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Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy
(review)

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Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul, editors. *Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy*

Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. ix, 194 pp.

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From the Series Editors' Introduction by David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, one learns that this volume is a collection of papers by Hans Lenk, Christoph Harbsmeier, A. C. Graham, Chad Hansen, Heiner Roetz, Hubert Schleichert, Gregor Paul, Peter J. Opitz, and A. S. Cua, originally delivered in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1987 at a conference on the subject of "Epistemological Questions in Classical Chinese Philosophy" (p. vii).

The stated intent of the volume is "to broaden the exposure of Chinese Studies outside America and Great Britain" (p. vii). In this respect, the book succeeds admirably, as one of its distinctive features is the introduction of German scholarly approaches to an Anglo-American audience. As this fills a lacuna in Chinese studies, this volume is to be welcomed.

The individual contributions are, generally speaking, consistently of good quality. The contributors show a combination of a depth of understanding of Chinese philosophy and an approach that displays a breadth of learning. The modest preface written by the editors, Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul, does not do justice to their own achievement. While it is not clear that they succeed in their stated objective of "bridging the institutional gap between philosophy and philology" (p. ix), that in which they do succeed is a far greater accomplishment. When one considers that Lenk and Paul have prepared a volume in a language other than their own, one cannot fail to be impressed by their desire to contribute to those unfamiliar with European languages or European studies of Chinese philosophy, and by the tremendous effort required to carry out their project.

As far as "bridging the gap between philology and philosophy" is concerned, there is some accommodation in the sense that most of the essays show an awareness of philological issues as well as certain issues important to, and techniques employed by, linguistic philosophers, but to equate preoccupations of linguistic philosophy with philosophy itself is to take too narrow a definition of philosophy. In fairness, this is not so much the fault of the editors as it is a reflection of the field of Chinese philosophy, which has been both influenced and populated

by scholars who focus on linguistic and philological concerns. It is not at all clear that epistemological issues should be treated mainly from the standpoint of philology and linguistic analysis; thus if this volume is to be faulted, then it is mainly for this narrowness of its general emphasis. In this respect, however, this collection reflects the condition of philosophical studies today.

An exception is the purely historical essay by Peter J. Opitz, "The Birth of 'History': Historical Speculation in Chou China." This essay is in no wise philological or linguistic, and it does not seem to fit into the general subject matter of the volume; it is therefore not at all clear why it is included. This is a pity since it is a very good, wide-ranging essay with unusual, reader-friendly documentation.

This sort of problem reflects the difficulty of creating a book from conference proceedings. It is difficult to achieve unity in such a collection, and the editors must be congratulated for the degree of unification that they do manage to achieve.

Worthy of particular attention is the introduction by Hans Lenk, which is impressive in terms of its scope, its Germanic thoroughness, and its ability to raise questions. But, however tantalizing, it is not entirely sufficient as an introduction, since some of the essays that follow are not mentioned at all, and others receive only the briefest passing reference. Its imaginative title, "Introduction: If Aristotle Had Spoken and Wittgenstein Known Chinese ..." reveals the long heritage of Germanic studies of Chinese philosophy, since it is drawn, with modifications, from Fritz Mauthner's *Beitrage zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (1901). Would the course of Western philosophy have been smoother and more efficient if its founders and perpetrators had been speakers of Chinese language? This kind of question whets the reader's appetite. Lenk remarks trenchantly, "Analytic philosophy in the West had to make great and prolonged efforts to get beyond the dualistic Cartesian epistemology and arrive at a philosophy of interpretive internalism which was evidently prominent in classical Chinese epistemology, and especially Confucianism, some two-and-a-half millenia ago" (p. 8). Lenk's grasp of divergent traditions is reflected in his next sentence, which immediately compares Popper's achievements to what had already been implied in the Anekanta philosophy of Jainism.

