CHAPTER FIVE

DAVIDSON'S CHARITY IN THE CONTEXT OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Yiu-ming Fung

1. *A.C. Graham's Sinologist's Criticism and the Myth of 'Pre-logical Thinking'*

A.C. Graham, a widely respected Sinologist, may be the first scholar in the context of Chinese philosophy to express opinions counter to Donald Davidson's principle of charity and to his view on the very idea of a conceptual scheme. As a Sinologist with a comparative perspective based on a strong British theological background and on a long-term experience through energetic work in Chinese Studies, Graham has made significant contributions to the field of Chinese philosophy, especially in his interpretations of Chinese texts and his explanations of the problems in the field. Graham's contributions seem inseparable from his special status in terms of his reading meanings from or into Chinese texts with a comparative perspective from a double eye—a 'British eye' together with a 'Chinese eye'. It seems to Graham a basic faith that his and his colleagues' comparative studies with 'bilingual' capabilities (or to use my metaphor, with a 'double eye') are significant and that the comparisons between Chinese and Western thoughts are understandable or intelligible though they are based on very different conceptual schemes which fundamentally have very little in common. In this regard, Davidson's challenge to the very idea of a conceptual scheme, I think, is also a challenge to the Sinologist's basic faith.

In his rebuttal to Davidson's thesis, Graham declares: "For inquirers into the thought and language of other cultures, the issue is inescapable. That very idea [of a conceptual scheme] is one of their indispensable tools, to which Davidson's objections do not directly apply, since their own tendency is to think of it in terms, not of propositions, but of classification by naming, and perhaps of syntactic

structures."[1] One of the main reasons for Graham to reject Davidson's objections is that "[a]t the roots of the systems of propositions called 'conceptual schemes' by philosophers there are patterns of naming, pre-logical in the same sense as patterns of perception are pre-logical."[2] To illustrate this point more specifically, Graham mentions Le Gall's and Bruce's failure in using 'forme' (or 'law') and 'matière' (or 'matter') to translate '*li*' (理) and '*qi*' (氣) in the texts of *Song-Ming* Confucianism as a starting point of his journey to search for a pre-logical or even pre-linguistic realm.[3] He claims that "to think of Le Gall and Bruce as making mistakes which we now avoid would miss the whole point. There are no exact equivalents for *li* and *qi* among our concepts, and there is no way of approaching them except by breaking out from or awakening to one analogy after another."[4] Because he believes that "all thinking is grounded in analogization," that the 'metaphorical root' behind Westerners' 'matter' and 'law' are different from that behind Chinese '*qi*' and '*li*', and, unfortunately, that the 'outsider', unlike the 'insider' who habitually thinks with their concepts, are much less conscious of the differences at the bottom.[5]

What are 'the differences at the bottom'? Borrowing Roman Jakobson's ideas of 'paradigm/syntagm' and 'metaphor/metonym', Graham argues that, at the bottom of each language or thinking, there is some kind of pre-logical patterning of names that is "a stock of paradigms already grouping syntagmatically in chains of oppositions which at their simplest are binary."[6] He thinks that, for example, before entering into sentences, we can have the compound words as 'daylight' and such formulas as 'the light of knowledge' syntagmatically grouping from a stock of paradigms which consists of binary oppositions such as 'day' and 'night', 'light' and 'darkness', and 'knowledge' and 'ignorance', etc. When comparing 'king' with 'lion' as 'men' with 'beasts', by metaphor we can have the lion as king of the beasts and the king as a lion among men. King connects with throne as chairman with chair, so by metonymy the monarchy is

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[1] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 59.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 207.

[4] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[5] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.

[6] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

called the throne and the chairmanship the chair.[7] Based on these ideas coming from what Graham calls 'Semiology', he believes that we can find the beginning of a conceptual scheme in these chains of oppositions. He calls the thinking in these chains 'correlative' in contrast with 'analytic' in the sense that the former is conceived as spontaneous, pre-logical, and operating at the level of the non-sentential combinations of words, while the latter is discursive, logical, and operating at the level of propositions.

Based on the idea that a conceptual scheme is not a system of logically related propositions but a pre-logical pattern of names, Graham argues that a comparison of Western and Chinese conceptual schemes should begin at the level of non-sentential units. Through his 'double eye', he seems to be able to see that the structures of Chinese conceptual scheme "are exposed nakedly by the tendency to parallelism in the classical language, and are overly formulated in the *Yin-Yang* (陰陽) cosmological scheme."[8] In comparison with the Western scheme which tends to center on conflicting opposites (truth/falsehood, good/evil), he points out that the *Yin-Yang* scheme is focused on complementary polarities. Some of the English chains of oppositions such as 'day/night' and 'light/darkness' seem to fit neatly into a *Yang/Yin* scheme, but, as stressed by Graham, in the latter A and B are interdependent with A only relatively superior, and the chain does not lead to conflicting duality such as 'good/evil'. So, he concludes, "[o]ur conceptual schemes differ, not in assuming the truth of contradictory propositions, but in including or excluding different pairs of words."[9] In contrast to the complementary characteristic of Chinese thinking, Graham thinks that David Hall and Roger Ames are right in demonstrating that "the West habitually treat[s] A as 'transcendent' in the sense that A is conceivable without B but not B without A; for Westerners there could be God without world, reality without appearance, good without evil."[10]
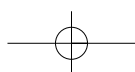
Graham's opinions mentioned above are mainly based on his deviant notion of 'conceptual scheme' and his interpretations of Chinese concepts used in ancient Chinese texts, especially in philosophical texts. His arguments, if valid, assume that there are two levels of

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[7] A.C. Graham, 1992, pp. 62–63.
[8] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

thinking (analytic and correlative) and, most importantly, that the latter, in contrast with the former, is spontaneous, pre-logical, and even pre-linguistic though it is presented as a pattern of oppositions. Besides the mystical characteristic of the so-called 'pre-logical' and 'pre-linguistic' thinking, he also assumes that the meaning of a sentence is dependent on the meaning of the words which occur in the sentence though the truth of the sentence is independent of its component words. In this regard, Graham seems to adopt an atomistic or 'building-block' theory of meaning which is opposite to Davidson's holism. In the following, I will argue that Graham's criticism is not accurate both in the sense that his mystical idea of pre-logical thinking together with his atomistic theory of meaning is not well argued and in the sense that his interpretations of the Chinese concepts are not well grounded in Chinese sources. I will also point out that, even if we accept, for the sake of argument, his idea of the two levels of thinking, his explanation of the differences of Chinese and Western conceptual schemes is more consistent with Davidson's principle of charity than his idea of bilingual but distinct understanding would suggest.

Why do I think Graham's mystical idea of pre-logical thinking is not sustainable? One of the major reasons is that the so-called 'pre-logical chain of oppositions' is a self-contradictory description (How can we make sense of oppositions without logic?). Although Graham borrows his idea of binary oppositions from Jakobson, unlike Graham who understands them as 'pre-logical', Jakobson stresses their 'logical structure'.[11] Jakobson's idea of 'markedness' is based on the logical nature of oppositions applied both at the level of the signifier and at the level of the signified.[12] In Semiology or Semiotics, we know that there is a 'semiotic square', which is adapted from the 'logical square of oppositions', to characterize different kinds of oppositions such as contradiction, contrariety, and complementarity or implication. It appears unintelligible to say that these binary relations are oppositions without any logical sense. How can Graham

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[11] Roman Jakobson, 1978, p. 115. He and his student Morris Halle also remark that "the binary opposition is a child's first logical operation." See Jakobson and Halle, 1956, p. 60.

[12] Jakobson mentions that "[e]very single constituent of any linguistic system is built on an opposition of two logical contradictories: the present of an attribute (markedness) in contraposition to its absence (unmarkedness)." See Jakobson, 1985, p. 85, cited in John Lechte, 1994, p. 62.

claim that they are 'pre-logical' without any supporting argument?

If Graham's idea is not mere speculation, there is still a question whether this chain of oppositions in people's mind is innate or obtained by learning. If it is innate, people from different cultures should have the same chain reflected in their spontaneous reactions unless there is some kind of biological ground or genetic evidence to explain why two different races or two different groups of people from different cultures innately have different chains of oppositions. If different chains of oppositions reflected in different cultures are basically grasped by learning, it is impossible for us to understand a chain of oppositions as 'pre-logical'. Because what items selected and correlated as opposites from learning cannot be understood in a space without any logical relations. How can we know, from learning, if two items (linguistic or ontological entities), such as truth/falsehood and good/evil (in English), are conflicting, or other two items, such as *Yin/Yang* and day/night (in Chinese), complementary? If all these are grasped by learning and not innate, a native speaker's seemingly spontaneous reaction in using his or her words in a chain of oppositions should not be considered as different in nature from a skillful swimmer's or a mature driver's reaction. Some Westerners' viewing day and night as conflicting may be based on a perspective emphasizing the different characteristics between them, while some Chinese perception of them as complementary is probably based on a different perspective focusing on their alternation. I think both people can easily understand each other's opinion without presupposing the necessity of going back to Graham's 'pre-logical' underground.

While the idea of 'pre-logical' discussed above can be considered as self-refuting, the idea of 'pre-linguistic' can be understood as mystical. It is interesting that Graham interprets human beings' reaction of correlation as pre-linguistic on the one hand, and treats this reaction as similar to Pavlov's dog's conditioning on the other.[13] In discussing the problem whether animals have thought as humans have, Davidson also mentions the dog, in addition to his example of the fly. In this regard, Graham seems to be totally ignoring Davidson's arguments about 'the concept of belief' or 'the belief of belief'. It is obvious that the idea of 'pre-linguistic correlation' is inconsistent

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[13] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 207.
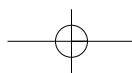
with Graham's other description of the same thing, 'a pre-logical patterning of names' (How can we have names by pre-linguistic correlation?). However, let's put aside the problem of inconsistency and focus on this dog-like correlation. According to Davidson's view in his "Thought and Talk", a dog probably knows that its master is home but does not know that Mr. Smith (its master) is home and the president of a bank is home.[14] A dog, unlike a rational creature, cannot have a thought in such an intensional context. So, a speechless creature may be able to discriminate something from other and may be conditioned to make similar reaction to similar stimulus, but it does not mean that it entertains a distinction between what is believed and what is the case. In other words, a dog does not have a belief which is known to be either true or false. In order to have a belief known to be either true or false, a creature must have the belief of a belief, i.e. the concept of a belief. In Davidson's words, "[t]he reason neither a dog nor any other creature can have a single belief, such as that it is seeing a cat, is that what identifies a belief is what we loosely call its propositional content. Thus, to have a belief about a cat, one must have mastery of the concepts that are involved in this judgement of belief. A creature does not have a concept of a cat merely because it can discriminate cats from other things in its environment. Mice are very good at telling cats apart from trees, lions, and snakes. But being able to discriminate cats is not the same thing as having the concept of a cat. You have the concept of a cat only if you can make sense of the idea of misapplying the concept, of believing or judging that something is a cat which is not a cat. To have the concept of a cat, you must have the concept of an animal, or at least of a continuing physical object, the concept of an object that moves in certain ways, something that can move freely in this environment, something that has sensations. There is no fixed list of things you have to know about, or associate with, felinity; but unless you have a lot of beliefs about what a cat is, you don't have the concept of a cat."[15] A dog doesn't have a single belief (a first-order belief), because it doesn't have the belief of a belief (a second-order belief). If Westerners' thinking or Chinese people's thinking at the so-called 'correlative' level is dog-like as Graham describes, it would be reasonable to treat the thinking as

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[14] Donald Davidson, 2001, p. 163.
[15] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 124.

