

## IMAGES IN THE *YIJING* AND THEIR CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

rule of visibility and invisibility. This rule implicated in the images of the 64 hexagrams often discloses itself in this way: "it manifests itself as kindness but conceals its workings. It gives life to all things, but it does not share the anxieties of the holy sage."<sup>26</sup> Thus "Its glorious power and its great field of action are of all things the most sublime."<sup>27</sup>

Because my study of Jung's psychology is just a start, and I am not well versed in English, and this presentation is only based on few materials at hand, it must contains lots of omissions, fallacies, and prejudices. It is my hope that these drawbacks will be criticized and rectified. My original purpose is to gain an entry pass to Jung's ideology by this presentation.

Finally, I would like to cite the final part from the poem "A Great Journey" composed by me in 1973 (during the Cultural Revolution) to close my presentation:

Like a wild crane roused up by singing sounds,  
I swiftly spread the wings and soared to great heights;  
Let those misty valleys cast off underneath my sight,  
As gifted philosophical thought comes from the blue skies!

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 229.

## *The Yijing, Whitehead, and Time Philosophy*

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The *philosophia prennis* of Chinese culture was an organic naturalism which invariably accepted the reality and importance of time.

Joseph Needham, "Time and Eastern Man," *The Grand Titration*

### *The Yijing and Ancient Chinese Thought*

The concept of time and the sense of temporality<sup>2</sup> are evident in the basic teachings of ancient Chinese philosophical schools which owes their deep source to the *Yijing* 易經 or the *Book of Changes*. The book, one of the *Six Classics* of Confucianism, contains abundant elements of time philosophy together with a cosmology of creativity which turn out to be the metaphysical foundation of two of the leading schools of the Pre-Chin periods, Confucianism and Daoism. As Confucius has long been regarded as the author of *Shiyi* 十翼 ("Ten Wings" or the "Ten Commentaries") of the *Yijing*, Confucianism is entitled to the orthodox heritor of the archaic book. Further, it is said that one day Confucius stood on the bank of a river and lamented, "It passes on just like this, restless no matter day or night!" (*Analects*, Chapter 9) Confucius' appeal to a river metaphor in characterizing the nature of this transient world reminds us of Heraclitus' famous fragment, "Upon those that step into the same rivers different waters flow... They scatter and ...gather ...come together and flow away...approach and depart."<sup>3</sup> The founder of Daoism, Laozi, echoed this river metaphor with the "wind and

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<sup>2</sup> Nathaniel Lawrence has made a distinction between "the concept of time" and "a sense of temporality," the former connotes the meaning that can be objectively understood, whereas the latter is our subjective feeling of temporality that we must go through. He maintains that the various concepts of time are derived from the raw material of sense of temporality. The present article takes the two indistinguishably, as the ancient Chinese always did. See Nathaniel Lawrence, "The Origins of Time," in eds. J. T. Fraser, Nathaniel Lawrence, and F. C. Haber, *Time, Science and Society in China and the West The Study of Time V* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 195.

rain phenomena," as he said in the *Daodejing*, "It's hard to apply any words to nature! Galloping winds do not last for a whole morning; sudden rains do not last for the whole day." (Chapter 23) In another paragraph of the *Daodejing* he even shows a greater connection to the *Yijing* by saying: "Dao 道 (universal principle/way) begets one (ultimate unity), one begets two (yin and yang), two begets three (multiplicity) [through the interplay of yin and yang], and three begets myriads of things. All things are backed up by the negative yin 陰 (feminine principle) and embraced by the positive yang 陽 (masculine principle), and harmonized by the force of *qi* (breath/pneuma)." (Chapter 42) The idea of a creative and evolutionary universe and the appearance of the characters "yin" and "yang" in the text of *Daodejing* all indicate its close relation to the *Yijing*.

The *Yijing* not only delineates the basic features of Chinese modes of thought by providing archetypal ideas of various kinds, an organic, holistic outlook of the cosmos, and a humanistic interpretation of man's place in nature; it also vindicates both change and the universal principles (*dao*) behind the change as the reality of all existence.<sup>4</sup> Just as a contemporary Chinese philosopher Thome Fang 方東美 (1899-1977) has suggested, the *Yijing* is composed of a symbolic system of sixty-four hexagrams—composed of two trigrams of eight kinds, which are in turn made of three lines, either broken or unbroken—that operates according to some logical rules, and is appended with enigmatic *guaci* 卦辭 (hexagram statements), *yaoci* 爻辭 (line statements), and the expository "Ten Wings" (*Ten Commentaries*). All these, however, are but the prelude to a philosophy of time that provides philosophical interpretations of the cosmos and its relevance to human existence.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The author's understanding of the *Book of Change* as a *magnum opus* in Chinese philosophy is indebted to late Professor Shih-chuan Chen and his work in the field; specifically *Yixue Xintan* 易學新探 (New Investigations of Yi, 1979), *Yici Xinquan* 易辭新詮 (New Interpretations of Yici, 1995) and *Yixue Xinlun* 易學新論 (New Essays concerning Yi, 1996). All these books are published by Wenjing Bookstore, Taipei.