With respect to Lenk's discussion of individual conference participants, Lenk points out that the interpretation of the Confucian "rectification of names" (*cheng ming*) differs in Hall and Ames (whose work is not included in the volume) from that of Hansen (p. 6), and that the function of *cheng ming* for Hall and Ames is performative (p. 7). From this reviewer's perspective, Lenk could have emphasized the importance of the role that the difference of translation choices plays in the interpretations of Hansen and Hall/Ames. The translation choice of Hall/Ames mitigates against the performative function they assign to this concept. *Cheng ming* is translated as the "ordering of names" in Hall/Ames and not as the "rectification of names." "Ordering names" carries with it no

moral sanction or guidepost: there is no implication that there is a right order or where that order is to be found. "Rectification," or making something right, clearly connotes that there is a correct state and that one must reach it by bringing something back into line (*Webster's Unabridged*). This is in keeping with the traditional Chinese understanding of *cheng ming* as signifying a return to ancient wisdom and ancient traditions. Therefore, "rectification of names" is to be preferred as a translation choice to accomplish the performative function which Hall/Ames assign it, since it contains both a built-in moral charge or moral impetus to change one's behavior and an indication of what acts to perform (in accordance with the ancient norm), whereas "ordering names" is morally neutral and directionless.

The first chapter, Christoph Harbsmeier's "Conceptions of Knowledge in Ancient China," shows Harbsmeier's usual strength in citing numerous specific sources from classical Chinese writings to prove his points, though it would assist the reader if the discrete sections that make up his chapter formed a continuous line of development. His understanding of Confucius is revealed by his statement, "Confucianism is not just about training people ... in moral skills; it is crucially about making them 'understand'" (p. 15). On the other hand, his definition of pure discursive knowledge is inadequate. In the next section he remarks that "We may safely assume that the Mohists spoke of purely discursive knowledge" (p. 17)—but, "Our conclusion at this point is that discursive knowing in ancient China (as in ancient Greece and in the modern West) was just familiarity with things and knowing how to apply names to things" (p. 18). From the reviewer's point of view, the second conclusion is inconsistent with the first and in error with respect to ancient China, ancient Greece, and the modern West (although his point may apply to twentieth-century linguistic philosophy), since familiarity with things and knowing how to name things does not cover the whole extent of pure discursive knowing, and there are examples of thinkers in ancient China, ancient Greece, and the modern West whose discursive knowledge is not simply of things and names.

The chapter itself concludes with a discussion of skepticism that does not seem to correlate clearly either with the beginning of the chapter or its intervening sections. A conclusion to the chapter as a whole would have been of assistance to the reader. With respect to Harbsmeier's interpretation that "the justly celebrated story of Zhuangzi and the butterfly seeks to illustrate that we cannot be sure" (p. 24), one may consult Allinson, *Chuang-tzu for Spiritual Transformation: An Analysis of the Inner Chapters* (SUNY Press, 1989), for a book-length argument that Chuang-tzu cannot be interpreted as a skeptic. Harbsmeier's presentation of Chuang-tzu's point of view is not helped by his quotation from chapter 12 of the *Huai-nan-tzu* (p. 25), which is not considered a part of the Chuang-tzu corpus. He refers to this as Taoist and then resumes his discussion of Chuang-tzu, but this quotation from the *Huai-nan-tzu* does not support his con-

clusion about Chuang-tzu. In spite of its organizational weaknesses, inconsistencies, and occasional errors, this is a readable and generally well-supported chapter.

The second chapter, by A. C. Graham, "The Way and the One in *Ho-kuan-tzu*," is a mixture of historical scholarship, philology, and philosophical analysis. The *Ho-kuan-tzu*, a little-known work, is analyzed and referred to as "the first developed Chinese philosophy of the One" (p. 40). The problem of relating universal and particular is preempted by this point of view according to Graham, because "it is immediately obvious that *Ho-kuan-tzu* does treat the cosmos as a variously divisible whole." (p. 40). In addition, Graham discusses such unusual topics as the clairvoyance and illumination of the sage from the vantage point of a proactive depiction of the sage as one who "does not merely mirror the way as law but generates it" (p. 38).

The third and fourth chapters can be considered together, since the fourth is a reply to the third. The third chapter, Chad Hansen's "Term-Belief in Action: Sentences and Terms in Early Chinese Philosophy," sets out Hansen's familiar view that knowledge and truth function behavioristically rather than theoretically in classical Chinese thought. While his theoretical justification is ingenious, at times it seems a bit forced. For example, is there enough basis to justify the substitution of the expression "string" for "sentence" in constructing an ad hoc Chinese grammar for certain classical passages (pp. 62–66)? In addition, it does not seem possible to fit all of Chinese speculative reasoning into his model. A more minor point: some readers might feel uncomfortable with some of his cavalier comments, such as: "(Buddhism) infected the Chinese tradition" (p. 45) and "Confucius really does seem essentially deficient as a philosopher" (p. 52).