'pre-logical' without being true or false. Nevertheless, is it possible for Chinese people to have a chain of oppositions, such as 'day/night' and '*Yin/Yang*', without some beliefs about daytime and sunshine and some other beliefs about nighttime and the Moon? Is it possible for Westerners to have another pattern of naming, such as 'good/evil' and 'true/false', without some intentions about behaviors and some beliefs about sentences? If our conceptual thinking really operates at the very beginning on Graham's underground level, Chinese thinking (in ancient times) on this level, for example, would have 'day/night' opposition without backing up by any beliefs about day and night. In other words, they would think of 'day/night' or '*Yin/Yang*' as complementary without believing that "There is sunshine at daytime", "The moon appears at night", and so on. Can we imagine that Chinese people (in ancient times) are thinking of 'day/night' correlatively first without any beliefs and then later thinking about them analytically with propositional attitudes? What is the rationale for this learning process? How can Graham identify these correlative concepts or ideas without assigning some background knowledge to the speakers?

If we accept, for the sake of argument, that the schemes themselves are patterns of names which are neither true nor false, and that factual statements depend on them for their meaning but not for their truth, Graham's building-block theory would still have more trouble than the ordinary version of the theory. His words or names used at the 'pre-logical' level (of course, it is impossible for them to be used at the 'pre-linguistic' level) must be context-free, otherwise they would appear in a context that connects them to other words for identifying their meaning or sense, and this context must be sentential. He thinks that learning Chinese words through guess from the entries of Mathews's dictionary would never be at home; instead, to understand the meanings of these words, such as '*an*' (安) and its opposite '*wei*' (危), is not to analyze them in a logical way but to correlate them within different contextual patterns.[16] However, these 'contextual patterns' are not patterns in sentential context, but patterns of naming at 'pre-logical' level. This may be one of the reasons why he considers his 'pre-logical' terms as having "no other content than the oppositions themselves".[17] But, when he uses some

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[16] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 67.
[17] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
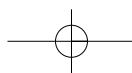
examples to illustrate the meanings of these sentential context-free terms or names, it indicates clearly that the terms' contents are more than the oppositions themselves. He says, for example, "to be *yang* not *yin* is nothing else but to be light not dark, or male not female."[18] It is obvious that the example is not consistent with his 'no more content' thesis, because 'to be *yang* not *yin*' is not the same as 'to be A not B' or 'to be A not ~A'. In order to know the similarity between *yang* and light or male and the difference between each pair, we have to know some contents more than just oppositions. If the terms have no other content than oppositions, then 'to be *yang* not *yin*' would have no difference from 'to be A not B' or 'to be A not ~A'. If so, how can this abstract and logical idea be understood at the 'pre-logical' level?

Since the differences in meaning between (ancient) Chinese and English words and sentences, for Graham, are 'to the bottom', at the 'pre-logical' level, it seems natural for him to claim that "*Mao-wo-zai-xi-zi-shang*" (貓臥在蓆子上) cannot be translated into "The cat sat on the mat", "*Cao-qing*" (草青) into "Grass is green," and '*yang*' (羊) into 'sheep'. To the bottom, it seems that Chinese and English correlate things or divide up the world differently. But Graham's explanations for these examples are not digging into the bottom if there is one. Although he mentions that '*wo*' (臥) does not express the same posture as 'sit' and that the classification of floor coverings for '*xi-zi*' (蓆子) and that for 'mats' are different, this explanation is definitely not about something underground but about contents, more than just correlations and oppositions. Graham's spontaneous thinking seems to exclude the possibility of having background beliefs about *xi-zi* in naming *xi-zi*. However, as he describes, in Chinese *xi-zi* is used of [*sic*] straw mats. In other words, it is something not made of cloths but straw only. This indicates that, when ancient Chinese people using the word '*xi-zi*', it is impossible for them not to know that "*xi-zi* is made of cloths" is false and "*xi-zi* is made of straw" is true. Graham's 'bottom-claim' is also not supported by his example of the unintertranslatability between "*Cao-qing*" and "Grass is green." He mentions that the concept of *cao* (草) has a wider scope than that of grass, *qing* (青) as blue-green is based on Chinese primary Five Colors which are different in division or classification from

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[18] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 209.

English primary Seven Colors. However, his term 'wider scope' means 'wider extension' and to identify the scope or extension of a concept is to identify the applicability of the concept, to test whether it is true or false in applying a concept to some object. Although Graham stresses that "[n]aming is by contrast within the scheme rather than by adequacy to the object"[19] and that to correlate Chinese and English words need not assume coincide in extensions,[20] it is obvious, in the explanation of this example, that he has to use the idea of scope or extension to identify the differences.

Graham's example about the unintertranslatability of '*yang*' and 'sheep' is also not consistent with his 'bottom-claim'. When reading the explanation in two languages of a vocabulary difference between them, Graham thinks that "one is positively grateful that they do not say exactly the same thing, much as when collecting information about an incident one wants photographs taken from different angles at different moments." It means that from a Chinese angle we can see that the scope of '*yang*' includes both things English people call 'sheep' and 'goat'; but from an English angle we can see that the scope of 'sheep' is exclusively different from that of 'goat'. Like the case that seeing or photographing an accident from different angles presupposes there is one and the same accident, this case also requires that there is one and the same object in plain sight; otherwise, we cannot have different perspectives or different descriptions of the (same) object in plain sight.

Graham identifies his idea of correlative thinking or naming as 'pre-logical', 'pre-linguistic', 'spontaneous', and also 'mystical'. It is mystical in the first sense that Graham's idea presupposes some kind of mentalist meaning which is independent of analytic thinking; it is mystical in the second sense that Graham treats his 'pre-logical pattern of names' as the products of a classifying act of naming without understanding them as the singular terms of logic. Nevertheless, in what sense could this kind of 'naming' be understood as a classifying act? Isn't it necessary to have some sense in which something can be named rightly under a classifying act while others cannot? If Chinese classifying *yang* is different from English classifying sheep in the sense that the English word 'sheep' cannot be used to refer to a goat but the Chinese word '*yang*' can be used to refer to both

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[19] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 212.
[20] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

a sheep and a goat, Chinese people should know at the same time that it is right to say '*yang*' to cover both sheep and goats and wrong to refer to sheep only. It seems to be the same situation as indicated by Davidson that we can master the distinction between erroneously applying the concept cow to bulls when faced by a bull and correctly applying a concept that covers both cows and bulls through a test of learning to explain errors.[21] To compare a foreign language with home language, I think we can also use this kind of test for learning to explain the differences. For the same reason, if someone says "That's *yang*" when faced by a sheep consistently, and says the same thing when faced by a goat at only one time, a Westerner may not know at that time whether she is erroneously applying the word '*yang*' (if he has the impression that it is equivalent to 'sheep') or correctly applying the word that refers to both sheep and goats. Until some day he knows more about her background beliefs through a triangulated interaction as described by Davidson, he could be sure that her concept *yang* is not the same as his concept sheep. It is unintelligible that without the concept of applicability of names we can have an act of classification. The job of classifying names cannot be done merely at the level of names, especially not at the so-called 'pre-logical' level, which is separated from or independent of the context of sentence or proposition. Graham is not only neglecting Davidson's holism, but also arguing for his mystical version of meaning atomism in a self-refuting way.

According to Davidson, "Because of the fact that beliefs are individuated and identified by their relation to other beliefs, one must have a large number of beliefs if one is to have any. Beliefs support one another, and give each other content. Beliefs also have logical relations to one another. As a result, unless one's beliefs are roughly consistent with each other, there is no identifying the contents of beliefs. A degree of rationality or consistency is therefore a condition for having beliefs."[22] In other words, to identify the content of a belief, a large number of other beliefs with a high degree of consistency are necessary: the principle of charity with the holistic characteristic. This point is not only true for a single belief, but also true for a single word. Davidson says, "[W]ords, like thoughts, have a familiar meaning, a propositional content, only if they occur in a

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[21] Donald Davidson, 1998, p. 7.
[22] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 124.

rich context, for such a context is required to give the words or thoughts a location and a meaningful function."[23] For example, Graham's binary oppositions of 'day' and 'night' for a child cannot be understood as no other content than the oppositions themselves, unless the child could know something so abstract as the formal relationship between 'A' and '~A' at the very beginning of learning. To understand the word 'night' requires someone to know that there is no sunlight when the word is used in a context related to what he or she sees. He or she is also required to have the belief that sometimes he or she can see the moon and stars at night. These relevant knowledge or beliefs about the general features of the event (or object) are the criteria for people to apply their concepts correctly, and thus to identify the content of the word. Davidson has an example with a similar explanation of the holistic character of having a single concept. He says that "we would deny that someone had the concept of a man who did not know something about what distinguishes a man from a woman, who did not know that fathers are men, that every man has a father and a mother, and that normal adults have thoughts."[24] So, generally speaking, according to Davidson, "the meanings of the words that refer to these features, and the contents of the concepts the words express, depend as much on the natural history of how the words and concepts were acquired as was the case for 'porcupine' and 'echidna'. There are no words, or concepts tied to words, that are not understood and interpreted, directly or indirectly, in terms of causal relations between people and the world (and, of course, the relations among words and other words, concepts and other concepts)."[25] He also mentions that, "in the simplest cases words and thoughts refer to what causes them, it is clear that it cannot happen that most of our plainest beliefs about what exists in the world are false. The reason is that we do not first form concepts and then discover what they apply to; rather, in the basic cases, the application determines the content of the concept."[26] Or put in another way, "[w]e can give the meaning of any sentence (or word) only by giving the meaning of every sentence (and word) in the language."[27]
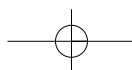
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[23] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 127.
[24] Donald Davidson, 1998, p. 2.
[25] Donald Davidson, 2002, pp. 50–51.
[26] Donald Davidson, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–197.
[27] Donald Davidson, 1984, p. 22.