<sup>5</sup> Thome Fang, "The World and the Individual in Chinese Metaphysics," in *Creativity in Man and Nature* (Taipei: Linking Publishing Co. Ltd., 1980), 34. Here I would like to add a passage stated by Carl Jung that will help our understanding of the significance of the sixty four hexagrams. Jung was also very insightful in revealing the secrets of the *Yijing*, as he says, "The I Ching, therefore, consists of a collection sixty-four interpretations in which the meaning of each of the possible Yin-Yang combinations is worked out. These interpretations formulate the inner unconscious knowledge that corresponds to the state of consciousness at the moment, and this psychological situation coincides with the chance results of the method, that is, with the odd and even numbers resulting from the fall of the coins or the division of the yarrow stalks." See C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity An Acausal Connecting Principle*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 36.

### The *Yijing* and Comparative Philosophy

The *Yijing* not only assumes an insurmountable position in the Chinese intellectual tradition; it also provides abundant sources for the comparative studies of both Eastern and Western philosophy. The philosophical significance of the book was first addressed systematically by Leibniz (1646-1716) to the West in the "Discours sur la Theologie naturelle des Chinois" ("Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese," 1679) in replying to a French Platonist, Nicholas de Remond's letter asking for his opinion regarding the works by Catholic missionaries on Chinese religion. In the Discourse, Leibniz insightfully discerns that there is natural religion in the *Yijing* and he parallels his binary arithmetic to the symbols of yin and yang of which the trigrams are composed. Moreover, he considers the idea of pre-established harmony as a parallel to the *Yijing*'s "supreme ultimate" (*taiji* 太極), both of which assume an outlook of organismic metaphysics.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, Leibniz did not grasp the true meaning of the character "yi" as change (or creativity) due to his indirect knowledge of the *Yijing* through the Latin and French translations, and thereby failed to represent one of the most important aspects of the book—namely, the philosophy of time.

The task was undertaken by Richard Wilhelm (1873-1930) who consistently rendered the title of the *Yijing* into the "Book of Changes" ("*Das Buch der Wandlungen*") and gave a series of enlightening lectures elucidating the ideas and meanings of the book.<sup>7</sup> His authoritative German translation of the *Yijing*, appeared in 1924, and his broad understanding of its philosophical elements made the book accessible and intelligible to Western scholars. The German translation attracted the attention of the renowned psychologist Carl G. Jung (1875-1961), who developed the concept of synchronicity, in contrast to that of causality, from his reading through the underlying presuppositions of the book.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Henry Rosenmont, Jr. and Daniel K. Cook, "Introduction," in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese, Monographs of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy*, no. 4 (USA: The University Press of Hawaii, 1977), 2-3.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Wilhelm trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, German translation by Richard Wilhelm, English translation by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1955); R. Wilhelm, trans. Irene Eber, *Lectures on the I Ching Constancy and Change* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

<sup>8</sup> It is said that Carl Gustav Jung first used the term "synchronicity" only in 1930, in his memorial address for Richard Wilhelm. He referred to it again when he lectured in London, 1935, and equated it with the Chinese concept of Dao. Years later, in his "Foreword" to Wilhelm/Baynes translation of the *Yijing*, Jung gave an exposition of the principle of synchronicity. Basically, Jung contends synchronicity to be a case of meaningful coincidence, i.e. an acausal connection that is founded on chance and the statistic truths of

In his lectures, delivered from 1926 through 1929 in Qindao 青島, Richard Wilhelm rightly holds that the concept of change is the major theme of the *Yijing* and the metaphysical status of change in China is similar to that of pure Being in Europe. This makes Chinese thought a mediator, he observes, between Buddhism and the European philosophy of existence: Buddhism as ephemeralism sees all existence as becoming illusory, whereas the European philosophy of existence as realism takes all existence as reality. Thus, by adding the element of time, in Wilhelm's view, Chinese thought acquires a reconciliatory role in the incompatible conditions of Being and Becoming to meeting in time; the opposites or incompatible contrasts become compatible by following each other in time, the one changing into the other. Thus he formulates the basic idea of the *Yijing* as "opposition and fellowship produced together by time," which underlies human consciousness of contrasts, subject and object, the inner self and the surrounding world. What is stressed by this idea of the *Yijing*, as Wilhelm construes, is a moderate attitude to our understanding of contrast which enables us to avoid any extremes and to maintaining a harmony between our inner self and the surrounding world.

Accordingly, Wilhelm correctly observes that the reason why Confucius has been considered the "most timely" among China's sages might be due to this thought of moderation, acting appropriately in accordance with the law of change so as to bring our inner self and the surrounding world into harmony.<sup>9</sup> Based on the conviction that the *Yijing*'s formula could be applied to the world situation of his times—the catastrophic first World War and the international political struggles that followed—Wilhelm highlights an important world-view furnished by the *Yijing*: "there is no situation without a way out. All situations are stages of change...even when things are most difficult we can plant the seed for a new situation..."<sup>10</sup> Again, Wilhelm also correctly renders the first trigram Qian (乾

natural laws. Jung believed that the *Yijing* is one of the oldest known methods for grasping a situation as a whole and proceeds experimentally and statistically with the procedure of divination. Jung suggests that the process of divination is also a psychic process relying on self-knowledge of the diviner, "that one's own personality is very often implicated in the answer of the oracle." Jung and Wilhelm's application of the concept of synchronicity to the explanation of the psychology of divination appearing in the *Yijing* was endorsed by the Chinese philosopher and Yi scholar Shih-chuan Chen. See C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity An Acausal Connecting Principle*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 5-12; C. Jung, "Foreword," in R. Wilhelm, *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, xxxv. Shih-chuan Chen, "How to Form a Hexagram and Consult the *I Ching*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92 no. 2 (April-June 1972), 237-249.

