating from the law and breaking the relations among people, which are characterized by theft, homicide, robbery, and other horrible things. Sin is against God’s will. We can go back to the human ancestor Adam who ate the apple of the tree of knowledge without the permission of God, and hence possessed both the will and ability to commit crimes. Because of that he was expelled from the Garden of Eden; his descendants inherit Adam’s sin and the punishment associated with crime becomes human fate. That is why we call it “original sin”. God is all-good and all-powerful, and human deviation from God causes the deficiency of man. That is so say, human nature is not perfect; this is a sin in the sense of deviating from God. The deficiency of human nature breaks the relationship between man and God, which will inevitably lead to the break of relations among people, and the development of a variety of evils.

The deficiency is the key to understanding the original sin, but it is not about the ethical and legal evil, although this evil is attributable to humanity’s deficiency. The deficiency means humans have an inherent or innate finiteness. People cannot be omniscient; all people have to die eventually and suffer diseases, pains or poverty etc. It is human's fate.

² A.S.Hornby, Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary, translated by Li Beida (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1997), p. 1411.

³ Ibid., p. 336.

¹ Liu Xiaofeng, Pentecostal Narrative (Beijing: Joint Publishing, 2003), p. 81.

The deficiency makes humans become the playthings of fate. Ancient Greek philosophy said that all people must suffer pain; this is the arrangement for everyone from the gods, whereas the gods themselves need not suffer so. The ancient Greek playwright Sophocles' tragedy "Oedipus Rex" typically represents this fate. When Oedipus was born, he was prophesied to kill his father and marry his mother when he grows up, and then his biological parents (the King and Queen of a country) asked someone to kill him. But the man did not kill Oedipus but threw him to the wild out of pity, and he was saved by someone else. When he grew up and went to the Temple to ask about his future he got the same prophecy again. He left his hometown and led a vagabond life in pain. Oedipus was a very smart, brave and talented man. For some reason, he killed his father unknowingly at last, and married his mother, becoming the King. When he knew the truth, his mother committed suicide, and he poked out his own eyes. From an ethical point of view, Oedipus' killing of his father and marrying his mother was a serious offence, but he did this without knowing the truth. Can we say that he had broken the law? Human deficiency leads to the tragedy of Oedipus.

The sin of people caused the crime. Typical examples occur in the ancient Greek tragedy of Euripides' "Medea". Medea was a princess of a country; she was beautiful and well versed in sorcery. When she met Jason who was from another country, she fell in love with him. She stole her country's sacred Golden Fleece for Jason. When they escaped from her country, Medea killed her own brother and chopped him into pieces on the road to block her father's army. Because of that, her father had to pick up his son's bones and give up chasing Medea. After many years, Jason fell in love with someone else. Medea killed his two sons for revenge, and then Jason died of deep sorrow. We may fall in love with someone, but sometimes the person you meet is not the right person for you. When the relationship breaks up, we recognize that others may not understand and we too fall into deep sorrow. Why would this situation happen? The reason is the same; that is, the deficiency of human nature causes this inevitable fate. Medea was the plaything of love. When love turned to hate, she killed her son. Thus, the deficiency leads to crime.

Sin — human deficiency — is not the ideal state of spirit, but a minimum level one must seek to go beyond. In Christianity transcending the minimum level is the salvation of God's love. The deficiency of human nature will lead to the missing value and the wandering soul. How to confront it? I try to elaborate respectively with examples of both Chinese and Western philosophy.

According to the Bible, people would stone a woman taken in adultery; Jesus said to them: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone." Everyone was silent and left; no one cast a stone at this woman. Jesus said to the woman: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more."⁴ The Christians admitted their own sins, so they did not kill the woman. However, the people who have no Christian faith

may want to kill her, because killing her is the proof of their innocence.

III. THE LOST GENERATION: VALUE-NIHILISM

It is said that young people represent the lost generation. I found many of them will more or less have to confront their nihilism. What caused this phenomenon for a particular social group? Of course, this phenomenon is closely related to the specific social environment and atmosphere of the times, but this is too general. I do not want to argue the causation in this paper. I just want to state that the nature of our spirit means the collapse of past ideological education. When we discover the gap between the idea and the reality, the false doctrines which forever lead us are exposed for their hypocrisy. When we abandon the false doctrines but the right ones are not constructed, nihilism will become the social order. Specifically I want to discuss how the Chinese and Western philosophies explain this phenomenon.