Graham agrees with Chad Hansen that classical Chinese nouns in general are closer to English mass than to English count nouns, and thus accepts Hansen's argument that Western thought is predisposed by number termination to conceive the world as an aggregate of distinct objects while Chinese by the mass noun to conceive it as a whole variously divisible into parts. He also declares that Chinese thought being conditioned to divide down rather than add up is in any case suggested by other features of the language and that Chinese thinking is in terms of process rather than of static entities—individual objects. However, some serious difficulties of Hansen's explanations based on his 'mass noun hypothesis' and his misinterpretations of the Chinese texts seem to be totally unknown to Graham. Among other criticisms, I have argued about Hansen's issue elsewhere that, based on this hypothesis, his interpretations and explanations of the problem in Chinese texts are basically focused on very few paragraphs mainly in *Mohist Canon* (墨經) and *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi* (公孫龍子). But unfortunately, even limited to these paragraphs, some terms used in *Mohist Canon* obviously referring to individual object or abstract entity seem to be totally ignored by Hansen's treatment. More unfortunately, even though he claims to use Davidson's principle of charity to interpret *Gong-Sun-Long-Zi,* he has to interpret Gong-Sun Long as committing inconsistency, particularly in the case that he interprets Gong-Sun Long as using the term '*fei-ma*' (非馬) in two different senses: one meaning as English 'not (identical with) horse' and the other as 'non-horse' (in the context of mentioning 'cow-horse' collection, it means cow).[28] Let's put aside the problem whether ancient Chinese has count terms or not (it is clear that there are a lot of evidences provided by Chinese linguists to indicate that count terms do exist in ancient China), there is still a question of how the ancient Chinese people could have a language which lacks count terms to express individual objects. Is it possible that there is a language used by them whose words can only be used to refer to mass stuff instead of individual object? I don't think so. I don't think that there is a language without expressions referring to different individual objects. Claiming that Chinese thinking is in terms of process rather than of static entities is not only distorting Chinese thinking, but also misleading the real issue

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[28] Yiu-ming Fung, 2000, ch. 8.

in Chinese texts by such a groundless hypothesis. Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, the hypothesis, it is not necessary for us to accept Graham's (or Hansen's) pseudo (or real) linguistic determinism of thinking and ontology. Graham seems to be totally ignoring Davidson's view on convention (and on the prior theory and the passing theory). According to Davidson's view, "what interpreter and speaker share, to the extent that communication succeeds, is not learned and so is not a language governed by rules or conventions known to speaker and interpreter in advance; but what the speaker and interpreter know in advance is not (necessarily) shared, and so is not a language governed by shared rules or conventions." One of the reasons is that "a sufficiently explicit framework could be discredited by a single malapropism. There is some evidence of a more impressive sort that internal grammars do differ among speakers of 'the same language'." He concludes that "[w]e must give up the idea of a clearly defined shared structure which language-users acquire and then apply to cases." Because "we have discovered no learnable common core of consistent behaviour, no shared grammar or rules, no portable interpreting machine set to grind out the meaning of an arbitrary utterance. We may say that linguistic ability is the ability to converge on a passing theory from time to time."[29]

It is quite strange that Graham recognizes Wittgenstein, Ryle, and Derrida as his heroes in fighting for his correlative thinking covered by analytic thinking. Nevertheless, it is evident that what these important figures of contemporary philosophy have done is not struggle and search for something at the bottom as Graham's mentalist and mystical 'root'. Wittgenstein's or Ryle's disenchantment work is to try to explain away any mystical element which is supposedly believed by the mentalists as other than something identified in a social context; and one of the aims of Derrida's deconstruction is to subvert the 'binarism' of Structuralism by demonstrating the instability of binary oppositions. It is clear that these heroes cannot be understood as supporting Graham's idea; on the contrary, they clean up his 'bottom'.

Let us imagine that a person, who is retarded and fails to recognize the words 'sheep' and 'goat', invents by himself or herself a word 'shoat' (not meaning a young pig just after weaning) to refer

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[29] Donald Davidson, 1986, pp. 444–446.

to either sheep or goats based on his or her perception of some of their shared characteristics. With respect to his or her new word, I don't think people using normal English as their home language cannot understand and interpret what he or she says about 'shoat'; and I also don't think people using ancient Chinese as their home language cannot understand '*yang*' as the equivalent of 'shoat'. It is unnecessary to treat the triple sides as having different conceptual schemes. They share a lot even though there are differences in vocabulary and grammar among different cultures or at home. Semantic and syntactic flexibility and expandability are not only possible for interpretation at home, but also possible for translation of words and sentences in a foreign language. As indicated by Davidson, "Different speakers have different stocks of proper names, different vocabularies, and attach somewhat different meanings to words. In some cases this reduces the level of mutual understanding; but not necessarily, for as interpreters we are very good at arriving at a correct interpretation of words we have not heard before, or of words we have not heard before with meanings a speaker is giving them."[30] As to a foreign language, for example, we know that, before silk or china transported from China to Europe several thousand years ago, there was no equivalent word for each of these things in English. But it is not reasonable to say that the word china was not translatable between Chinese and English at that time but is translatable now. Literally speaking, there was no exact word in English to translate the Chinese word of china at that time; but in principle, it was not untranslatable. Even though the English word 'dragon' in a Westerner's mind may have different mental image, emotional color, or opinion from the Chinese word '*long*' (龍) in a Chinese mind, if they both use their words in most of the propositional contexts with the same truth condition and with the same content-fixing cause, we would have no ground to say that most of the sentences about '*long*' in Chinese and 'dragon' in English are not intertranslatable. As indicated by Davidson, there is no need to have a 'word-by-word' translation.[31] His criticism of Thomas Kuhn's idea is based on 'the fact of reason', if we could use the Kantian description in this context, that incommensurability, if making sense, presupposes a co-ordinate to identify a difference; and the difference "can be explained and

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[30] Donald Davidson, 2001, p. 277.
[31] Donald Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
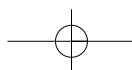
described using the equipment of a single language."[32] It means that Davidson's notion of 'translation' does not mean literal translation but interpretative translation which allows explanation and description in addition to semantic and syntactic expansions. In the past the English words 'mutton' and 'sheep' defined one another by contrast of their being cooked vs. on the hoof. French word 'mouton' does not have this contrast; so, we cannot find its English equivalent in translation. However, when subtracting 'mutton' from English, it would lead 'sheep' to expand its extension into something like French 'mouton'. I do not think there is any person who would be so unthinking as to claim that the literal translation among different languages is always workable without semantic and syntactic expansions. If there are people in this list, Davidson is definitely not.

2. *A Methodological Reflection on the Principle of Charity*

If I am right in the above discussion, Graham's Sinologist's criticism of Davidson's principle of charity together with his view on the very idea of a conceptual scheme can be judged as groundless and self-defeating. I believe Davidson's principle of charity can survive in its application to the Chinese or Sinologist context. However, there are quite a few criticisms of this principle which are not based on concrete contexts in examining its applicability, but are focused on the controversial issue of its methodological character. Most of the criticisms in this regard are targeted on its seemingly Kantian nature of transcendental argument or transcendental deduction (hereafter, simplified as 'TA' and 'TD' respectively). However, Davidson seems to be reluctant to reject this label in the beginning and unwilling to accept it later. In his "In Defense of Convention T", Davidson writes: "Tarski is right, I think, in proposing that we think of natural languages as essentially intertranslatable (although I don't see why this requires word-by-word translation). The proposal idealizes the flexibility and expandability of natural languages, but can be justified by a transcendental argument (which I will not give here)."[33] In a footnote Davidson refers the reader to his articles "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" and "The Method of Truth in Metaphysics"

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[32] Donald Davidson, 2001, p. 184.
[33] Donald Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
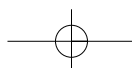
for this TA. But later when responding to Andrew Cutrofello's crit-
icism, he replies that "I don't know if my arguments for the prin-
ciple of charity are transcendental or not. Andrew Cutrofello does
not quote me as saying so. In any case, the arguments he says are
mine are not transcendental, good, or mine."[34] In response to A.C.
Genova's interpretation of his idea, he mentions that "[p]eople sug-
gested that what I had hit on was a transcendental argument, and
I didn't reject the idea. But was it?" and gives a more concrete
explanation that "[i]f you accept the steps that lead to my version
of externalism, what Genova calls 'semantic realism', then you can-
not, I think, be a skeptic about the existence of an external world
much like the one we all believe we share, nor about the existence
of other people with minds like ours. But the considerations in favor
of semantic realism seem to depend in part not on purely a priori
considerations but rather on a view of the way people are."[35] And
in response to Barry Stroud's discussion, he also stresses that "[w]hat
is not trivial is to show that we know enough about the world to
be able to say that it is pretty much as we think it is."[36] On another
occasion, Davidson mentions that the principle of charity in inter-
pretation is not a policy: "we might do better to think of it as a
way of expressing the *fact* [my italic] that creatures with thoughts,
values, and speech must be rational creatures, are necessarily inhab-
itants of the same objective world as ourselves, and necessarily share
their leading values with us."[37] Although Davidson agrees that whether
a creature 'subscribes' to the basic principles of rationality, includ-
ing the principle of continence, the basic principles of logic, and the
principle of total evidence for inductive reasoning, "is not an empir-
ical question",[38] it seems he is only referring to the coherence part
of the principle of charity; as to the correspondence part, it is obvi-
ous that the question is of a factual nature. It seems he is express-
ing the same point when he replies to Thomas Nagel in emphasizing
that "[t]he conclusion [of the reasoning of charity] that I know that
the world, both in general and in many particular ways, is as I think
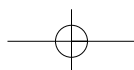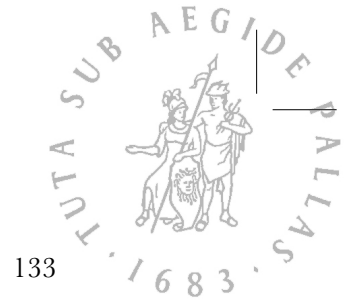
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[34] Lewis H. Hahn, ed., 1999, p. 342.

[35] Donald Davidson, "Reply to A.C. Genova", in Lewis H. Hahn, ed., 1999, pp. 192, 194.

[36] Donald Davidson, "Reply to Barry Stroud", in Lewis H. Hahn, ed., 1999, p. 163.

[37] Donald Davidson, 1984, p. 18.

[38] Donald Davidson, 1985, p. 352.

it is, depends on the *fact* [my italic] that I have just the beliefs I do."[39] In other words, the argument for the impossibility of massive errors of our beliefs or for the necessity of massive truth shared by the speaker and the interpreter is based in part on empirical evidence; in this sense we cannot label Davidson's argument for the principle of charity 'transcendental'.

With respect to the arguments for the condition of attribution of thought and for the condition of language-hood, it is obvious that Davidson uses many similar key terms or phrases which are the indicators of using TA or TD in a Kantian sense or a popular sense since P.F. Strawson's use. In Davidson's third book which deals with three kinds of knowledge, we can easily find a pattern of terms or phrases used in his sentences, such as "X is possible only if Y", "X is impossible unless (there is a presumption that) Y", "X requires Y", "X is essential to the possibility of Y", "The very possibility of X demands Y", "X is intelligible only on the supposition that Y", "X takes its content from a background of Y", "In order to have X, we must entertain Y", "X is a necessary condition of Y", and so on. These expressions are undoubtedly also used in the discourse of TA or TD. So, I think the popular perception of 'transcendental' attributed to Davidson's arguments is not groundless. That Davidson lacks detailed explanation may be in part responsible for the resultant misunderstanding.

