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Yang Xing March 20, 2017

Debates between Leibniz and the Jesuit Missionaries on the Meaning of Confucianism

by

Yang Xing

Ursula Goldenbaum
Advisor

Philosophy Department

Ursula Goldenbaum
Advisor

Nicholas Fotion
Committee Member

Maria Franca Sibau
Committee Member

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Abstract

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In this thesis I discuss how Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz understands Chinese philosophy by comparing his interpretation to that of the two Jesuit missionaries, Matteo Ricci and Nicholas Longobardi. Their main areas of debate are: whether the Chinese have any concepts similar to the Christian idea of God; whether the Chinese have any understanding of spirits separated from matters; and, whether the Chinese have any understanding of the immortality of the human souls and rewards and punishments after death. Matteo Ricci is the inventor the approach "accommodationism", and he believes that missionaries in China could adapt to its people by reinterpreting Confucian Classics and absorbing Confucian moral values. Longobardi, however, denies such an approach and argues for the fundamental incongruences of the two civilizations. Leibniz finds similarities in the philosophy of the Chinese and his own, and thus supports the accommodationist position and criticizes Longobardi's opinions. He is also interested in the Chinese civilization in general and, especially, China's "practical philosophy"—how its society is organized using Confucian moral values.

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1 Introduction

The German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646—1716) is usually known as a "Universal Man" and associated with terms like "entelechies", "monads", or "pre-established harmony" (Introduction, p. 1). People are, however, less aware of his enormous interest in the study of non-European civilizations. Among his various writings on other than European cultures, "China" is the most frequently mentioned country, "more than all other non-Western cultures combined" (Introduction, p. 2). As readers, we would certainly wonder, what is the reason for this philosopher's peculiar interest in this civilization? Is there anything in China that Leibniz was especially fond of? And, is Leibniz's interest in China somehow related to his own philosophy? To help the readers to answer such questions is the purpose of this thesis.

Before I proceed with the arguments, I think it is important to give some background information in consideration of readers who are not familiar with this topic. There are two areas of information that seem significant to me: the first one is the historical background—how did Leibniz gradually develop his interest in China? Who were the important figures that influenced him? The second area is the document information—how many pieces did he write on China? And what are they? I will answer the second question when I turn to Chapter 4 of this thesis. The first one I will address now for the remaining of my introduction.

Leibniz's "mature study of China" did not happen before the late 1680s (Introduction, p. 12). Before, although he did mention "China" at least "over a dozen times", his account of China was not all positive (Introduction, p. 11). His earliest reference to China could be dated to 1668, when he compared Chinese medicine favorably to the European (Introduction, p. 11). In a work titled *Consilium Aegyptiacum* that Leibniz wrote during 1671-72, he mentioned the conquest of China by the nomadic "Tartars", and criticized China for its "corruption" and "misuse of… wealth" (Introduction, p. 11).

During the 1670s and early 1680s, a group of Jesuit missionaries in China worked to "[compile] a history of China", "[translate]… classical texts", and "[analyze]…[Chinese] language"; their work was then published in 1687[1] (Introduction, p. 12). Although Leibniz, in a letter to Ernest von Hessen-Rheinfels in December 1687, did mention that he "[had] read through the…work", he "seldom" referred to it in his later writings on China (Introduction, p. 12). Thus it is more likely that Leibniz started his systematic study of China, especially of Chinese philosophy, only after he met Claudio Grimaldi (1638-1712) in Rome in 1689. Grimaldi was an Italian Jesuit missionary who entered China in 1669 and, together with another missionary Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), "served as diplomatic aide[s]" to the Chinese Emperor Kangxi (Introduction, p. 12).

[1] Under the title *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive scientia Sinensis Latine exposita*".

After his return to Germany, Leibniz started a correspondence with Grimaldi. In a letter to Grimaldi from July 1689, Leibniz listed thirty questions about China that he would like Grimaldi to answer. This list of questions reflects Leibniz's wide range of interests: the topics of questions reach from "botany" to "industrial arts" to "weapons" (Introduction, p. 12). Besides, it also tells us that Leibniz "was not well versed in Chinese history, geography, or culture" at that time (Introduction, p. 12). Leibniz personally valued this correspondence not only because he could get information about China from a "competent scientist" who had actually been there, but also because he could thereby connect with Grimaldi's colleague Verbiest. The latter still held a position at Qing court enabling to perhaps influence the Chinese Emperor—which could be beneficial to Leibniz's political and "ecumenical interests" (Introduction, p. 13).