<sup>9</sup> R. Wilhelm, trans. Irene Eber, *Lectures on the I Ching Constancy and Change* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979), 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 25.

symbol for heaven) to "the Creative" and second trigram Kun (坤 symbol for earth) to "the Receptive," which indicates that he is quite aware of the fundamental meanings of the basic trigrams of the *Yijing*.<sup>11</sup> Thus, based on the idea of change, Wilhelm has successfully explored the ontological aspect of the *Yijing* and developed from it a comprehensive world view which is closely connected with the Confucian ideals of moderation and harmony. However, he did not go into the cosmological aspect of the book with which all this is presupposed.

Independent of Richard Wilhelm's effort to philosophize the *Yijing*, two contemporary Chinese philosophers, Thome Fang and Shih-chuan Chen 程石泉 (1909-2005), sought their own way to explore the philosophical elements of the book. They were convinced that the *Yijing* is the metaphysical fountain of Chinese thought and its fundamental notion is that of "creativity" or "incessant creation" (*shengsheng* 生生). They considered the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) the most congenial and appealing to the Chinese mind since it takes the concept of "creativity" as one of its ultimate notions.<sup>12</sup> As Whitehead says in an often quoted paragraph of *Process and Reality*, "In the philosophy of organism this ultimate is termed 'Creativity'...In this general position the philosophy of organism seems to approximate more to some strains of Indian, or Chinese thought, than to western Asiatic, or European, thought."<sup>13</sup> Here Whitehead's casual mentioning of "Indian or Chinese thought"—the only place where oriental thought is noted throughout the whole book—might well make him the spiritual heir to Leibniz, a universal man who sought ecumenical knowledge from non-Occidental cultures.

Undeniably, Whitehead had even less knowledge of China and of Chinese thought than Leibniz even though he has revealed sufficient insight into the religious values of Buddhism and Confucianism in *Religion in the Making*.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, the world of the early twentieth century in which Whitehead lived

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>12</sup> For Thome Fang the organismic thought in Huayan Buddhism makes Whitehead closer to the Chinese mind; but he also refers to Whitehead's concept of nature as creative advance and has adopted his idea of organismic metaphysics. See Thome Fang, *Huayanzung Zhexue Shangce* 華嚴宗哲學上冊 (Philosophy of Huayan Buddhism, Vol. 1) (Taipei: Liming Cultural Enterprise Co. Ltd., 1981), 413. Shih-chuan Chen has laid more emphases on the importance of the concept of creativity both in the *Yijing* and in Whitehead. For a critical comparison between the two, see Shih-chuan Chen, "Whitehead and the Book of Changes," *Zhouyi Studies* (English Version) 4:1 (2006), 95-117.

<sup>13</sup> A. N. Whitehead, edited by D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne, corrected edition, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 7.

<sup>14</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1962), 39-62.

was much less favorable for Western scholars to appreciate non-Occidental cultures than that of the early eighteenth century in which Leibniz lived. For Leibniz, China as a prosperous, ancient civilization was an ideal model of moral practices and of political stability for the Europeans, and his view was largely endorsed by the Jesuits preaching there. This ideal image of China was shattered in the European mind after the 1840's Opium War waged by the British and the rampages of Western and Japanese imperialism which resulted in the pitiful disintegration of Chinese civilization and society. Under such circumstances, Whitehead, a twentieth century Western mathematician, a logician and a philosopher showing his appreciation of Chinese thought is no less significant than Leibniz's *sinophilia* (love of Chinese culture), or the general "cult chinoise" of eighteenth century Europe. Implicitly or explicitly, they both agreed that the space-time remoteness and peculiarities between different cultures can be surpassed by some universal elements in spiritual and natural realities. This idea was accepted by modern Chinese philosophers who considered the metaphysical ideas and conceptual apparatus provided by Whitehead very helpful in our understanding and exposition of the essences of the *Yijing*: process cosmology and metaphysics of creativity that underlie the ontological and the axiological aspects of the book, and are in turn founded on the philosophy of time.

### Time Philosophy East and West

The questions about the nature and reality of time have puzzled Western thinkers for thousands of years, yet they hardly reached any agreement on these issues. Generally speaking, Western philosophers who deny the importance of time together with the idea of creativity may be roughly grouped into two types: the perennial type and the scientific type. Philosophers of the perennial type who emphasize the importance of timeless eternity are inclined to regard "time" as "the shadow of eternity" and thereby deny its reality; Parmenides, Plato, B. de Spinoza, I. Kant, G. W. F. Hegel, A. Schopenhauer, F. Bradley, and J. McTaggart all maintain various forms of doctrines of the unreality of time. Philosophers of the scientific type either take time as number, as motion, as framework of measurement, as a derivative from matter, or take time as independent existence which could exist even were there nothing in the universe. Aristotle was the forerunner of this type and most of the modern philosophers followed him in various revised forms: they take time as discontinuous, homogeneous, quantifiable instants, as equal to the bodily movements governed by the mechanical and causal laws. The scientific concept of time has been censured by

Bergson as "spatialization of time" that dissects pure duration into discrete instants, a way to treat time as space. With Bergson, contemporary process philosophers, Samuel Alexander, Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, Whitehead, and John Dewey are all convinced that the scientific concept of time fails to do justice to the continuous, heterogeneous, becoming, irreversible, novel, biological, and telic nature of time. Under the influence of Darwin's evolution theory that nature is evolving in a temporal process was a widely received idea among them, and they all endorse to the reality and the importance of time.