In order to give a supplementary explanation for this problem, I will make a distinction based on Kant's two kinds of TD or TA in the following. We know that in Kant's three *Critiques* there are at least two kinds of TD or TA. In Kant's first *Critique* there is a paradigmatic use of the TD, i.e. the transcendental deduction of the categories. It starts from a question "How is experience (or empirical knowledge) possible?" and answers with the following chain of expressions: "From the premises that there is experience and that the categories are necessary conditions of its possibility, it proves or legitimizes the objective validity of the categories." In his second *Critique* Kant seems to use the same kind of TD. Its question is: "How is (autonomy) morality (or moral judgment and action) possible?" Its argument runs like this: "From the premises that there is

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[39] Donald Davidson, "Reply to Thomas Nagel", in Lewis H. Hahn, ed., 1999, p. 209.

(autonomy) morality and that its possibility is based on the postu-
late of the freedom of will, it proves or legitimizes the objective valid-
ity (or practical necessity) of the freedom of will." In this regard, the
first premise in each deduction seems to Kant to be empirically true,
but the second premise in each deduction obviously includes some
transcendental concept or transcendental entity, i.e. a priori category
or the freedom of will, and thus it cannot be considered as empir-
ically true. To assert that having some transcendental concept or
transcendental entity is a necessary condition of, or is presupposed
by, having an empirical fact is clearly not an empirical claim, but
some kind of a priori claim or stipulation. In this sense we are legit-
imated to say that this kind of argument is a TD or TA in its proper
sense or paradigmatic use. Another sense of TD or TA used in the
first *Critique* is about the objective validity of (empirical) objects. As
for the same question as above, "How is experience possible?" Kant's
reply is this: "From the premises that there is experience and that
(physical) objects are necessary conditions of its possibility, it follows
that there are (physical) objects." We can see in this case that the
second premise does not have any transcendental concept or tran-
scendental entity; it seems not to be an a priori stipulation but an
empirical claim of a necessary condition, just like the claim that
"having food is essential to being healthy", "good teaching requires
good learning", "stopping smoking is a necessary condition of pre-
venting lung cancer", and "having an event of bell ringing presupposes
having a bell". All these are based on some empirical fact. In com-
parison with the first kind of TA, a paradigmatic use of TA, this
second kind of argument has also been classified as TA by many
philosophers but is obviously lacking a 'transcendental' sense. The
other difference between these two kinds of TA is related to the
problem of objective validity. With respect to the first kind of TA,
if there are different TAs based on different a priori stipulations for
the possibility of the same empirical fact, what can be justified or
legitimized would be different transcendental concepts or transcen-
dental entities; and the so-called 'objective validity' of the target con-
clusion would be relativized and thus the argument could not be
sound. On the other hand, each example of the second kind of TA
is an empirical claim, each argument can be valid or invalid, sound
or unsound, as long as we can have the relevant empirical evidence
to confirm or disconfirm (or to verify or falsify) each sentence in the
argument. This kind of TA may have Stroud's problem with
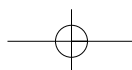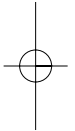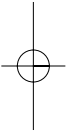
'superfluous' or 'redundant' in relation to verification;[40] but the first kind is definitely irrelevant to the problem. Although these two kinds of TA are very different, I think it is unfortunate that some people like to put these two together under the same label. To make them devoiced may be good for our understanding of many related but distinct arguments in the literature, and especially for our understanding of Davidson's principle of charity.

The impression of the 'transcendental' sense given to people by Davidson's principle of charity may be due to its expressing in a very general way and its seemingly a priori characteristic. However, if we pay ample attention to some of the concrete examples which are usually used by Davidson to illustrate the applicability of the principle, this impression may be different. For example, a different impression would emerge if we read carefully the paragraph about the concept of a cat I quoted from Davidson's article in the previous section.[41] In this particular case, but not in the general form of the principle, it is obvious that this claim for the condition of having a concept and a belief, or attributing a concept or a belief, is supported by empirical evidence; this is not an a priori stipulation. If we use Graham's seemingly counter-example as our example, it also confirms with empirical evidence that massive true beliefs shared by Chinese and Westerners are essential for interpreting and understanding the differences between their languages. Someone who fails to interpret or to translate the Chinese word '*yang*' into the English word 'sheep' at the beginning would eventually discover that the scope or extension of the former is larger than that of the latter through a test of Davidson's triangulation. In this case, even though they classify things differently and each side may have different mental images, emotive colors, and opinions attached to their words, they do have a lot to share. They both recognize that there are two sorts of objects, though English, unlike Chinese, does not put them together as belonging to the same kind. They both know that the objects either referred to by the Chinese '*yang*' or referred to by the English 'sheep' or 'goat' are not plants but animals, that these animals are physically visible, freely moving, do not eat other animals, and so on. The list of shared beliefs and thoughts is too long to


[40] Barry Stroud, 1968, p. 256.
[41] See the quotation in footnote 15.

enumerate; but it forms an empirical background for each to inter-
pret and to understand the other's language. Based on this and other
examples, I think Graham's argument against Davidson's view is
actually self-refuting; Graham's explanation of the differences between
the two languages, in order to make sense, is also necessarily based
on some kind of background beliefs shared by both sides.

   If a teacher of biology wants to persuade his or her students to
stop smoking, he or she may ask the students a question like this:
"How is preventing lung cancer possible?" Some smart students would
give an answer from a health magazine that "It is the case that
many people have no lung cancer, and (we know from statistical evi-
dence) that a necessary condition of preventing lung cancer is to
stop smoking; therefore, stop smoking." This Modus Ponens argu-
ment is clearly based on empirical evidence. Let us take another
example to illustrate the same point. We can ask an experienced
teacher, like Davidson, a question "How is it possible to be a good
teacher?" I think he would answer like this: "There are many good
teachers in the world, and (we know from experience that) to be a
good teacher requires someone to be a good learner; therefore, to
be a good learner." So, based on this valid argument, we should try
our best to be a good learner if we want to be a good teacher. This
argument starts from a question of possibility, its premises do not
involve any transcendental concept or transcendental entity, and its
assertion of the necessary condition is based on empirical evidence.
Hence, it is not an a priori claim. The general form of Davidson's
principle of charity seems to suggest an a priori claim, but its par-
ticular examples are not. I think this principle is in accord with our
intuition of the ordinary use of language (speaking or interpreting)
and, more importantly, is generalized from a lot of particular cases
with empirical evidence as its inductive base. This base is very sta-
ble and seems unshakable, because we have not yet found any con-
crete and obvious counter-example to the principle. In this sense, I
conclude that the principle of charity, "Maximizing true beliefs is a
condition of having thought," is based on a huge amount of empir-
ical evidence, as is the principle of nutrition, "Maximizing nutriment
is a condition of having energy."
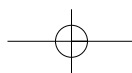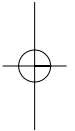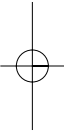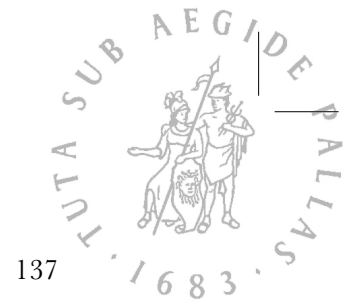
3. *Zen Buddhism Interpreted as Deconstructive Skepticism*

Davidson, like other contemporary philosophers, wants to kick out skepticism. What Davidson can do in this respect, I think, is to kick out some version of skepticism in a constructive or explicit form, but not a deconstructive or implicit form of skepticism. As demonstrated by Putnam's model-theoretical argument, metaphysical realism and skepticism are two sides of the same coin.[42] In this sense we may say that metaphysical realism or Platonism is a constructive form of skepticism. This kind of skepticism, if expressed explicitly, is not only claiming that our existing empirical knowledge of the world is an illusion or delusion, but also establishing its own position and asserting a view of reality. Since it is not only negatively rejecting what we have known as illusive or delusive appearance, but also positively affirming an ultimate truth of reality, there is trouble for this kind of skepticism to justify itself. It has trouble both because the burden of proof is now on its shoulder and because its non-empirical stance is obviously no better than our empirical stance even though it would try to legitimize or justify itself on its own stance. In this regard, Davidson's arguments based on triangulation are obviously more convincing than the transcendental or metaphysical arguments of skepticism such as Platonic realism; and in this sense, it is fair to say that Davidson can kick out this kind of constructive skepticism. However, Davidson believes that "to show we know enough about the world to be able to say that it is pretty much as we think it is" is "to show that it [i.e. skepticism] is false", though he agrees that "we cannot prove it false in particular cases."[43] Or more moderately speaking, "I set out not to 'refute' the skeptic, but to give a sketch of what I think to be a correct account of the foundations of linguistic communication and its implications for truth, belief, and knowledge. If one grants the correctness of this account, one can tell the skeptic to get lost."[44] It seems he is claiming that he can kick out skepticism in general. But I do not think this is true; I think the case is reversed. There are many brands of skepticism, constructive or deconstructive, metaphysical or mystical, or in particular, the thesis of Plato's cave or Descartes' demon. In general, it is

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[42] Hilary Putnam, 1984, ch. 1.
[43] Donald Davidson, "Reply to Stroud", in Lewis H. Hahn ed., 1999, p. 163.
[44] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 157.
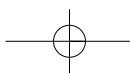
not easy to kick out all of them; but when facing some particular cases of constructive skepticism, it is quite easy to compare its power of justification with that from our empirical stance and thus not difficult to kick it out.

Although all brands of skepticism cannot justify themselves, some of them cannot be falsified by empirical evidence. This is just like the case that although all brands of theism cannot justify there is God, some of them cannot be falsified by empirical evidence. Let us imagine that, if a theist claims that in reality God is in the world though in appearance you do not know that it is the case, what could an anti-theist say? She could say that "Please tell me how to identify or locate God in this world?" Then, the burden of proof would be put on the theist's shoulder, because what he claims is more than a negative statement that the world is not what it appears, a mere logical possibility, but he also has a positive claim about something (i.e. God) which does not appear in the world but is really in the world. Just like the case of constructive skepticism, this can be easily judged as false unless the theist can identify or locate the non-empirical entity in the empirical world in a non-mysterious way. Nevertheless, if some 'slippery' theist claims that God does exist but 'He' and 'His Action' are ineffable and unintelligible in a rational way, it seems that we cannot directly prove the claim is false. When you try to prove its falsity, the theist would reply that "Hey, it cannot be thought in a rational way, so, it cannot be falsified in a rational way either." My point is that, when facing this deconstructive, implicit or hidden kind of skepticism, we cannot kick it out directly, because it rejects the whole idea of rationality, either used for proving or for disproving the issue: it refuses to prove itself in this way and also refuses any disproof in the same way. It is totally out of reason. But, is it irrational?