Another important result of Leibniz' meeting with Grimaldi in Rome, and his subsequent correspondence with him, is that he was introduced to the Jesuits' "accommodationist position", a position that Leibniz would defend later in his life (Introduction, p. 13).

The accommodationist position was first created and implemented by the famous Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), who believes that there are certain elements in Confucianism that are similar to Christianity and can be used by the missionaries in China. Ricci "entered China through Macao" in 1583 and founded the "first Catholic mission" in China (Introduction, p. 13). When Ricci arrived in this land, he "immersed" himself in the

study of Chinese language, and, eventually, he mastered the Classical Chinese (written Chinese language) to such a degree that his essays were "virtually indistinguishable from the essays written by the most prominent Chinese scholars and officials of the day" (Introduction, p. 13)[2]. As a result, "very few missionaries before or since have learnt as much about the culture of the peoples they sought to convert" as Ricci did (Introduction, p. 13).

Although, throughout his *Journals*[3], Ricci makes some negative comments on China, he does not reserve his good words when it comes to the ancient Chinese and their Classics. On page 99 of his *Journals*, he writes:

"Among all the pagans that are known to Europe, I do not know any nation that, at the early stage of its antiquity, made less mistakes than the ancient Chinese did. From the very beginning of their history, they had written records of a supreme deity, acknowledged and worshiped by all …. They also teach that human beings' light of reason comes from Heaven, and all activities of men need to obey to the order of reason." (Journals, p. 99)

[2] It was possible that Ricci was helped by his Chinese collaborators.

[3] Ricci, Matteo 利玛窦, et al. *Li Ma Dou Zhong Guo Zha Ji [Ying Han Fan Yi]* 利 玛窦 中国 札记 [英 汉 翻译]. Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1983. As the readers can see, I am using a Chinese translation of Ricci's *Journals*. Thus, the quotation in the next paragraph is my own translation. Also, this Chinese translation of Ricci's *Journals* is based on Trigault's Latin version.

"In 1597, Ricci was named Superior or head of the entire Jesuit missionary effort in China."[4] He first tried to enter Beijing, the capital of China at that time, in 1598 (Wenchao Li, p. 63). However, due to "a Sino-Japanese conflict in Korea" that "made all foreigners suspect", his first attempt was not successful. Ricci finally entered Beijing together with another Jesuit Diego Pantoja in January 1601. He got permission to stay in Beijing, and lived in that city until he passed away on May 11, 1610. [5]

Although Ricci had long died before Leibniz was born, "the latter's admiration for the scholarly Jesuit is clear in Leibniz's China writings" (Introduction, p. 14). Leibniz "defends and advances", together with most Jesuits, Ricci's position of accommodationism (Introduction, p. 14). However, there are others who were Ricci's opponents: not only did "most of the missionaries from other Catholic orders" reject Ricci's position; several Jesuits, including Ricci's successor, the Sicily-born missionary Nicholas Longobardi (16th to 17th Century)[6], also attacked accommodationism (Wenchao Li, p. 62).

Longobardi joined the Jesuit Mission in 1582 (Wenchao Li, p. 63). He then attended the Jesuit missionary school in Palermo in 1584 (Wenchao Li, p. 63). However, he did not finish his study and was not able to get a diploma. Later, when other Jesuit missionaries attacked

[4] Retrieved from "University of Minnesota Libraries" on March 20, 2017. See https://www.lib.umn.edu/bell/riccimap

[5] Shih, J.Hs. (2016, August 31). *Matteo Ricci.* Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/biography/Matteo-Ricci on March 20, 2017

[6] As Wenchao Li points out on page 62 of his article, both Longobardi's birth and death dates are uncertain; there are several conflicting statements.

his anti-accommodationist book *Religion Treatise*, they used to take advantage of this failure, stating that Longobardi was advanced in neither theology nor philosophy; thus, his points of view should be greatly questioned (Wenchao Li, p. 63).

When Ricci was making his first attempt to enter Beijing in 1598, he needed someone to look after the missions in *Chao Zhou* for him (Wenchao Li, p. 63). Thus, Longobardi was sent from Macau, and arrived in *Chao Zhou* on December 28, 1597. Before Ricci passed away, he declared Longobardi his successor and put him in charge of the Jesuit Missions in China (Wenchao Li, p. 63).