Nonetheless, among them, only Whitehead has attempted a cosmology of process that aims at resuming the speculative and metaphysical tradition of the West. The affirmation of the function of philosophy in providing speculative schemes in terms of which have every element of human experience can be interpreted coherently, logically, and adequately makes Whitehead the best candidate in assisting us to interpret the rational and the organismic aspects of the *Yijing*. As it is stated in the Great Treatise (Xici 繫辭), "What is supra-physical/metaphysical/supersensible, is called principle/way or *dao*; whereas what is intra-physical/concrete/sensible, is called artifact/physical thing or *qi*" [形而上者謂之道, 形而下者謂之器], the *Yijing* makes a demarcation between the immaterial and the material, the supersensible and the sensible, the intangible and the tangible, the universal and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, and so forth. Here *dao* is very close to Heraclitus' logos, both of which owe their etymological meanings to "word," "speech" or "account," from which the meanings of "universal principle" or "measure," "way" and of "reason" or "logic" is derived. Nonetheless, *dao* in the *Yijing* is immaterial and functional through and through, whereas "logos" in Heraclitus is something substantial and tradable; it is "an ever-living fire, kindling in measures and being extinguished in measures; ...Everything is an exchange for fire, and fire for everything."<sup>15</sup> In this respect, Whitehead's view of reality as something functional, not substantial, is closer to that of the *Yijing*, so he transformed the Heraclitean "all things flow" into "the flux of things," and says, "In so doing, the notion of the 'flux' has been held up before our thoughts as one primary notion for further analysis."<sup>16</sup>

### Whitehead's Philosophy of Time

According to Whitehead's analysis, "flux" or "process," as a "primary notion,"

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 61.

<sup>16</sup> A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 208.

is a twofold activity of concrescence and transition. "Concrescence" or "microscopic process," as he says, is the kind of fluency in which many real things, actual entities (also called actual occasions) or organisms get together and become one novel real thing. The kind of fluency, Whitehead suggests, is the Lockean "real internal constitution of a particular existent" that moves towards some final cause as its subjective aim and seeks satisfaction in the realization of the aim. While "transition" or "macroscopic process" is the kind of fluency in which real things or actual occasions become as being effected by the physical power of their antecedent actual occasions. This kind of fluency is the Lockean "perpetually perishing" that gives rise to the present real thing in conformity with the "power" of the past. Again, it should be noted that the fluency is twofold in one process of becoming of the organisms: concrescence that provide the ends to be attained and transition that provide the conditions which govern the attainment. In this case, the former process is teleological and the latter, efficient; neither of them can dispense with the fact of creativity.<sup>17</sup> As Whitehead says,

The creativity in virtue of which any relative complete actual world is, by the nature of things, the datum for a new concrescence is termed 'transition.' Thus, by reason of transition, 'the actual world' is always a relative term, and refers to that basis of presupposed actual occasions which is a datum for the novel concrescence.<sup>18</sup>

In this process of becoming, the universe is incomplete and always in expansion, while the real things are self-caused and partially free.

Ostensibly, Whitehead has taken Aristotle's ideas of efficient and final causes and transformed them into two kinds of fluency representing two modes of time respectively: time as efficient cause in succession and time as telos that unifies the past and the present with the future. Yet in Aristotle's metaphysics "substance" is something changeless in the flux of change, it is the static primary stuff and the ultimate substratum of individual existence. While in Whitehead's metaphysics the concept of "creativity" has substituted for that of "substance" as the ultimate presupposition that characterizes the most prevailing feature of the universe, it is one of three notions of which the Category of the Ultimate, while the other two are "one" and "many." Thus for Whitehead, "creativity" is "the principle of novelty," it introduces novelty into the content of the "many" and brings forth the existence of a united new "one." Prevailing with the function of

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 210-212.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 211.

creativity, nature offers the ground for infinite, interrelated actual entities to enter into novelty by contemporaneously contrasting with each other or by succeeding to one after another. By succeeding to the previous ones, the actual entities are caused and determined and are under the sway of efficient cause. By seeking their satisfactions goaded by the subjective aims, the actual entities are self-caused and reacted to the final causes. All this seems to echo Leibniz's doctrine of monadology. In order to reconcile the conflict between mechanism and teleology, Leibniz introduced the doctrine of monadology that lays physics on the foundation of metaphysics and applies the final causes and the efficient causes to the explanations of nature complementarily.<sup>19</sup>

### Philosophy of Time in the *Yijing*

Just as "creativity" is the ultimate presupposition of Whitehead's metaphysical system, it acquires similar status in that of the *Yijing*. This could be found in a number of passages in the Great Treatise,

Yi (creativity) is on a par with heaven and earth, and that's why it pervades the principle/way of heaven and earth. [易與天地準，故能彌綸天地之道。]

The regular alternation of sun and moon as one yin following one yang [and one yang following one yin] is called *dao*. What succeeds to it is the Good, and what is fulfilled by it is the nature of being. [一陰一陽之謂道，繼之者善也，成之者性也。]

Unceasing generation is termed "yi" [change/creativity]. [生生之謂易。]

How immense and great is yi! With reference to anything far-reaching, no limit can be set on it; with reference to anything nearby at hand, it seems to stand still without motion. While with reference to all existence between heaven and earth, it pervades them all. [夫易廣矣，大矣。以言乎遠，則不禦；以言乎邇，則靜而正；以言乎天地之間則備矣。]