Nihilism will directly lead to boredom. Boredom means people lose interest in everything; they have nothing to do and are always tired. People don't have any focus in life. So-called ideals, morality, ideologies, creeds are powerless and ridiculous in advance of boredom. People recognize the absurdity of existence in a boring state. How does one deal with boredom? Chats, mass entertainment and virtual worlds (such as PC games) are some examples of superficial things that filled the boring life. This mentality rests in a belief that there is nothing else to do for the struggling soul. It means that everything for you is as it should be; you don't care if your life advances one way or another. However, there is always a deep internal struggle. I will briefly cite two theories about nihilism.

A. Bakhtin's Theory of Carnival

There is no binary oppositional relationship in the carnival life style. All the relative theories such as master and servant, the center and the edge will disappear. All the participants, in a particular party space, release their own repressed emotion without any limitation, in order to seek so-called "freedom and democracy" in a constraint-free environment. Hierarchy is canceled; the sacred and the vulgar, noble and humble, greatness and smallness, wisdom and foolishness are inverted with each other and the boundaries disappear. The King was knocked to the ground; the clown was crowned "King".⁵

B. The problems of modernity

The concept of modernity means: "A universal conversion of every individual and every nation...It is leading to individual and social life changes in the ongoing instability. In modern times, social and cultural institutions as well as individuals are in a position which they cannot understand."⁶ Those who are bothered by the problems of

⁵ Mei-Lan, A Research on Bakhtin's aesthetics and literature (Wuhan: Huazhong University press, 2005), p. 196.

⁶ Liu XiaoFeng. An Introduction to Social Theory of Modernity. (Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 1998), p. 2.

⁴ John 8:1-11

modernity lose the foundation of life, and their spirit has to drift in a rootless state. People are full of enthusiasm about secular life and the holy worlds, on the other hand, are ignored. Words such as, God, morality, rational authority, and so on, lose their power to construct society and become synonymous with emptiness.

The feeling caused by nihilism can be called "Thrownness" which was introduced by Martin Heidegger. It means our individual existence is thrown into the world and one is alone and helpless. T.S. Eliot called the world "The Wasteland" (the wasteland can be literally construed as a "desolate, abandoned place"). One living in the wasteland says, "I could not/ Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither/ living nor dead, and I knew nothing."⁷ Such people were described by Elliot as "The Hollow Men": "We are the hollow men/We are the stuffed men/Leaning together/Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!"⁸ Not everyone can realize their "Thrownness"; some may realize it earlier and some later, but once it is realized, people can hardly transcend it.

Camus said: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy."⁹ Many people commit suicide because they have lost the meaning of life; but no philosophers kill themselves because of the relation of spirit and nature. Suicide is certainly not the only philosophical issue, but undoubtedly it is one of the most important problems. Suicides are caused by the perception of an insignificant life. Here I try to identify the root of life in the context of Chinese and Western philosophy. Seeking the meaning of life is the process of questioning and reflecting: refusing to accept any authority or the principle of survival practices without any reflection would make it difficult to find the reliable value of life across the abyss of doubt.

IV. THE PURSUIT OF LIFE MEANING IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Confucius believed that people settle down among the roots in Heaven. We can see these words in *The Analects*: "Does the Heaven speak? The four seasons run their courses and all things are continually being produced. Does the Heaven speak?"¹⁰ "I have heard that life and death are determined by fate, that wealth and honors depend upon the will of heaven."¹¹ Xunzi said: "The course of Heaven is constant; it does not survive because of the actions of a Yao; it does not perish because of actions of a Jie."¹² So Heaven is

a force of nature which is in itself and for itself, Heaven is not a personal God, but will rely on the practice of sages and superior man. Mencius said: "Heaven does not want to bring peace to the world. If it did, who would there be in the present time besides me to bring it about?"¹³ Xunzi said: "The superior man regulates what Heaven has mandated and uses it."¹⁴ So the superior men speak and act on behalf of Heaven. In Confucianism the real master of history and society is human, not heaven, and people settle down among the roots of humanity rather than Heaven. But humanity is finite and deficient; the finite human cannot be the root of value; if it were, history and society would not be full of evil.

In fact, Confucianism hardly discusses about the individual's death, deficiency and value-nihilism. Confucianism proposes many great doctrines, such as "self-cultivating; family-regulating; state-ordering; then the land great governed."¹⁵ "Heaven moves forever vigorously, likewise, a superior man strives on his own initiative constantly."¹⁶ "Earth is thick and obedient; likewise, a superior man accumulates his virtue and embraces all things of creation."¹⁷ Those of humble origin or weak character, struggling to survive at the bottom of society or in the wasteland are deprived of the right to survive by the great doctrines of Confucianism. The two sages, Confucius and Mencius, traveled all the kingdoms to promote their political ideals to military and political leaders, while Jesus Christ ministered to the bottom of society, saving the lepers, prostitutes, criminals, the poor, etc. who were seen as "rotten wood that cannot be carved"¹⁸ by Confucius. Confucius was proud that "At fifteen I set my heart on learning. At thirty I could stand firm. At forty I had no doubts. At fifty I knew the Decree of Heaven. At sixty I was already obedient (to this decree). At seventy I could follow the desires of my mind without the boundaries (of what is right)."¹⁹ In contrast, Jesus Christ died on the cross at thirty.