Davidson is right in saying that "we could not understand someone whom we were forced to treat as departing radically and predominantly from all such [rational] norms. This would not be an example of irrationality, or of an alien set of standards: it would be an absence of rationality, something that could not be reckoned as thought."[45] He is also right in making his conclusion that "If what we share provides a common standard of truth and objectivity,

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[45] Donald Davidson, 1993, p. 297.

difference of opinion makes sense. But relativism about standards requires what there cannot be, a position beyond all standard."[46] So, the deconstructive skepticism or slippery relativism mentioned above, according to Davidson, can be understood as not irrational, but non-rational (except its criticism of the rational view of the world). This means that it is not about thought, therefore it cannot be either true or false. Irrational thinking is false because it is qualified to be false; but non-rational thinking (if it can be called 'thinking') is not false because it is not qualified to be false. From Davidson's point of view, non-rational thinking is just not making sense. Here, I totally agree with Davidson on this point. However, I do not think the story ends here. Because the deconstructive skepticism would reply that "based on your rational standards, you have your own right to judge that my thinking is not making sense; but based on my non-rational or super-rational standards, your knowledge of the world is illusive or delusive. My thinking not making sense to you is tantamount to my thinking not understood by you, because it cannot be understood by rational thinking. Why do I have to give up my own standards and then to share your rational standards and thoughts? Could I ask you to do the reverse? Your request of my giving up my standards and my request of your giving up your standards seem to be of the same weight of legitimacy." At this point, I do not think Davidson and any other can kick out this deconstructive skepticism without more energy.

Davidson seems to have smelt this kind of skepticism; so he mentions that "there is the idea that any language distorts reality, which implies that it is only wordlessly if at all that the mind comes to grips with things as they really are . . . Yet if the mind can grapple without distortion with the real, the mind itself must be without categories and concepts. This featureless self is familiar from theories in quite different parts of the philosophical landscape."[47] The thesis based on the idea of the 'featureless self' in general, or the idea of Zen (or *Chan* 禪) Buddhism's 'no-self' in particular (which will be discussed later), is definitely rejected by Davidson, because he thinks that "the mind is divorced from the traits that constitute it." However, the reason of Davidson's rejection is still based on rational standards

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[46] Donald Davidson, 1993, p. 307.
[47] Donald Davidson, 2001, p. 185.

which are not welcome to this kind of skepticism; so, I do not think it can persuade the skepticism to get lost.

In Asian philosophy, especially in Chinese philosophy, the idea of 'featureless self', 'conceptless subject', 'contentless consciousness', 'absolute mind', or 'no-self' was very popular a few thousand years ago. Ancient Daoism, Zen Buddhism, and New Confucianism (including *Song-Ming* and contemporary Confucianism) are the main representatives with this characteristic in the field. In the following, our discussion will mainly focus on Zen Buddhism, with special reference to D.T. Suzuki's interpretation. We know that Suzuki was very successful in promoting Zen Buddhism in the West. In order to attract Western people's attention by some salient differences, sometimes Suzuki exaggerates the contrast between Western and Asian thinking. One of the major differences emphasized by him is the contrast between rationality and irrationality, or logical and illogical thinking. For example, Suzuki sometimes says that "Zen is the most irrational, inconceivable thing in the world", that it "defies all concept-making", and that the essence of Zen is *satori* (頓悟), the experience of 'sudden enlightenment', which is irrational, inexplicable, and incommunicable.[48] In his popular book, entitled *Living by Zen*, he stresses that "If we are to judge Zen from our common-sense view of things, we shall find the ground sinking away under our feet. Our so-called rationalistic way of thinking has apparently no use in evaluating the truth or untruth of Zen. It is altogether beyond the ken of human understanding. All that we can therefore state about Zen is that its uniqueness lies in its irrationality or its passing beyond our logical comprehension."[49] In response to the Chinese historian Hu Shih's (胡適) criticism, he says, "Zen is not explainable by mere intellectual analysis. As long as the intellect is concerned with words and ideas, it can never reach Zen."[50] Therefore, to know Zen one must give up his or her rational thinking and dualistic logic, and then he or she could be enlightened with *prajñā*-intuition (般若直觀), an unknowable knowledge. Why do you have to give up rational thinking and dualistic logic? It is because people without Zen enlightenment are living in the world of *samsāra* (生死) with the sufferings issuing from dualistic thinking. If you want to be emancipated from

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[48] D.T. Suzuki, 1996, pp. 13, 103.
[49] D.T. Suzuki, 1994, p. 20.
[50] D.T. Suzuki, 1953, p. 26.

these sufferings and to enter Zen's non-dualistic world, you have to go beyond rational thinking. To be free from the dualistic cage and enter this beautiful world, one must know nothing; because to fall into the dualistic abyss, one is forced to know something conceptualized. Zen or the insight of *sunyata* (空 emptiness) is nothingness, because it is the 'undifferentiated totality', there is nothing in it which can be conceptualized. Suzuki thinks that "the dualist view of reality has been a great stumbling block to our right understanding of spiritual truth,"[51] and thus "Zen is decidedly not a system founded upon logic and analysis. If anything, it is the antipode to logic, by which I mean the dualistic mode of thinking."[52] He even condemns: "According to the philosophy of Zen, we are too much of a slave to the conventional way of thinking, which is dualistic through and through. No 'interpenetration' is allowed, there takes place no fusing of opposites in our everyday logic." "Zen, however, upsets this scheme of thought and substitutes a new one in which there exists no logic, no dualistic arrangement of ideas."[53]

In order to deconstruct dualistic logic, Suzuki sometimes stresses the significance or necessity of Zen masters' using incoherent or paradoxical statements to express their insight. He explains the reason "why they [i.e. the masters] make those apparently incoherent statements. Their inclination is to set the minds of their disciples or of scholars free from being oppressed by any fixed opinion or prejudices or so-called logical interpretations."[54] More theoretically speaking, "Paradoxical statements are . . . characteristic of *prajñā*-intuition. As it transcends *vijnana* (識) or logic it does not mind contradicting itself; it knows that a contradiction is the outcome of differentiation, which is the work of *vijnana*."[55] One of the paradoxical statements frequently used by Suzuki is the following example: "We generally reason: 'A' is 'A' because 'A' is 'A'; or 'A' is 'A', therefore, 'A' is 'A'. Zen agrees or accepts this way of reasoning, but Zen has its own way which is ordinarily not at all acceptable. Zen would say: 'A' is 'A' because 'A' is not 'A'; or 'A' is not 'A', therefore, 'A' is 'A'."[56] It seems that the way of Zen that Suzuki describes is the way

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[51] D.T. Suzuki, 1994, p. 28.
[52] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, p. 38.
[53] D.T. Suzuki, 1996, p. 112.
[54] D.T. Suzuki, [1991], pp. 78–79.
[55] D.T. Suzuki, 1955, pp. 94–95, also in Charles A. Moore, ed., 1951, p. 24.
[56] D.T. Suzuki, 1953, p. 37.

to subvert, generally, the duality of 'A' and '~A'; and specifically, the dichotomy of subject and object. He believes that "in *prajñā* this dichotomy no longer exists," because, "[*p*]*rajñā* is not concerned with finite objects as such; it is the totality of things becoming conscious of itself as such. And this totality is not at all limited. An infinite totality is beyond our ordinary human comprehension."[57] It means that not only the extension but also the content of Zen wisdom is beyond ordinary human comprehension. So he concludes, "*Satori* (emptiness) may be defined as an intuitive looking into the nature of things in contradistinction to the analytical or logical understanding of it."[58]

Although Suzuki puts too much emphasis on the irrational and illogical character of Zen, it is basically a strategy. In reality, he is not rejecting rational thinking and logic for its own sake; in order to demonstrate their irrelevance to or distortion of the ultimate reality, he has to use this strategy to help people to go beyond them. In other words, Zen is a realm of 'pure land' inhabited by people with pure consciousness without any concept and logic. For Suzuki, to fight against rational thinking and logic is not to justify their falsity, but to throw them away altogether in order to enter Zen enlightenment. In this sense we can say that Suzuki's Zen is not irrational but non-rational. To understand irrational thinking, as demonstrated by Davidson, we have to put it into the framework of rational thinking. I think Suzuki would agree with this point. However, to understand non-rational or super-rational thinking, for Suzuki, we have to throw away rational thinking altogether, there is no place for it to stand. In other words, giving up rationality is essential to attaining Zen enlightenment. Based on this point, I argue that, if Zen Buddhism's view on the secular world can be interpreted as a form of deconstructive skepticism, its 'non-rational web' can be considered as very defensive to any attack from the 'rational army'.

4. *Locating Problem and Landing Problem*

Zen as a form of deconstructive skepticism is both like and unlike the relativism defined by Davidson and others. It is like relativism

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[57] D.T. Suzuki, 1960, p. 57.
[58] D.T. Suzuki, 1996, p. 84; and 1991, p. 88.
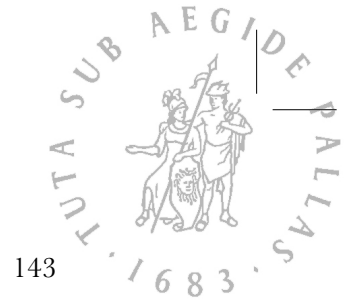
in the sense that it takes an unorganized reality for granted; it is unlike it in the sense that it throws away the so-called conventional scheme and defines its understanding or enlightenment as concept-less and speechless. As interpreted by Suzuki, Zen masters can grasp their ultimate reality through a special and private access, while ordinary people still in the ignorant state distort Zen's truth and misunderstand reality as appearance. This picture of the two kinds of truth (Zen's truth and ordinary truth) or of the two levels of world (Zen's world and ordinary world) may be understood as a special sort of relativism; but it seems not appropriate to apply Davidson's argument against the very idea of a conceptual scheme in this context, because, as indicated by Suzuki, Zen has no conceptual scheme. Suzuki would probably address the question in this way: "Zen masters would reject applying Davidson's identifying or locating criterion by saying that there is no conceptual content, clear or unclear, in my state of enlightenment, and one can reach this state only if he or she gives up rational thinking and thus is free from the conceptual cage. We have no language at all when enlightened. We are not to use language to organize or to fix anything. For Zen, there is nothing to be organized or to be fixed. What we have is neither an object nor a subject, because the dualistic contrast between subject and object has been merged into an undistinguishing unity, an absolute subjectivity. If we have to describe what it is, it is the subject without opposite to object, the subject in itself, or more appropriately, no-self or emptiness (*sunyata*)." Since Suzuki stresses that only through each individual's private access can one enter Zen's world, we may consider Zen's world as solipsistic and, according to Davidson, judge it as having no size or as not a world at all.[59] But Suzuki would not agree with this accusation, because he believes that one who enters Zen's world with enlightenment "is absolutely convinced of its universality in spite of its privacy."[60] It is private because it cannot be grasped by concepts and can be entertained or enjoyed only in each individual's mind. It is not solipsistic because it is enjoyable by all people though not enjoyed by those who are still in the realm of illusion. Furthermore, even using Davidson's idea of the 'compartmentalization of the mind' would be unhelpful, because

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[59] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 119.
[60] D.T. Suzuki, 1953, p. 33.

Zen's problem is not the division of the mind, but the deconstruc-
tion of the mind. This deconstructive or hidden skepticism implies
a special sort of relativism which is very slippery and is not easy to
get rid of.