Therefore, in *yi* there is the supreme ultimate, which generated the two forms [- - and —, symbols for sun and moon, masculine and feminine]. Those two forms generated the four images [symbols for spring, summer, autumn and winter respectively] which again generated the eight Trigrams [*Qian* ☰, *Kun* ☷, *Zhen* ☳, *Gen* ☶, *Kan* ☵, *Li* ☲, *Xun* ☴, and *Dui* ☱, symbols for

<sup>19</sup> G. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, trans. George R. Montgomery (Illinois: The Open Court Publishing, 1968), 37.

heaven, earth, thunder, mountain, water, fire, wind and lake respectively]. The eight trigrams served to determine the auspicious [events] and the ominous [events], and the auspicious and the ominous result in great enterprise. [是故易有太極，是生兩儀。兩儀生四象，四象生八卦。八卦定吉凶，吉凶生大業。]

The grand virtue/greatest function of heaven and earth is called generation/creation. [天地之大德曰生。]

All this indicates that "creativity" or *yi* has been regarded as the greatest cosmic function that permeates heaven and earth and all existence in between, and it results in an overall distribution of animation and power to heaven, earth, and man. It says in the Great Treatise,

The *Book of Changes* is comprehensive and encompassing. There are in it the principle/way of heaven, the principle/way of man, and the principle/way of earth. By doubling three lines of the trigram [the sage made] the hexagram to be composed of six lines. What these six lines signify is nothing else but the principle/way of Three Calibers. [易之為書也，廣大悉備。有天道焉，有人道焉，有地道焉。兼三才而兩之，故六。六者非他也，三才之道也。]

In the trigram "man" is taken to be in the middle of "heaven" and "earth," as the lowest line of each trigram represents "earth" and is called "*ti yao*" 地爻 (the *yao* of earth), the middle line represents "man" and is called "*ren yao*" 人爻 (the *yao* of man), and the highest line represents "heaven" and is called "*tian yao*" 天爻 (the *yao* of heaven). "The Three Calibers" 三才 (*sancal*) is rendered by Shih-chuan Chen as "three participants in the creative process" and by Wilhelm as "the three primal powers."<sup>20</sup> It has been explained in greater detail by Thome Fang as the principle of creative creativity.<sup>21</sup> In *Creativity in Man and Nature*, Fang explains that the universal *dao* in the *Book of Changes* has been ramified into the *Tao* (*Dao*) of heaven, the *Tao* (*Dao*) of earth and the *Tao* (*Dao*) of man. The *Dao* of heaven is the primordial creative power of nature that gives rise to all creatures incessantly and governs them with natural laws, so as to reach a state of comprehensive harmony and develop from it the Supreme Good. The *Dao* of earth is the procreative power of nature that complies with the creative power of

<sup>20</sup> See, Shih-chuan Chen, "How to Form a Hexagram and Consult the *I Ching*," 248; also Richard and Hellmut Wilhelm (tr.), *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 377. It should be noted that the "way/principle of Three Calibers" in fact comprises the way/principle of heaven (time), of earth (space) and of man (humanity). it is a way/principle of "three ways/principles."

<sup>21</sup> See Thome Fang, *Creativity in Man and Nature* (Taipei: Linking, 1980), 36.

heaven by bearing and nourishing all creatures with immense space. And the *Dao* of man assures the central position of man's place in nature; he is the only creature capable of joining this activity of creation by producing human values.

In sum, the principle of Three Calibers is in fact the principle of creativity embodied in time (heaven), in space (earth) and in man. For the ancient Chinese, the heavenly order exemplified by the regular alternations of sun (*yang*, day) and moon (*yin*, night) is the very nature of time and the quality of earth shown in its firmness/hardness (*yang*, hard/poor soil) and tenderness/softness (*yin*, soft/rich soil) is the very nature of space, and the interplay of heaven and earth or time and space gives birth to everything. With this understanding in mind, one may argue that time is the function of concrete heaven and space is the function of concrete earth, and creativity is their common feature. Similar to natural creation's following certain universal principles, human creation abides the principles of humanity, namely, benevolence and justice, which are the basic virtues of being human. To make all this more explicit, it says in the Shuogua (說卦),

The principles whereupon heaven is established are *yin*/moon and *yang*/sun; the principles whereupon earth is established are firmness and tenderness; again, the principles whereupon humanity is established are benevolence and justice. [立天之道，曰陰與陽。立地之道，曰柔與剛。立人之道，曰仁與義。]

Thus, the principle of Three Calibers is seen to be not only a warrant of fundamental humanism in ancient Chinese thought, but also an anticipation of modern axiological cosmology that lays strong emphasis on man's place in nature.

### The *Yijing* and Whitehead: Differences

Accordingly, both the *Yijing* and Whitehead take "creativity" as the ultimate principle in their metaphysical systems that characterizes the sporadic and genetic function of the universe, and it is the very starting point for a Chinese Classic of antiquity and a Western philosopher of 20<sup>th</sup> century to meet. Admittedly, the concept had been developed under quite different cultural settings and with quite different leitmotifs.