Chuang Tzu believed, "Heaven and Earth and I came into existence together, and all things with me are one."²⁰ The world is the unity of all; persons and things, good and evil, beauty and ugliness are equal to the same. One of the most famous writers in ancient China, Su Shi, said, "Seeing gain and lose as equivalent, forgetting happiness and misfortune, mixing noble and humble into one, distinguishing nothing between sage and fool, identifying ourselves with all things

⁷ T. S. Eliot. *T.S. Eliot, Collected Poems 1909-1962* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc. 1963), p. 54.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁹ Albert Camus. *The Myth Of Sisyphus And Other Essays*. trans. by Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 3.

¹⁰ *The Analects of Confucius, Chinese-English*, translated into English by Pan Fuen, Wen Shaoxia (Shandong: Qi Lu Press, 1993), p. 215.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹² Xunzi, *Chinese-English*, translated into English by John Knoblock (Hunan: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999), p. 533.

¹³ Mencius, *Chinese-English*, translated into English by Zhao Zhentao, Zhang Wenting, Zhou Dingzhi (Hunan: Hunan People's Publishing House, 1999), p. 99.

¹⁴ Xunzi, p. 549.

¹⁵ See *Book of Rites* (Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House, 2002), p. 1715.

¹⁶ *The Zhou Book of Change, Chinese-English*. translated into English by Fu Huisheng (Hunan: Hunan People's House, 2008), p. 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁸ *The Analects of Confucius*, p. 43.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁰ Fung Yulan, *A Short history of Chinese Philosophy* (Jiangsu: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House, 2012), p. 446.

and as partners with the Creator.”²¹ Both Taoism and Confucianism have emphasized the pursuit of this world's happiness. But the difference is in Confucianism happiness is in ethical and political order, while Taoism views the identification of man with universe, and this is the Absolute Happiness. Taoists find that Confucians's doctrines are unable to eliminate evil in the world; in an era of upside down values, love is doomed to be suffered in the sinful world, so people should pursue the Absolute Happiness which transcends the distinction between self and world. “One who attends to one's own mind and who is not easily diverted by sorrow and joy, realizing their inevitability and accepting them as if they were destiny, has attained the ultimate of integrity.”²² Taoists are some very intelligent people, but if people who want to grin and bear it in the world which is full of evil, ignoring human tears, wailing, killing, they will need a heart of stone.

Buddhism's ultimate aim is Nirvana which means releasing one from the cycle of rebirth and removing all suffering. Zen is seen as customization of Indian Buddhism, in which there is a Buddha who gives mercy to all creatures in the world, but Zen believes Buddha is Wu (Non-being). The only method to achieve Buddhahood is “to carry on one's ordinary and uneventful tasks: relieve one's bowels, pass water, wear one's clothes, eat one's meals, and when tired, lie down.”²³ “There is no single Buddha here; Bodhidharma is urine, Buddha is stool, Manjusri and Samantabhadra are cleaners who clean the toilet.”²⁴ Both good and evil are produced by mind.”²⁵ There is no difference between Buddha and excretion, so to between good and evil, they are all Wu. So the mercy of Buddha is meaningless in Zen. Zen takes the sinful world as paradise and believes people can seek salvation on earth. Zen believes “the very mind is Buddha,”²⁶ it is in fact that Buddha is replaced of mind, so it goes back to human nature. But human nature is finite and deficient; it cannot be the root of value. And like Taoism, it takes great courage to view the sinful world as paradise.

In traditional China, intellectuals and common folk have different understandings of Taoism and Buddhism. For the common folk, there are personal Gods in Taoism and Buddhism which are understood as religions, and they hope to gain blessing from their religions. However, the intellectuals mostly understand Taoism and Buddhism as philosophy, through which they could achieve peace of mind and a high level spirit. Laozi said, “Washing and cleaning the

dark mirror, can you make it without stain?”²⁷ He thought if we could exclude distractions and make the soul clean as mirror, we would find the origins of all things. Through attaining vacuity is perennial; keeping to emptiness is everlasting. The myriad things leap forth; I am at rest to watch their return.”²⁸ we could achieve Tao which also can be called “becoming one with the abstruse.”²⁹ That Chuang Tzu called “all things with me are one” shares the same meaning. There are many ways to practice Buddhist Dharma; the Shurangama Sutra has traditionally been regarded as a complete and practical manual for spiritual practice that will eventually lead to enlightenment.