When Longobardi was still in *Chao Zhou*, he started to doubt the missionaries' efforts to make Christianity "suit" to Confucianism. Such doubt was then supported by a letter from his Supervisor Francesco Pasio, warning Longobardi that, according to some Jesuits in Japan, some of the Chinese writings by Jesuits in China contain "contents very similar to the mistakes of the pagans" (Wenchao Li, p. 65). In order to further investigate, Longobardi eventually decided to do a group of interviews with some missionaries, Chinese intellectuals, and converted Chinese (Wenchao Li, p. 65).

In 1613, when Francisco Viera replaced Pasio as the new Supervisor, Jesuits themselves started a debate on the validity of Ricci's approach. Participants of this debate included Diego de Pantoja, Alfonso Vagnone, and Sabatino de Ursis, etc. (Wenchao Li, pp. 65-66). In 1621

however, the new Supervisor Hieronymus Ruis held a meeting in Macao, and affirmed Ricci's position to be the correct one. Longobardi was not satisfied though. After reading the works of other Jesuits such as Pantoja and Ursis, he wrote his *Respuesta Breve* (or, another title is *De confucio Ejusque Doctrina Tractatus*) in 1623, which later became the *Religion Treatise* (Wenchao Li, p. 67).

The main sources of his book are, besides the writings of other Jesuits and the interviews he did earlier, Book 26 (*On Li and Qi,* Part I), 27 (*On Li and Qi,* Part II), and 28 (*On Gui Shen*) of the *Xing Li Da Quan*, a famous collection of Neo-Confucian writings (Wenchao Li, p. 67). Longobardi concludes in his book that, since the Chinese civilization is a fundamentally "atheistic" and "materialistic" one, it is impossible to harmonize their culture with the Christian teaching.

According to Rosemont and Cook, Longobardi's book was later "condemned to be burnt" when "the Riccian position was temporarily in the ascendancy at Rome" (Introduction, p. 14). However, a Spanish translation by the Dominican Fernandez Navarette remained. This version was then translated to French and "published in Paris in 1701" (Introduction, p. 14). It was sent to Leibniz by Nicholas de Remond together with another anti-accommodationist text, *Mission Treatise*, by the Franciscan Antoine de Sainte-Marie. (Introduction, pp. 14-15)

Remond asked for the famous philosopher's opinions on the two works. Leibniz, being a

supporter of Ricci's position, decided to give a detailed criticism of Longobardi's arguments, and, at the same time, express his own opinions on Chinese philosophy. In the last year of his life, he wrote an "over 14000 words" long letter to Remond, which later became known as the text *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (Introduction, pp. 6-7).

Leibniz gathered a lot of information about China from his exchanged letters with many Jesuits missionaries, some in China, and some in Europe. Among his Jesuit correspondents, one man worth mentioning is certainly Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730). Although he is not a subject of this thesis, some of Leibniz's ideas on China were developed under his influence. Among them, the most significant one is Leibniz's attempt to connect his binary arithmetic with the Chinese Classic *Yi Jing* (Leibniz and Jesuits, p. 90). This connection allows Leibniz to argue that this mathematics of the ancient Chinese was "only reached in Europe during [Leibniz's] own lifetime", and, since the ancient Chinese had such a great mathematical achievement, their philosophy also needs to be respected. (Introduction, pp. 8-9)

However, besides the intellectual exchange, Bouvet was also important for Leibniz due to the latter's political and ecumenical interests. Bouvet was a mathematician and a "corresponding member of the *Academie des Sciences* in Paris"; he was sent to China because the Jesuits realized that the Chinese Emperor Kangxi had a certain interest in Western science (Leibniz and Jesuits, p. 90). Bouvet was then "chosen to direct service at the court", and indeed, "convinced of [his] scientific abilities", Emperor Kangxi made Bouvet his personal teacher in

mathematics (Leibniz and Jesuits, p. 90-91). After the French Jesuit "effected a cure of the Emperor from a vaguely described 'grave illness'", Kangxi trusted Bouvet even more (Leibniz and Jesuits, p. 92). Thus, although Kangxi was later angered by the patronizing attitude of the Papal Legate[7] and the decisions from the Vatican Church regarding the "Rites Controversy"[8], he still remained in good relationships with Bouvet and some other Jesuits.