Firstly creativity in the *Yijing* arose from the Chinese tradition of fundamental humanism which makes human beings the only participants—though not the only members—in the creative process of nature (heaven and earth). It laid more



emphases on the given central position of humankind in nature, and stressed on the activities of nature and of man in respect to their works on "creation *ex nihilo*." While for Whitehead, "creativity" is much more a philosophical presupposition that is a substitution for the Aristotelian "prime matter," for the Thomistic "being itself," and for Spinoza's "substance," and it is also deeply involved with Christian theology and modern science. This is the very reason why we may find the doctrines of God and of temporal atomism (taking indivisible actual occasions as the final realities) in Whitehead's metaphysics, which have no counterpart in the *Yijing*.

Secondly the *Yijing* originally had been a divine book of mantic power before it was transformed into a masterpiece of philosophy through Confucius's commentary. So originally the function of the book was to communicate with superhuman, not supernatural, spiritualities through complex procedures of prognostication, so as to help resolve the doubts of the diviners facing any critical decision-making. When it came down to Confucius' hand, these cryptic and mysterious aspects receded, and was taken over by its rational and humanistic aspects. Nonetheless, Confucius never denied the mystique and inexplicability of the book and of the issues concerned; he had no intention to pursue any systematic causal explanations of changes occurring in nature, and of human conducts and behaviors in terms of the book. In his view, just as in the view of the authors' of the *Yijing*, the cosmic changes as "the givens" manifest to us in our experience such that in one aspect they are intelligible and bound to natural laws (including causal laws) and show us natural order, whereas in another aspect they are unintelligible, inscrutable, and miraculous. Many a time some significant events, auspicious or ominous occur in personal experience and in human history unexpectedly, without due reasons, are obviously beyond the ken of man. So as the ancient Chinese conceived, there must be something unpredictable, mystic, and inexplicable behind the scene, but it might become knowable via a procedure of prognostication handed down by the sages from generations to generations that emulates the genesis of the cosmos. To give a psychological interpretation of the idea of prognostication, Wilhelm and Jung suggest that for the authors of the *Yijing* reality is understandable because there is in all things a "latent" rationality; it is the basic idea underlying meaningful coincidence: an acausal or synchronistic connective principle.<sup>22</sup> More than what they have seen, here insightful intuition, archetypal imaginations, rational wishes,

<sup>22</sup> C. G. Jung, *Synchronicity An Acausal Connecting Principle*, trans. by R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 34-36, 72.

relational observations, analogous thinking, encompassing apprehension, cosmic feelings etc., according to the *Yijing*, all play significant roles in our dealing with mysterious reality. In this respect, Whitehead is different from the authors of the *Yijing*; he has followed the Western tradition in seeking causal explanations of the ultimate facts of nature, and thereby has creativity integrated into the flux of becoming as transition in terms of efficient causes and as concrescence in terms of final cause. In this way little room is left for creativity to function in itself; the conception of chance thus acquires less importance in Whitehead than in the *Yijing*. Taking the conception of chance seriously, the *Yijing* says,

The unpredictability of the appearances of *yin* and *yang* is called the truly miraculous. [陰陽不測之謂神。]

The *Yi* is a book that should not be away from us. Its principles are constantly in change, just as the *yaos* produced through prognostication are always unstable. They change and move around the six places of the hexagram, where the upper *yaos* and the lower *yaos* are indeterminate. They ascend and descend, ever inconstant. The firmness and the tenderness of the lines interplay and exchange with each other, so that an invariable and fixed law is unsustainable; everything depends on what the change directs. [易之為書也不可遠，為道也屢遷，變動不居，周流六虛，上下無常，剛柔相易，不可為典要，唯變所適。]

To hold the importance of change or "chance" as equal to or as even higher than the fixed laws of nature might be the essential difference of *Yijing* from Whitehead.

### The *Yijing* and Whitehead: Commonness

However, Whitehead's basic outlook on creativity as the Ultimate assumes striking similarity to that of the *Yijing*, and thereby shares with it a similar understanding of the nature of time. When joining the Six International Congress of Philosophy at Harvard, 1926, Whitehead delivered a speech on "Time" and addressed the issue in question with six kinds of categories, namely, supersession, prehension, incompleteness, objective immortality, simultaneity, and time as epochal.<sup>23</sup> All of them can find their resonance in the *Yijing*.

In light of the previous discussions, Whitehead's conception of time as fluency

<sup>23</sup> A. N. Whitehead, "Time (September 1926)," in Lewis Ford, *The Emergence of Whitehead's Metaphysics 1925-1929* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 303-308.

seems to be a series of successions heading towards infinity. But these successions are in fact supersessions. For Whitehead, the temporal continuity consists of a multiplicity of actual entities that the earlier ones are superseded by the later ones. Supersession is in fact part of the real essence of actual entities and it is a three-way process. Each occasion supersedes, or is superseded by other occasions, and there is also an internal process of supersession in which the mental pole supersedes the physical pole or the physical pole supersedes the mental pole. Each actual entity is dipolar as a prehending subject, according to Whitehead, endowed with the physical pole of physical prehensions which have other actual entities as their data, and the mental pole that have eternal objects or pure potentials as their data. And time is concerned primarily with the physical poles of occasions and only derivatively with the mental poles; while the linkage between the two illustrates the category of supersession transcending time, since it is both extratemporal and yet is an instance of supersession.<sup>24</sup> Here Whitehead demonstrates his basic position of realism which allows the physical actuality to be the ground of mental actuality.