Based on the principle of charity, of course, Davidson would ask
Suzuki to identify or locate Zen's thinking in a human language. As
mentioned by Davidson, "We do not understand the idea of such a
really foreign scheme. We know what states of mind are like, and
how they are correctly identified; they are just those states whose
contents can be discovered in well-known ways. If other people or
creatures are in states not discoverable by these methods, it cannot
be because our methods fail us, but because those states are not cor-
rectly called states of mind—they are not beliefs, desires, wishes, or
intentions. The meaninglessness of the idea of a conceptual scheme
forever beyond our grasp is due not to our inability to understand
such a scheme, nor to our other human limitations; it is due sim-
ply to what we mean by a system of concepts."[61] I think Suzuki's
Zen or other skepticism painted with a similar color of mysticism
would respond to Davidson's request of identification of their inner
state in this way: "Yes, they are not usual or ordinary mental states.
You have to be trained or to practice by yourself (in a special reli-
gious or moral way of practice or *gong-fu* 工夫) in order to trans-
form your 'self' from illusion to enlightenment." And Davidson might
answer in this way: "Oh, that's all I can say of your so-called 'inner
states'. If they cannot be discovered and identified by these meth-
ods, I don't know what they are. I only know that they are not what
we call 'mental states' in the common usage, period." Nevertheless,
I do not think Suzuki and his comrades are satisfied with Davidson's
answer on this point, and there would be no further dialogue between
Davidson and them to follow. However, I prefer a strategy of putting
aside the locating problem and ask them another question: "We
agree, for argument's sake, that you can be enlightened without ratio-
nal thinking, but, how can you transform your 'self' and know that
you are crossing the gap after you have been trained or practiced
in your special way and then arrived at the realm of the so-called
'inner experience' of enlightenment? How can you know, without
any ordinary concept, the very secular concepts are all wrong in

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[61] Donald Davidson, 2002, p. 40.
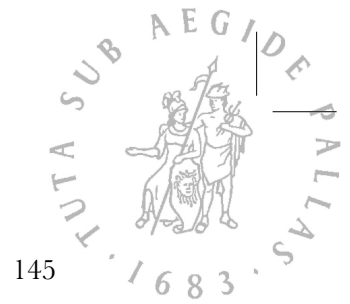
grasping your ultimate concern? You only say that your 'inner world' cannot be expressed in discursive language or even in any language (i.e. ineffability thesis), and sometimes say that your transcendental entity (i.e. absolute subjectivity) is not an ordinary object, such as table, tree, apple, or an event in the physical world; but that is not enough for us and even for you to understand what it is." I think this is not to ask for an answer of the locating problem, but another problem.

Let us suppose there is a game of twin boxes. Both boxes are similar in the cover, but one of them is empty and the other either has something inside or has not. We do not know which one is empty and whether both are empty. However, the master of the game gives us some hints. He tells us that inside the boxes both include no ordinary object, such as apple, pencil, or cake, and that the only difference between these two boxes is that one of them is empty and the other one has a non-ordinary object inside. I think what Suzuki tells us in his game is similar to this box game: Based on our standard of identifying ordinary object, we are not only unable to identify the so-called non-ordinary object inside the transcendental box, we also cannot understand whether there is any difference between having this very thing in the transcendental box and having nothing in the other ordinary box. It is no use to characterize it based only on some negative descriptions, such as 'non-ordinary object', 'emptiness' or 'no-self', because these can also be applied to the case when there is nothing inside the transcendental box (or applied to the ordinary empty box), the truth condition for both cases is the same. Suzuki's example of tea drinking also indicates a similar game. He says: "You and I sip a cup of tea. That act is apparently alike to us both, but who can tell what a wide gap there is subjectively between your drinking and my drinking? In your drinking there may be no Zen, while my [sic] is brim-full of it. The reason for it is: you move in a logical circle and I am out of it."[62] This time the twin boxes seem to have the same kind of object inside, but the game master stresses that only he who moves beyond a logical circle can know they are different. But I do not think Suzuki can make the distinction in a significant way. When Suzuki declares that the aim of Zen is "the unfolding of a new world hitherto

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[62] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, p. 88.

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unperceived in the confusion of a dualistically trained mind",[63] what
is his standpoint? If he declares from the standpoint of the old world,
this declaration is self-defeating; if he declares from the standpoint
of the new world, it would be nonsense. It is self-defeating because
the dualistically trained mind rejects itself in the former case; it is
nonsense because there is no point in contrast in the latter. I do not
think he can explain his standpoint. He sometimes stresses "no other
method than that of casting away this intellectual weapon and in all
nakedness plunging into '*sunyata*' itself,"[64] because he thinks that, "[a]s
long as conceptualization goes on, there will be no discovery of the
real self"[65] and "[t]he self escapes from all these meshes of concep-
tualization or objectification."[66] However, on the other hand, in order
to explain the foundational meaning of '*sunyata*', he on another occa-
sion emphasizes that "*sunyata* is not a negative term but a positive
concept [my italic], and is not arrived at by abstraction or postula-
tion, for it is 'what makes the existence of anything possible'."[67] He
is wandering in between the conceptual and the conceptless world.
My conclusion is that not only can we not understand that, but also
the Zen masters are unable to distinguish their own 'inner experi-
ence' from ordinary things, because their Zen wisdom is totally
beyond logical and rational thinking and thus they cannot think of
any difference between Zen and other things. In other words, they
give up their right to make any distinction and they become the
slave of their non-dualistic thinking.

The problem of locating or identifying is to ask the question of
how to locate the position of an entity under investigation in a ratio-
nal or public space. If we consider the idea of Zen as having this
problem, it would be a question about the location of Zen's tran-
scendental self (or no-self). However, as mentioned above, Suzuki
does not take this problem seriously, because he rejects the 'ratio-
nal doctor' to treat his problem and thinks that Zen has its 'non-
rational immutability' which is free from the 'disease' cured by the
rational doctor. Although Suzuki's interpretation of Zen could be
recognized as immune from the locating problem, it still has another

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[63] D.T. Suzuki, 1996, p. 84; and 1991, p. 88.
[64] D.T. Suzuki, 1951, p. 5.
[65] D.T. Suzuki, 1954, p. 174.
[66] D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
[67] D.T. Suzuki, 1951, p. 4.

problem which may be thought as troubling him. This other prob-
lem, which I call the 'landing problem', is about 'bridging' the Zen's
inner world with the secular outer world, or about 'landing' the
Zen's transcendent or transcendental self into empirical life. More
particularly speaking, it is the problem of how to transform from
the illusive life of attachment to the secular world into the enlight-
ened life of freedom from such attachment. As indicated by Suzuki,
"what makes Zen unique as it is practiced in Japan is its systematic
training of the mind. Ordinary mysticism has been too erratic a
product and apart from one's ordinary life; this has Zen revolu-
tionized. What was up in the heavens, Zen has brought down to
earth."[68] However, he also believes that "[w]hen conceptually under-
stood, the lifting of a finger is one of the most ordinary incidents in
everybody's life. But when it is viewed from the Zen point of view
it vibrates with the divine meaning and creative vitality." This would
appear to be difficult to land on earth. Our question is: how could
one shift from the ordinary view to the Zen view? He mentions that
"[t]hose who have only read the foregoing treatment of Zen as illog-
ical, or of Zen as a higher affirmation [i.e. affirmation without nega-
tion as antithesis], may conclude that Zen is something unapproachable,
something far apart from our ordinary life, something very alluring
but very elusive; and we cannot blame them for so thinking. Zen
ought, therefore, [to] be presented also from its easy, familiar and
approachable side. Life is the basis of all things; apart from it noth-
ing can stand. With all our philosophy, with all our grand and
enhancing ideas, we cannot escape life from as we live it. Star-gazers
are still walking on the solid earth."[69] But, how can Zen-gazers land
on the solid earth?

If Zen cannot land on the earth of our ordinary life, it is irrele-
vant to our ordinary life and thus is unable to criticize our ordinary
view of the world as illusion and delusion, or as rational attachment
and distortion of reality. If I am right on this point, I think Zen's
situation would be no different from that of a speechless dog in its
inability to criticize the illusion and delusion of humans' attachment
to the secular world. However, Suzuki thinks that "Zen must never
be confused with naturalism or libertinism, which means to follow

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[68] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, p. 45.
[69] D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, pp. 80–81.

one's natural bent without questioning its origin and value. There is a great difference between human action and that of the animals, which are lacking in moral intuition and religious consciousness. The animals do not know anything about exerting themselves in order to improve their conditions or to progress in the way to higher virtues."[70] Even though he shows us a demarcation between humans' intentional action and animals' natural reaction, this picture is over-simplified. If humans' knowing something about exerting themselves in order to improve their condition or to progress to higher virtues is based on rational thinking, it is definitely not the characteristic of Zen; if it is based on Zen wisdom, Zen wisdom would be the reason of an intentional action and thus could not be separated from rational thinking. As indicated by Suzuki, "all that we can do in Zen in the way of instruction is to indicate, or to suggest, or to show the way so that one's attention may be directed towards the goal."[71] If the transcendental goal is not separated from the empirical world in the sense that what is done in our ordinary life is intentionally related to the goal, then the verbal and nonverbal actions done for Zen can be understood and interpreted in our rational language. If Zen masters' verbal and nonverbal actions are intentional, they cannot be either totally irrational or totally non-rational. My question is that, without rational thinking, how can a Zen master show his way towards the goal of enlightenment? Should he and his disciples not be conscious of whether it is a right or wrong direction when they intend to go ahead? It is clear that, as an intentional action, making effort to attain Zen enlightenment cannot be separated from rational thinking.

The locating problem seems inescapable for any religious thought which claims that their world of enlightenment or transcendence is radically or rigidly different from the secular world of common sense. But some special religious thought, such as Zen Buddhism as interpreted by Suzuki, which stresses its practical wisdom as necessarily supervened on the 'Aufheben' of rational thinking and logic, may have a good excuse for rejecting the request of locating. However, the locating problem is only performed as the first check-point of rationality, even though putting aside this problem, there is still a

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[70] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, pp. 85–86.
[71] D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
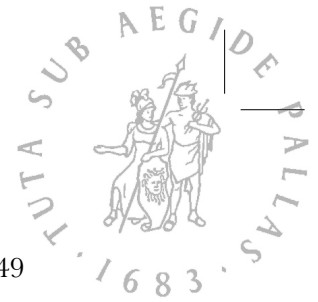
problem of landing, the second check-point of rationality, to which
this kind of skepticism is required to respond. In other words, the
masters may have some excuse to reject or to ignore the request of
identifying or locating its non-conceptual and speechless entity; but
they cannot escape the request of explaining the possibility of bridg-
ing the gap between the two worlds and the feasibility of trans-
forming the ordinary self into the transcendental self (or no-self). It
is obvious that, without landing the transcendental mystery on empir-
ical life, entertaining the private experience of the mystery would be
non-sense or irrelevant to actual life. If it has to land on actual life,
the Zen master has to explain how his 'qi-zhi' (氣質 natural dis-
position) can be transformed into the ideal state of Zen living, how
he can know, from a view point without rational thinking and logic,
that the ordinary understanding of the world from a view point of
rational thinking and logic is illusive and delusive, and how he can
know what he has attained is not the wrong thing. These are all
questions of landing problem they have to answer.