V. THE PURSUIT OF LIFE MEANING IN WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Some philosophers such as Karl Marx had a conception of historical regularity. They advocate atheism which is denying the religious belief in God. God is not, they believe, intrinsic to the value of life; they deny the universal value, because they believe value will change with the historical regularity of development. Historical regularity is the foundation of life. Emotions and feelings do not exist in historical regularity. The progress of historical regularity is unstoppable. Anyone who resists it will be crushed by the wheels of history. So people should grasp historical regularity in order to rebuild both society and individual.

However, whether there is a historical regularity is still a question. We have seen enough disasters caused by reforming society with the so-called historical regularity. Russia's February Revolution, Counter-insurgency, Great Purge, concentration camps, China's Cultural Revolution, Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries and so on are typical examples. Actually, the conception of historical regularity is a kind of moral idealism which overestimates the capacity of human rationality, and it believes that human rationality can solve all problems. The conception of historical regularity wishes to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth through personal design. This is a dangerous idea. The design of Rationalist ignored the inheritance from the tradition, and politics is a practical wisdom. “Like the politics of the Rationalist, the morality of the Rationalist is the morality of the self-made and of the self-made society; it is what other peoples have recognized as ‘idolatry’.”³⁰

The ideal social system-kingdom of heaven on earth- is often wishful thinking; it cannot be universal for everyone. You enjoy collectivism, while I like individualism, we have different ideas from each other, and this is understandable. But once Rationalists have political power, they impose their ideals on others, resulting in terrible catastrophes. Some people in China believe the ideal- establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth- could date back to the early Confucian

²¹ Su Shi, “Zuibai Tang Ji”, The collected works of Su Shi, Volume 11 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1986) pp. 344-345.

²² Chuang Tzu, *Wandering on the way : early Taoist tales and parables of Chuang Tzu*, translated by Victor H. Mair (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), p. 34.

²³ Fung Yulan, *A Short history of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 595.

²⁴ Puji, *Wu Deng Hui Yuan*, Volume II (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1997), p.374.

²⁵ Daoyuan, *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp Published in the Ching-te Era*, Volume 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2010) p. 348.

²⁶ Fung Yulan, *A Short history of Chinese Philosophy*, p. 592.

²⁷ Laozi, *Daodejing*, trans. by Edmund Ryden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³⁰ Micheal Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991), p. 41.

tradition, and they are very proud of it.³¹ I don't agree with it. The "Great leap forward" and "Cultural Revolution" were not caused by learning from the West, but by the worst parts of Chinese traditional culture.

Nietzsche argued that God is dead. So the proof of value would not exist as it is unnecessary to distinguish good from evil. People should create meaning through strong will; people must be "Superman" with enormous creativity and fulfillment. Mediocrity is ignorant rabble; a superhero is worth 10000 fools. In *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoevsky, the main character, Lasikeernikefu, is deeply affected by the idea of Nietzsche's "Superman" and the conception of historical regularity. He had envisioned collecting all the fools in the city, looking for cannon to kill them all. Then, the elites can rule the world and rebuild the world order. This is a fanatical, appalling idea. But Nietzsche's was a complex and contradictory man. Nietzsche was quite a sickly person, but he always preached the powerful vitality of life. He was biased against women, but he did not understand women at all. Because of his awkward and shy expressions, his relationships failed. Nietzsche was a man who was constantly looking for the meaning of life in pain.

Heidegger proposes being-towards-death and death-oriented planning. While death is inevitable, being-towards-death does not escape from real life and its duties. This is a deep, serious and positive attitude toward life, but later Heidegger seemed to give up this idea and shifted his focus to searching for Gods. Gods make the human beings who they are. Gods are the root of all beings. The absence of Gods makes the world lose its foundation, and times without foundation suspend above the abyss, in Heidegger's view. Only poets seem deeply aware of the poverty of the times and we should listen to the poets who can make life poetic. Heidegger's Gods are not the God of Christianity; he used the "poet" in a broad sense, referring to the thinkers, writers all of whom have poetic reflections of life.