In this case, the concept of time, Whitehead suggests, arises from the interplay of three fundamental categories, namely, supersession, prehension, and incompleteness, and all the similar ideas can be found in the *Yijing*.<sup>25</sup> Here the concept of supersession implies the sense of interiority in opposition to that of externality; time for an organism is its interior life process, not a physical imposition from without. The organism grows together with time which is qualitatively different in every moment and cumulatively progressive in the convergence of the organism's experiences of perceptions, memories, and anticipations. The category of prehension expresses the very "growing together" in question; it shows how every organism is physically related to all other organisms and mentally related to all kinds of possibilities and potentialities. Still more, the very nature of time is incompleteness. As Whitehead says, "Each occasion is temporal because it is incomplete....Thus the category of incompleteness means that every occasion holds in itself its own future; so that anticipation is primarily a blind physical fact, and is only a mental fact by reason of the partial analysis effected by conceptual mentality."<sup>26</sup> The incompleteness of an organism indicates infinite possibilities for its future; not only as a prehending subject but also as an objectified datum for other organisms.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 303-306.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 305.

Now, first of all, the concept of supersession corresponds to that of "*geku dingxin*," (革故鼎新) i.e. new things supersede the old ones in the *Yijing*: Here Ge and Ting are the forty-ninth and the fiftieth hexagrams: the former in the sense of "overturning old things"; while the latter in that of "setting up new things." The original meaning of the character Ge is "leather" and its derivative meaning is "revolution" and "change." While the character "Ting" was originally used to refer to a "caldron," a large sized tripodal cooking pot. It then acquired the meaning of taking over new things. When the two are combined together, it turns out to be "supersession." This can be clearly seen in the Zagua (雜卦), as it says, "What Ge means is to supersede the old things. What Ding means is to get the new things." [革, 去故也; 鼎, 取新也.] Since the two hexagrams closely conjoined there is in fact an internal and inseparable relation between the two. Second, the concept of prehension has "relation" as one of its connotations. Real things are interrelated to each other so as to constitute the solidarity of the world either through physical prehensions or through mental/conceptual prehensions. This idea is expressed in the *Yijing* as the principle of extensive connection (pangtung 旁通). As it is said in the Wenyan of Qian: "The changes that occur in the six yaos of a hexagram may transform it into any one of the other sixty three hexagrams. This is all due to the principle of extensive connection." [六爻發揮旁通情也 (〈乾·文言〉)]

Third, the concept of incompleteness is clearly indicated by the order of the last two hexagrams of the *Yijing*, the sixty-third hexagram "Completeness" (Jiji 既濟) followed closely by the sixty-fourth hexagram "Incompleteness" (Weiji 未濟). The adjacency of these hexagrams indicates an idea of cyclic recurrence, i.e. once finished, everything will restart. This had been most vividly observed by the ancient Chinese through the regular changes of day after night and vice versa, of four seasons, and of cold weather succeeding hot weather and vice versa. As it says in the Great Treatise,

The revolutions of the sun and moon give rise to cold and hot. [日月運行，一寒一暑。]

The sun goes and the moon comes; the moon goes and the sun comes. The sun and moon succeed one to another and give light to the world alternately. The cold goes and the heat comes; the heat goes and the cold comes. The gradual change of the weather from cold to hot and again from hot to cold constitutes the period of a year. [日往則月來，月往則日來，日月相推而明生焉。寒往則暑來，暑往則寒來，寒暑相推而歲成焉。]



In view of the ancient Chinese, the movements of the universe, the alternations of day and night, of cold and hot, and of four seasons not only have shown the order of nature by the alternating interplay of opposites, they also exhibited a kind of perpetual recurrence that lead to infinity. This cyclic idea of natural change has been extended to all kinds of opposites and to the very nature of time. Time is not only lineal and irreversible; it is also cyclic and recurrent. This idea can be most clearly seen in the twenty-fourth hexagram Fu (Return), as it's Guazi says, "Recurrence is in fact a way of the operation of *dao*," [反復其道(復卦辭)] and its Tuan zhuan (Judgment) also says, "May one see the heart of heaven and earth in light of the phenomena of recurrence." [復其見天地之心乎? (復卦初爻爻辭)] This perpetual recurrence is not Nietzsche's eternal recurrence in which everything repeats itself eternally. For the authors of the *Yijing*, once change or creativity is involved nothing can be repeated and be exactly the same again. So the recurrence in Nietzsche is the destiny of all existence entangled by causes, while in the *Yijing* it is a natural principle that gives order to the world and allows time heading to infinity.

In addition to the above-mentioned three categories of time, the other three which Whitehead proposes in relation to time are objective immortality, simultaneity, and time as epochal. "Objective Immortality" is the quality the prehending subject acquires when it becomes a past object. For Whitehead, when a self-functioning organism A becomes objectified and enters into the inner constitution of its supersessor B, it at once loses subjective immediacy and enjoys objective immortality as a stubborn fact of the past. Thus B always, as Whitehead explains, enshrines physical memory of A in its own concrescence, while A becomes immortal throughout its future. So Whitehead says, "...physical memory is causation, and causation is objective immortality...The irreversibility of time follows from this doctrine of objective immortality. For the later occasion is the completion of the earlier occasion, and therefore, different from it."<sup>27</sup> In this case both change and changeless, becoming and immortality are the ultimate metaphysical features of actuality. "Simultaneity" is the state of coexistence of actual entities which do not involve any causal relationship with the rest of actual entities, either as causes or as being caused; but by the acts of prehending they relate to the others with presentational immediacy that constitutes the simultaneous world. Finally, actual entities or the ultimate units of reality are epochal; they all have a definite quantum of time. Being influenced by quantum mechanics, Whitehead considers the ultimate fact of nature to be atomic or

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 306.

epochal; real things exist not in infinite continuity of succession but in finite supersession. Whitehead calls this the epochal nature of time.<sup>28</sup> This is a kind of temporal atomism that maintains the internal indivisibility and the external termination of the time-quantum. All this is to describe the emerging, the growing, the decaying, and the perishing of an organism as duration and with an epochal nature.