Suzuki's Zen Buddhism shares with New Confucianism and other
schools of Buddhism one of the major characteristics of mysticism
and pantheism, i.e. the ultimate reality is both transcendent and
immanent. Similarly, he also recognizes there are two levels of world
(satori's own world and a world of multitudes), two kinds of expe-
rience (Zen experience and ordinary experience), and two sorts of
truth (Zen truth and rational truth). Furthermore, he also claims that
Zen's suchness, experience, or truth is both transcendent of and
immanent in the ordinary world. However, we know that 'tran-
scendent immanence' or 'immanent transcendence' is not a coher-
ent concept,[72] how can Suzuki bridge these two contrary terms in a
coherent way? It is obvious that Suzuki encounters the same kind
of difficulty as most of the mysticists and pantheists confront. Although
Suzuki thinks that these two contrary terms are 'essentially incom-
mensurable'[73], he still strongly believes that "[i]n satori what is imma-
nent is transcendent and what is transcendent is immanent."[74] But
it is merely a claim without argument. Of course, Suzuki would say
that if we provide argument for the claim, satori would be murdered

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[72] See my article on the three dogmas of New Confucianism, Yiu-ming Fung,
2001, pp. 245–266.
[73] D.T. Suzuki, 1994, p. 119.
[74] D.T. Suzuki, op. cit., p. 47.
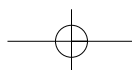
by this dualistic or rational thinking and it would not be genuine *satori*. But how can Suzuki bridge these two extreme terms and thus solve the landing problem if no rational thinking is permitted? It seems that there is no other way to the end except appealing to satori itself. Actually, Suzuki's strategy of persuasion is appealing to satori's absolute and private authority. He thinks that "[t]he gap between satori and rationality could never be bridged by concept-making and postulation, but by an absolute negation of the reason itself, which means 'an existential leap'."[75] According to Suzuki, an 'absolute negation' or 'absolute affirmation' can only be made by someone who has a '*satori*-eye'. It is therefore clear that appealing to satori's authority can solve the landing problem; so, eventually, "Satori is 'an existential leap'."[76] Nevertheless, mysticism and pantheism also claim the absolute authority of their inner, private, absolute, transcendental, mystic, and holy experience, and appealing to private access is obviously not a privilege of Suzuki's Zen Buddhism. I think the landing problem is not easy for him to solve.

Even if the Zen masters are able to escape the locating problem, they still have to solve their landing problem, otherwise they would face the following dilemma: On the first horn, if they really argue against conceptualization and duality, it would presuppose the conceptualization of its anti-thesis and make a duality between the thesis under attack and their own anti-thesis. It means that their anti-thesis would be self-refuting. On the second horn, if they want to transcend but not reject conceptualization and duality, their transcendental journey would be irrelevant to the daily world, a journey which is not only logically impossible to be identified but also substantially unrelated to actual life. It means that they cannot make any thesis or anti-thesis except sleeping on their private bed of mystery.

5. *Conclusion*

In the previous sections, I have tried to discuss some problems about Davidson's principle of charity. The first problem is the question of whether the principle can survive in the context of comparison between Chinese and English language and philosophy. In this regard,

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[75] D.T. Suzuki, 1994, p. 69.
[76] D.T. Suzuki, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

A.C. Graham's criticism has been sorted out as a salient example of the reaction issued from most Sinologists' basic faith. It seems that one of the major academic interests of most Sinologists is motivated by their expectation of finding some alien characteristics in Chinese culture and language, or by the goal of so-called 'Chinese-ness'. Even though there might be something called 'Chinese-ness', such as Graham's idea about a distinct 'root thinking' in Chinese language and philosophy, this 'Chinese-ness' cannot be merely and basically described and explained as 'Chinese-ness', i.e. understood only in a 'Chinese' way of thinking and interpreted only in a 'Chinese' way of expression. So Graham's criticism is fundamentally self-defeating; it cannot be understood as a real challenge to Davidson's principle of charity.

The second problem is the methodological character of the principle of charity. Although most of the discussants on the problem are inclined to identify Davidson's arguments as 'transcendental', I have argued that this is not accurate and that this misunderstanding is due to their not taking seriously some of the concrete examples provided by Davidson and not realizing a crucial distinction between two kinds of TA in the literature. The general form of Davidson's principle may give people a perception that it is an a priori claim; however, there are a lot of concrete examples which constitute a strong inductive base of empirical evidence to support the principle.

If Davidson's principle is defendable either in a concrete context or through a methodological examination, and thus qualified as indicating a necessary condition of understanding and interpretation, can it be used to kick out all kinds of skepticism and relativism? As to this third problem, Suzuki's interpretation of Zen Buddhism has been selected as a challenge to Davidson's principle. I have argued that the idea that giving up rational thinking and logic as a necessary condition of attaining Zen could escape the locating problem required by Davidson's principle. However, there is still a problem of landing. For the transcendental Zen to be relevant to the empirical world, it should solve its landing problem, for example, the problem of explaining how people can transform their 'self' from an empirical into a transcendental state and how the Zen masters can criticize dualistic thinking without committing to dualistic thinking. While the locating problem is a request for identifying a location in a rational space, the landing problem, on the other hand, is a request for

making sense of the relation between two kinds of truth or two lev-
els of world. My strategy is not to use Davidson's locating request
to force the Zen masters to give up their non-dualistic thinking for
identifying Zen's location in a rational space, but to use the land-
ing request to force them into a dilemma: either to explain the rela-
tion with our rational language and logic or to fall into an abyss of
total isolation from the real world.
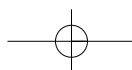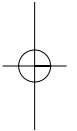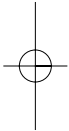
APPENDIX 1: A.C. GRAHAM ON CONCEPTUAL
SCHEMES IN THE CONTEXT OF CHINESE LANGUAGE
AND PHILOSOPHY

In order to illustrate the detailed differences to the bottom of think-
ing in different cultures, Graham gives some examples to explain
why English and Chinese sentences are not fully intertranslatable. In
his first example, he says that if "an English speaker says, 'The cat
sat on the mat', and a Chinese, *Mao wo tsai hsi-tzu-shang* [*Mao-wo-
zai-xi-zi-shang* 貓臥在蓆子上], only the cat is satisfying these con-
ditions. For the English its posture is similar to a man sitting in a
chair, for the Chinese to a man lying (*wo*) whether face forward or
on his back. As for the mat, we cannot expect an unrelated lan-
guage to share precisely our classification of floor coverings as mats,
rugs, carpets; *hsi-tzu* [*xi-zi* 蓆子] is used of straw mats. In addition,
the verb is tensed in English but not in Chinese."[77] Therefore, he
thinks that the sentences do not express the same proposition, because
"*Mao wo tsai hsi-tzu-shang* is true even if cat has never before now
sat on the mat, false if it sat on a cloth mat." More generally speak-
ing, the reason is that "Chinese and English divide up and organ-
ise the world differently."[78] The second example mentioned by Graham
is that when using "Grass is green" to match with "*Ts'ao ch'ing*"
[*Cao-qing* 草青], we would find that "the meaning of *ts'ao* depends
on a division of vegetation into *ts'ao mu* [*Cao-mu* 草木] 'grass and
tree', implying a wider scope than our 'grass'. *Ch'ing* is one of the
Five Colours, the blue-green which contrasts equally with red, yel-
low, white and black. If grass were blue 'Grass is green' would be
false but *Ts'ao ch'ing* would be true."[79] So, he considers these two
sentences not translatable to each other.

Based on these examples, Graham pushes to the point that the
unintertranslatability between these two languages fundamentally lies
in word level, not in sentence level; in correlative thinking, not in
analytic thinking; in pre-logical process, not in logical operation. In

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[77] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 65.
[78] *Ibid.*
[79] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66.

this regard, to explain the 'differences to the bottom' is tantamount to understand the words by correlation within the scheme, a pre-logical process which analysis assists but cannot replace. He believes that a native speaker is in command of his or her home language only when he or she stopped analyzing and applying grammatical rules to the chain of oppositions; and the gap of the chain, for example, 'dog/dogs', tree/trees, house/ . . .', can be spontaneously filled with 'houses'. So, he thinks, "if I learn the words primarily by correlating them, with analysis secondary even if employed at all, I understand the Chinese as I understand the English, and can confirm the truth of either *Ts'ao ch'ing* or 'Grass is green' by looking at grass and other herbs without bothering about translatability. If in a particular context a Chinese reports what he saw by *Mao wo tsai hsi-tzu-shang*, I am oriented towards what he saw as towards things I have seen myself, possibly but not necessarily by visually imagining as in my own case I visually remember. I can then say, 'The cat sat on the mat', as I might say, 'You still have that cat then', responding to the event which he observed without concern for whether I am saying what he said. I do have to co-ordinate the Chinese and English sentences, but will do so most accurately by correlation sensitive to more difference and similarity than I can analyse; there is no need to relate them logically because if I want to infer from one of them it will be in the same language."[80]

   Names, for Graham, cannot be understood as singular terms of logic; he treats names as the products of the classifying act of naming in a pre-logical pattern. He thinks that some of the Chinese and English names seem to match each other but actually differ in their different patterns of classification. An interesting example is the translation of the Chinese word '*yang*'. He says, "there is a single goat in plain sight, and X says *Yu yang* 'There is a *yang* (conventionally translated 'sheep')' and Y 'There is no sheep', I may be startled if I fail to appreciate that *yang* include goats as *shan yang* 'mountain *yang*' [山羊]; but for anyone who has fully correlated the Chinese and English words the observation confirms both sentences." Even though Davidson offers a similar case of agreement disguised by different usages of 'yawl' and 'ketch', Graham thinks that his account differs from Davidson's in "not having to assume (even if it is indeed the

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[80] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 67.
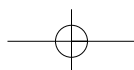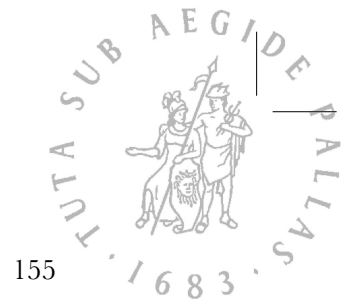
case) that the extensions of '*yang*' and 'sheep and goats' precisely coincide, that they are intertranslatable like the dates of the two calendars." The distinct picture of his example is that "[w]hen reading explanation in two languages of a vocabulary difference between them one is positively grateful that they do not say exactly the same thing, much as when collecting information about an incident one wants photographs taken from different angles at different moments." On this basis, therefore, he judges Davidson's criticism of Whorf's relativism unsound, because "there is no paradox here; Whorf would hardly have denied that bilingual readers would be clearer about the divergence with an equally sophisticated Hopi account to compare with his."[81]