But for Hansen, the central question for classical Chinese epistemology "was the problem of interpretation. . . . How do we know we have projected our terms on the world in the way that we should? If we have not, using the code in guiding our behavior will not produce the correct moral outcome. Let us call this the Wittgensteinian problem in contrast to the Socratic one. Confucius' most philosophical doctrine was an attempt to solve the Wittgensteinian problem" (p. 52).

The fourth chapter is Heiner Roetz' "Validity in Chou Thought: On Chad Hansen and the Pragmatic Turn in Sinology." This chapter is characterized throughout both by cogent argumentation and by reference to a wide range of sources to substantiate the line of argument presented. Roetz draws on historical scholarship to argue against Hansen that the Confucian *cheng ming* or rectification of names went beyond a concern for conventional word meanings (pp. 80–81, 86) and claims that "the normal usage of *cheng* is normative" (p. 86). In this reviewer's judgment, Hansen certainly sees *cheng ming* as normative (p. 60), although this may not be consistent with his overall behaviorism. Roetz argues persuasively against Hansen's behaviorism by pointing out that *chih* (to know) means "knowing that" as often as it means "knowing how" in the literature (p. 80). Roetz also criticizes Hansen's relativistic treatment of the "Ch'i wu lun", the sec-

ond chapter of the *Chuang-tzu*, and states, I think rightly, that Hansen overlooks the strong normative claims made therein. He argues convincingly that Hansen's postmodernist Chinese Wittgenstein, Chuang Chou, would make Chuang Chou's position self-refuting (p. 91). Nonetheless, one must thank Hansen for stimulating so much debate on this subject.

The fifth chapter, Hubert Schleichert's "Gong-Sun Long on the Semantics of 'World'" is dense and cryptic, and this may be due to its length (just over two pages of text). In contrast, the sixth chapter, Gregor Paul's "Equivalent Axioms of Aristotelian, or Traditional European, and Later Mohist Logic: An Argument in Favor of the Universality of Logic and Rationality," starts out in an elegant and breezy style with references ranging from Goethe to Spinoza. *En passant*, Paul makes the interesting and compelling point that "words such as 'logic' and 'logical' are not appropriate for describing cultural differences" (p. 121). More fundamentally, he presents a well-reasoned case that Neo-Mohist philosophers developed a system of logic basically identical to what was generally considered logic in the West from Aristotle to Frege.

However intrinsically interesting chapter seven may be, as mentioned above, it concerns itself with sketching historico-philosophical speculations during the Chou period, and it appears out of place in this volume of essays. In contrast, chapter eight, A. S. Cua's "The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge: Reflections on a Theme in Hsun Tzu," is a fit theme for the subject matter of this volume. In this well-considered essay, Cua argues that the view of Hsün-tzu, like that of Mencius and of the Sung-Ming Confucians, is that every person is capable of becoming a sage (p. 165). On the other hand, Cua points out that ethical judgments, like perceptual judgments, are fallible (p. 170) and, moreover, that ethical judgments are revisable (p. 171). In a discerning passage, Cua writes, "since **chih* and *chih* are often used interchangeably in the classical literature, *chih* can be properly rendered as 'wisdom'" (p. 170). This correlates with Harbsmeier's translation of "knowledge/wisdom" for *chih* (*zhi*) in Confucius (p. 19).

With regard to style, the volume does not feature consistency in the use of one style of romanization for transliterations of the Chinese for all of the contributors. *Chih* is rendered as *chih* by Cua (p. 170) and Roetz (p. 74), for example, and as *zhi* by Harbsmeier (p. 17). The choice of one style would be both aesthetically more pleasing and of more assistance to readers not familiar with the different styles of romanization to represent the same words. There is no consistency with respect to the providing of glossaries, bibliographies, or the form of documentation at the end of each chapter. Some chapters include a glossary of Chinese words at the end; others do not. The style of the glossary varies from author to author. Graham provides romanization but no translation or alphabetical indexing to accompany the Chinese characters; Roetz, Paul, Schleichert, and Cua provide a glossary with alphabetical indexing for each character but neither romanization nor translation; Hansen, Harbsmeier, and Opitz provide no glos-

sary at all. Three chapters include bibliographies (Cua, Schleichert, and Lenk); the others do not. Here, a multilanguage, comprehensive bibliography at the end of the volume might have proved a valuable aid to the reader. A comprehensive, alphabetically keyed, translated glossary with a unified romanization system at the end of the volume would also have been of assistance.