Now in the *Yijing* the idea of "*hua*" (化 transformation, internal, gradual, and subtle change) is analogous to that of objective immortality. As it says in the Great Treatise, "Transforming itself into something definitely different is called change." [化而裁之謂之變。] Here "transformation" implies a sense of past, something used to be in the past then became different afterwards; and this very nature of transformation is the objective immortality as Whitehead describes. It had been a casual experience of some Chinese poet who described a sad phenomenon of falling petals and remarked, "Falling red petals are not heartless, they transform into spring mud so as to cherish the flowers ever more tenderly." (落紅不是無情物，化作春泥更護花) The stanza gives us a perfect picture of how one thing becomes objectified in another and at the same becomes "immortal." Again, the idea of "*baohe taihe*" (保合太和 coming into congruence with the state of comprehensive harmony) in the *Yijing* is analogous to the concept of simultaneity. For the authors of the *Yijing*, the immediate present of the universe is in a state of comprehensive harmony. If human beings learn this great idea from nature and live harmoniously with one other, then a community of perpetual peace will appear. As it says in the Tuanzhuan of Qian (乾象傳),

The mode of creative power insinuates itself into change and transformation whereby everything fulfills its own nature and destiny so as to come into congruence with the Great Harmony<sup>29</sup> as the paradigm of perfection and consummation. It originates myriads of things and safeguards all states and nations in peace and joyfulness. [乾道變化，各正性命，保合大和，乃利貞。首出庶物，萬國咸寧。]

As for simultaneity, it is not only the basic concept underlying the idea of comprehensive harmony, an idea that requires contemporaneous coexistence of all, but also, just as Jung points out, of the idea of meaningful coincidence that makes the procedures of prognostication applied by the *Yijing* comprehensible. Lastly, the epochal nature of time has already been discerned in the idea of

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 308.

<sup>29</sup> Fang, op. cit., 110.

"Completeness" which is followed by the idea of "Incompleteness" in the *Yijing* as we have mentioned before. Eventually, whatever is completed must have a beginning and an end, the beginning of an existence is to be given birth to the world and the end is to terminate its existence; that is exactly what the term "epochal" might mean to the authors of the *Yijing*. In their mind the cosmic process is a process of perpetual recurrences and each recurrence is an epoch. As it says in the Great Treatise, "Going back to the beginnings of things and pursuing them to the end, we come to know the lessons of birth and of death."<sup>30</sup> [原始反終，故知生死之說。] From birth to death is exactly an epoch of life, life in its broadest sense.

Admittedly, there is no sophisticated analysis of the becoming of individual existence as Whitehead has done that can be found in the *Yijing*, a Chinese classic of antiquity which naturally dispenses with any influence from scientific atomism or Leibniz's monadology of the West in which Whitehead was deeply involved. This is exactly one of the major differences between the *Yijing* and Whitehead as we have mentioned before. In addition, as Whitehead possesses a lineal, irreversible idea of time and sees no circulation in the continuous creative process of the universe, so for him the concept of time can be distinguished into two modes: transition and concrescence, while in the *Yijing*, one may find various modes of time in describing the circular but progressive development of the universe. To explain this Thome Fang writes,

The essence of time consists in change, the basic mode of time is succession, and the efficacy of time abides in durance that lasts forever. The process of rhythmic and epochal change is wheeling around perpetually into infinity that is dovetailed by spring, summer, autumn and winter, by cold and hot, by old and new, by wax and wane, etc. All this indicates that nature is in a creative advance without ending. This is the way in which time functions and demonstrates in the activity of creation that unifies myriads of things with rational order. The dynamic temporality ridding itself of perished past and getting at coming new, it really gains over a loss. So the change in time is but a step to approaching eternity, eternity in the sense of durance. Before the past has gone, the future is already coming to present. Therefore, there is a linkage of being present to the past and to the future. Based on this nexus of time, the *Book of Change* contends that Change is on a par with Heaven and Earth and encourages us to see the all-pervasive Dao and its order."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Richard Wilhelm trans., *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, 316.

<sup>31</sup> See Thome Fang, *Creativity in Man and Nature*, 35; also, Thome Fang, *Shengsheng Zhide* (The Virtue of Creativity) (Taipei: Liming Cultural Co., 1980), 290-291.

The above-quoted paragraph suits best as the "witness" to our previous discussions on the comparisons of the time philosophy in the *Yijing* and Whitehead. To be sure, Thome Fang did not ever mention Whitehead's paper on "Time" which presumably had never been in his reach. Yet his analysis of the concept of time in the *Yijing* fits Whitehead's view on time nicely, except for the part of cyclic time, which is typical of the *Yijing*. At the end of our discussion, it should be noted that the whole purpose of the *Yijing* was in fact to bring out the idea of time as "value" and the universe as "value in the making" which is also exactly what was in Whitehead's mind; and the issue deserves another paper for further study.