Unlike most of the views of justification held by the people in the field of epistemology, Graham thinks that "to confirm or to refute requires not only logic and observation but also checking whether words have the same sense."[82] In contrast to the justification by logic and observation, this 'checking' is not on the level of proposition, but on the level of pre-logical patterns of names. Hence, he continues, "[t]o escape the conclusion that all truth is relative to incommensurable conceptual schemes it is enough to show that the schemes themselves are patterns of names neither true nor false, and that factual statements depend on them for their meaning but not for their truth; we need not bother about what lies between these extremes."[83]

In addition to the syntagmatic connexions of pairs in a chain, Graham's notion of 'conceptual scheme' also includes the syntactic structures which organize words in sentences. To compare English with Chinese grammar, he believes the differences in conceptual schemes are also obvious. With respect to this point, Graham recommends Hansen's claim that classical Chinese nouns in general are closer to English mass than to English count nouns. He says, "Hansen argues that Western thought is predisposed by number termination to conceive the world as an aggregate of distinct objects, Chinese by the mass noun to conceive it as a whole variously divisible into parts. Le Gall's inability to understand the *ch'i* [*qi* 氣] except as a collection of atoms would be a good illustration. The hypothesis survives Harbsmeier's classification; most or all philosophical terms would

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[81] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 68.
[82] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 69.
[83] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

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presumably be not count but generic nouns. This is plainly the case with *ch'i*; the *yi ch'i* 'one *ch'i*' [*yi-qi* 一氣] divides into the *erh ch'i* 'two (sorts of) *ch'i*' [*er-qi* 二氣] down to the *wan wù* 'myriad (sorts of) thing' [*wan-wu* 萬物]. That Chinese thought would be conditioned to divide down rather than add up is in any case suggested by other features of the language."[84] Graham, therefore, thinks that "[t]here would be no such compulsion to assume the primacy of individuals if English, on the analogy of Classical Chinese, lacked number termination, and we said 'the closet' and 'its shoe and shirt' as we say 'its dust' or 'its smell'. The effect of number termination is such that we cannot even make the simple statement that language classifies things as similar or different without implying in advance that the 'thing-s' are different."[85]

Graham believes that Chinese thinking is in terms of process rather than of static entities. Although Davidson recognizes that different languages may individuate differently over a certain range of words, Graham does not agree that this is only a local difficulty for translation. The impossibility for Davidson to explore such differences without sharing 'concepts that individuate the same objects', for Graham, is now magically transformed into a situation of possibility. Graham mentions, for example, "that a Chinese student of English has been assuming that *yang* and 'sheep' are synonymous but begins to doubt it. He points out a sheep and a goat, asks of both 'Is that a sheep?', and in the second case I answer 'No, a goat'. He has no need to guard against the danger that I might take him to be pointing at the horn; I cannot answer 'No, a horn' because 'horn', unlike 'goat', is not on the same paradigmatic level as 'sheep'. It would be less appropriate to his problem to ask the [sic] 'What is that?' which allows me to answer 'A horn', forcing him to introduce a shared concept by narrowing his question to something like 'What is that animal?'."[86]

Graham thinks that introducing syntactic structure into the conceptual scheme does not bring us nearer to epistemological relativism, because truths of fact are independent of the scheme. Here the word 'independent', he stresses, does not mean that factually true statements are translatable into any natural language, but that to

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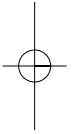
[84] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 4.
[85] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
[86] *Ibid.*
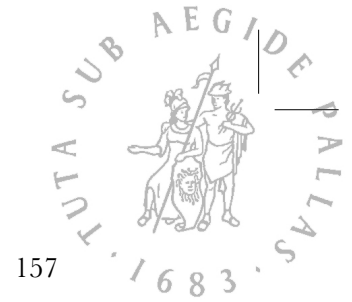
confirm or refute a factual statement by reason and observation you
have only to understand its place in the appropriate conceptual
scheme, you do not have to share the scheme. Nor does it suggest
that if schemes could be perfectly corrected by logic and observa-
tion they would all become the same.[87]

Graham interprets Wittgenstein, Ryle, Kuhn, and Derrida as his
heroes who can make an important move to dig below the surface
of our supposedly exact knowledge to find the correlative at its foun-
dations. He thinks that this recognition is the same as the Sinologist's
when in searching for metaphorical roots of a Chinese concept he
discovers that to compare and contrast it with Western concepts he
has to explore their roots as well. In the end, the solution, he sug-
gests, is to accept and come to terms with the thought that analy-
sis starts from the results of spontaneous correlation.[88]

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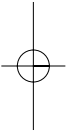
[87] A.C. Graham, 1992, p. 78.
[88] A.C. Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
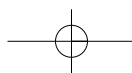
APPENDIX 2: THE LANDING PROBLEM IN SUZUKI'S
IDEA OF ZEN

The landing problem in Suzuki's idea of Zen can be focused on two
questions: (1) How can a Zen master and his disciples transform
their self from a delusive state into an enlightened state, how can
they communicate with each other, and how can they know that
they are enlightened? (2) How can a Zen master criticize the dual-
istic thinking from his non-dualistic thinking and how can he make
sense of his anti-logical thesis without logic?

One of the Zen masters' dialogues (*mondo* 問答) with their disci-
ples quoted by Suzuki can be used to illustrate his idea of giving up
the duality of logic for entering into Zen enlightenment. This can
also be used for explaining our first question about landing prob-
lem. Wei-kuan (惟寬), a Zen master of *Tang* dynasty, was asked by
one of his disciples about the question "Where is *Dao*?" The dia-
logue continues as follows:[89]

> Kuan: Right before us.
> Monk: Why don't I see it?
> Kuan: Because of your egoism you cannot see it.
> Monk: If I cannot see it because of my egoism, does your Reverence
> see it?
> Kuan: As long as there is 'I and thou', this complicates the situation
> and there is no seeing *Dao*.
> Monk: When there is neither 'I' nor 'thou' is it seen?
> Kuan: When there is neither 'I' nor 'thou', who is here to see it?

In comparison with Robinson Crusoe's physical isolation from other
people, the mental state of the Zen master stated above is absolutely
and logically isolated from the other minds. We can call this state
'Robinson Crusoe in an isolated mental state', instead of 'Robinson
Crusoe in an isolated island': the person entering into a mental
state which is impossible to communicate with others. The terms 'I'
and 'thou' mentioned above may have two alternative interpreta-

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[89] The translation is taken from Suzuki, 1996, p. 209; similar dialogue appeared
in Suzuki, 2000, p. 342.
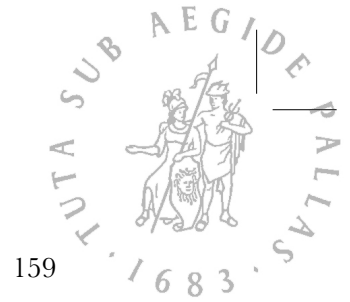
tions: one is the conventional use in ordinary language; the other a
special use in Zen language. If it is the first option, i.e., Wei-kuan
uses the term 'I' to refer to I and 'thou' to refer to thou as no
different from his disciple's ordinary use, then he is still in the com-
plicated situation in which "there is no seeing *Dao*" as mentioned
by himself. In other words, the requirement he states for seeing *Dao*
is self-defeating, and his dialogue cannot help his disciple's enlight-
enment. If it is the second option, i.e., Wei-kuan uses the terms 'I'
and 'thou' not in the conventional way, but in Zen's way, it is clear
that his speaking is not against the conventional use of 'I' and 'thou',
and thus not against the duality of the rational discourse, though we
do not know what they really mean. In this regard, we can say that
Wei-kuan's mind falls into a lonely place; as a master with private
Zen experience, he can be called 'Robinson Crousoe in an isolated
mental state'. Although he reaches the level of enlightenment, it is
logically impossible for him to communicate with others. Furthermore,
it is also logically impossible to explain how he could transform him-
self from the state of puzzlement to enlightenment, because he would
not know what's wrong with the conventional thinking for attaining
enlightenment without an analysis of the conventional thinking.

As regard to the second question of the landing problem, Suzuki's
idea is also inescapable from the predicament of self-defeat. If the
negative sentence "The flower is not red, nor is the willow green"
can be regarded by Suzuki as the same as its affirmative "The flower
is red and the willow is green" when they are understood from two
kinds of perspectives or seen by two kinds of 'eyes': the 'Zen's eye'
and the ordinary eye, then what Suzuki declares is definitely not
really anti-logical or a violation of logic. Furthermore, if we agree,
for argument's sake, that there is 'Zen's eye' and Zen's experience,
the Zen masters or Suzuki himself still cannot escape from the 'trap'
of duality. In order to illustrate the self-refuting characteristic of
Suzuki's thesis of anti-dualism, specifically, and anti-logic, generally,
let me pose the following hypothetical dialogue between Suzuki
and me:

> Suzuki: The absolute affirmation must not be the one accompanied
> or conditioned by a negation.[90]
> Y M: Could you give us an example?

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[90] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, p. 68.

Suzuki: Certainly! For example, Zen would say: "A is not A, there-
         fore A is A" and "A is A, therefore A is not A."[91] Or more
         concretely, "I is not I, therefore I is I" and "I is I, therefore
         I is not I."[92]

Y M: The two examples you have just said can be formulated as
         "~Q, therefore Q" and "Q, therefore ~Q." If so, does your
         sentence "I is not I, therefore I is I" mean or imply the sen-
         tence "It is not the case that I is not I therefore I is I"?

Suzuki: Absolutely, it doesn't mean that!

Y M: If we simplify the above sentence "~Q, therefore Q" as 'P',
         and "~(~Q, therefore Q)" as '~P', would you reject the sen-
         tence "P means or implies ~P" or the sentence "P, therefore
         ~P"?

Suzuki: If my answer is 'yes', so what?

Y M: If you reject the sentence "P, therefore ~P," how can you
         assert the sentence "Q, therefore ~Q"? Here they share the
         same form, and 'P' and 'Q' can be substituted by each other
         in the above sentences. So, I think your absolute affirmation
         or great affirmation is self-refuting.

Suzuki: If so, shouldn't I . . . I assert the paradoxes "Q, therefore ~Q"
         and "~Q, therefore Q"? Eventually, do I have nothing to
         assert?

Y M: Absolutely, you do have something to assert! The Buddha or
         Zen teaches us no attachment. So long as you are not attach-
         ing to the idea of 'anti-logic' or 'the transcending of logic',
         and not excluding the duality in our ordinary way of think-
         ing and in your Zen thinking, you will naturally and happily
         live in a world without attachment.

If someone wants to hold a thesis of anti-logic or the transcending
of logic for freedom from the attachment of (logical) dualism, he or
she would be inevitably trapped in the attachment to another dual-
ism: the logical and the anti-logical. In reality, what Suzuki claims
is eventually self-refuting. This is his predicament related to the sec-
ond question of the landing problem.[93]

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[91] D.T. Suzuki, 1991, pp. 59–60; and 1996, pp. 115, 269.
[92] D.T. Suzuki, 1971, pp. 30–31; and 1961, pp. 272–273.
[93] I would like to express my gratitude to my colleague Professor Angelina Yee
for her comments on the English writing of this paper.

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