Documentation practices are also variable. Opitz and Cua employ "See"; Hansen, Harbsmeier, and Roetz, "Cf.;" Paul both "See" and "Cf." There are differences between how the same sources are referred to by different authors, for example page 30, note 64, and page 157, note 24. While "rectification of names" is cross-referenced to *cheng ming* in the index, the reverse is not the case, and the lists of entries for each, which should be identical, are different. One reference to "rectification of names" (p. 178) is not included under either heading. Perhaps more significantly, given the contents of this volume, while there are many entries listed under "knowledge" in the index, they are cross-referenced only to ethical *chih* (and not at all to *zhi*), and under *chih* in the index, there is only one entry (which is not cross-referenced to anything). "**Chih*" is not indexed, and "wisdom" is not cross-referenced. While these are, generally speaking, minutiae, it is the duty of a reviewer to point these out. The weaknesses in the index are serious and render the volume less accessible as a reference source.

It also should be pointed out that there are a fair number of mistakes in English usage which are the result either of printer's errors or of the fact that English is not the first language of the editors. While it would be carping to fault the volume editors for mistakes in English usage, the series editors would appear to be able to answer for this. A selected list of examples include the omission of the preposition "in" between the words "transcendence" and "classical" in the sentence "model of transcendence [in] classical Confucian philosophy ..." (p. 5); the archaic use of the word "tradited" in the sentence "historically developed and tradited cultivation of linguistic and representational forms of conception" (p. 5); the cross-referencing in the index to "Zhungzi" instead of "Zhuangzi" (p. 189), which could mislead a reader unfamiliar with Chinese names; and the omission of the preposition "on" in the sentence describing a book by A. C. Graham by stating that it "draws [on] the sum of his philosophical, philological and historical investigations of Chinese thought" (p. 185). Such mistakes, while certainly minor, should be caught by a careful copyeditor. When appearing in certain contexts, especially when describing the works of a figure such as A. C. Graham, they appear especially glaring and mar the presentation of this volume.

To sum up, it would have been beneficial to the overall effect and resolution of this volume if it had included a beginning or concluding chapter which comprehensively compared the individual contributions with each other, pointed out the thematic unities of the volume, and summarized the volume's achievements. The introduction by Lenk, while fine, cannot accomplish its function in nine pages of text. In addition, Lenk does not actually attempt to discuss all of the

contributions included in the volume, and, as mentioned, the inclusion of the historico-philosophical sketch as a chapter is at odds with the general continuity of the volume. While this may be a small point, there is a great disparity in length in terms of one of the contributions (chapter 5) in comparison to the others. Its length, in fact, makes its inclusion questionable.

Some of these problems point up the difficulty of constructing a book from contributed conference papers. More importantly, since it appears that much of the comparative philosophical analysis in the volume is carried out from the perspective of linguistic philosophy, this represents too narrow a focus for philosophy—but, then, this reflects the situation of both philosophy and Chinese studies in the contemporary world.

On the other hand, there is definitely some individual insights and occasionally a literary flair in certain chapters, and for this alone the book is well worth reading. Not the least important virtue of the book is that Anglo-American scholars are given the opportunity to become acquainted with German scholarship and the detailed knowledge that European scholars possess of both classical Greek philosophy and of Anglo-American analytic philosophy—and, by implication, the relative insularity and narrowness of Anglo-American scholars. *Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy* is an auspicious beginning to a dialogue between European and Anglo-American scholars in their treatments of Chinese studies, and it is a tribute to Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul that one of the first contributions to the dialogue originates from the European side and at the same time is written in the English language.

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Jane Kate Leonard and John R. Watt, editors. *To Achieve Security and Wealth: The Qing Imperial State and the Economy, 1644–1911*.

Cornell East Asia Series. Ithaca, New York: East Asia Program,

Cornell University, 1992. xii, 189 pp.

Reflecting on recent studies of the Chinese economy during the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), one might say that there are two decidedly different approaches currently at work. The first approach concentrates on large structural issues that bear on economic growth, such as demographic trends, price movements, market development, and the like. Some authors writing in this vein are committed to exploring whether or not China was on a positive or negative path to modern development prior to Western and Japanese incursions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second approach, older and better established