Camus maintained the spirit of Sisyphus. Camus emphasized absurdity in human existence. Absurdity can be found everywhere in our daily lives resulting in a feeling that life has no purpose. On the finiteness of life-the people's deficiency and death, he posits one is more likely to have a sense of the absurd; for death, everything loses its meaning; death destroys all value, so it prominently shows the absurdity of the world; for confronting absurdity, people can only create meaning in life, which is the spirit of Sisyphus. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was sentenced to penal servitude for life. Because of his offence to the Gods, he had to push a boulder uphill, before he could reach the top. However, the boulder would always roll back down, forcing him to begin again, so he toiled in an eternal cycle. Sisyphus knows his work is meaningless, but he regards his meaningless life as the process through which he can obtain happiness and fulfillment. He recognizes the absurdity of the world, facing the finiteness and purposelessness of life. He shows contempt for the absurd, keeping a positive, creative attitude

³¹ Li Zehou, *Pragmatic Reason and a Culture of Optimism* (Beijing: Joint publishing, 2008), p. 248.

towards life, by creating value in himself. He teaches that we need to create meaning for ourselves.

Those people who have experienced profound suffering and desperation will probably be faced with the threat of the value-nihilism. Confucianism never talks much about such people; perhaps in the Confucian view, they are "Rotten wood cannot be carved. Dirty earth cannot be used for cement".³² Taoism and Zen believe that getting and losing are the same; we should forget about happiness and misfortune, take the corrupted world as paradise and ignore human sin, which for those sentimental persons, is difficult to do. Because people are finite, it is difficult for one to become "Superman", or like Sisyphus, create the meaning of life. But Jesus said to such people: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."³³ "...for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."³⁴ Only Jesus Christ is willing to give shelter for these people and let them rest in his arms.

VI. CONCLUSION

Of course, such views could or could not be as the foundation of life, this depends on each person's experience and temperament; different people will make different choices. I do not hope that "Up to the azure vault and down to deepest place, nor above nor below could he ever find her trace."³⁵ It is hard to find the true meaning of life, but life is precious; we should never lose hope in life.

REFERENCES

- [1] Albert Camus. 1991. *The Myth Of Sisyphus And Other Essays*. translated by Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage Books.
- [2] S.Hornby. 1997. *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*. translated by Li Bei-da. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- [3] Bai Juyi. 2006. *The Everlasting Regret. Selected Poems*. Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Publishing House.
- [4] *Book of Rites*. 2002. Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House.
- [5] Chuang Tzu. 1994. *Wandering on the way : early Taoist tales and parables of Chuang Tzu*. translated by Victor H. Mair. New York: Bantam Books.
- [6] Daoyuan. 2010. *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp Published in the Ching-te Era. Volume 1*. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House.
- [7] Fung Yulan. 2012. *A Short history of Chinese Philosophy*. Jiangsu: Jiangsu literature and art publishing House.
- [8] Laozi. 2008. *Daodejing*. translated by Edmund Ryden. Oxford University Press.
- [9] Li Zehou. 2008. *Pragmatic Reason and a Culture of Optimism*. Beijing: Joint Publishing.
- [10] Liu Xiaofeng. 2003. *Pentecostal Narrative*. Beijing: Joint Publishing.

³² The Analects of Confucius, p. 43.

³³ Matthew 11:28

³⁴ Matthew 5:45

³⁵ Bai Juyi, *The Everlasting Regret, Selected Poems* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei People's Publishing House, 2006), p. 13.

- [11] Liu Xiao-Feng. 1998. *An Introduction to Social Theory of Modernity*. Shanghai: SDX Joint Publishing Company.
- [12] Mei-Lan. 2005. *A Research on Bakhtin's aesthetics and literature*. Wuhan: Huazhong University Press.
- [13] Mencius. 1999. Chinese-English. translated into English by Zhao Zhentao, Zhang Wenting, Zhou Dingzhi.. Hunan: Hunan People's Publishing House.
- [14] Micheal Oakeshott. 1991. *Rationalism in Politics and other Essays*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
- [15] New Testament
- [16] Puji. 1997. *Wu Deng Hui Yuan*. Volume II. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- [17] Su Shi. 1986. *Zuibai Tang Ji*. The collected works of Su Shi. Volume 11. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company.
- [18] *The Analects of Confucius*. 1993. Chinese-English. translated into English by Pan Fuen, Wen Shaoxia. Shandong: Qi Lu Press.
- [19] *The Zhou Book of Change*. 2008. Chinese-English. translated into English by Fu Huisheng. Hunan: Hunan People's House.
- [20] T. S. Eliot. 1963. *Collected Poems 1909-1962*. New York: Harcourt, Brace&World, Inc.
- [21] Xunzi. 1999. Chinese-English. translated into English by John Knoblock. Hunan: Hunan People's Publishing House.