Because Bouvet was the personal teacher of the Emperor of then one of the largest empires on Earth, Leibniz, as someone who always had an interest in politics, definitely valued his correspondence with Bouvet. In fact, Bouvet himself had a "grand plan": in his letter to Leibniz dated October 27, 1704, he described how he would like to set up a "scientific Apostolic Academy" in Beijing, and invite scholars from both China and Europe to translate ancient Chinese texts and compile dictionaries on Chinese language (Leibniz and Jesuits, p. 95).

Leibniz, being someone who always urged the missionaries to learn more from China, would have strongly supported this plan, since it was exactly what he also wanted to do. However, unfortunately, the letter never reached Leibniz (Collani believes that their correspondence, going through Rome, might "had been interrupted systematically" (Leibniz and Jesuits, p.

[7] The Papal Legate is Charles-Thomas Maillard De Tournon.

[8] The "Rites Controversy" is a debate between the Westerners about whether the Chinese ancestral, imperial, and Confucius worships should be considered religious or civil in nature. Since this thesis mainly focuses on the theoretical aspect of the accommodationism (the interpretation of Chinese Philosophy), "Rites Controversy" will not be discussed here.

94)). In the meantime, when the "Chinese Rites Controversy had escalated", the Jesuit General Michelango Tamburini refused to permit the "foundation" of such an academy (Leibniz and Jesuits, pp. 95-96). Thus, Bouvet's interesting plan never came to fruition.

While Leibniz's approach to China was certainly similar to that of the Jesuit missionaries in that he aimed to convert people to Christianity, his interest in China goes beyond such missionary goals. In Chapter 4, I will discuss in detail how Leibniz understands religions in general and how he interprets Confucianism within his own philosophy. However, before I turn to Leibniz, I need to first address Ricci and Longobardi—Ricci because he is the founder of such an accommodationist approach, and Longobardi because he is the one Leibniz directly responds to. These two will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. As for the last Chapter (Chapter 5), I will give some of my own opinions on accommodationism in general, the differences between Ricci's approach and Longobardi's, and, finally, what is important about Leibniz's interpretation of Chinese philosophy and his interest in China in general.

One note I have to make here is that, some Chinese words are transliterated differently by different writers and in different texts—which can really confuse the readers with no Chinese. (For example, "*Shang Di*" and "*Xangti*" are two Romanizations of one Chinese word.) Thus, I decide to use Pinyin Romanization for all the Chinese names, terms, and book titles throughout this thesis. This means, using the same example, "*Xangti*", appearing in Leibniz's *Discourse*, will be written in its standard Pinyin transliteration, "*Shang Di*". It is also

noticeable that Matteo Ricci, one of the subjects of this thesis, was the first ever in history to Romanize Chinese language, when in 1605 he published his *Xizi Qiji* in Beijing.[9]

2 Matteo Ricci's Accommodationism

2.1 Introduction and the Sources

When Matteo Ricci (1552—1610) first entered Mainland China in 1583 (Introduction, p. 13), he eagerly immersed himself in the study of an ancient civilization and its language and customs. Ricci would have never thought that from this time on, his whole life would be deeply connected to this land, a land where he spent the rest of his life preaching, and a land where he was buried in. Ricci was indeed a prolific writer: he not only produced more than five works in very well versed classical Chinese, but also, together with his collegue Michele Ruggieri (1543—1607), compiled a Portuguese-Chinese dictionary.[10] As I have just stated, this not only marked the birth of the first dictionary of a European to the Chinese language, but also the first Romanization of the Chinese language ever.[11] In addition, Ricci was also

[9] Sin, Kiong Wong (2012). *Confucianism, Chinese History and Society*. World Scientific. p. 72.

[10] Witek, J.W. 魏若望. *Pu Han Ci Dian, Luo Ming Jian, Li Ma Dou Yuan Zhu* 葡漢辭典, 羅明堅, 利馬竇原著. Macau: Pu Tao Ya Guo Jia Tu Shu Guan, Dong Fang Pu Tao Ya Xue Hui, Li Ma Dou Zhong Xi Wen Hua Li Shi Yan Jiu Suo (Jiu Jin Shan Da Xue), 2001.

[11] Most European languages are "phonographic languages". They use a group of alphabets to represent different sounds, and combine these alphabets to form vocabulary. Chinese language, on the other hand, is a "logographic language". The smallest

responsible for the production of *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*, the first known Chinese world map[12], and, very likely, brought Prince *Zhu Zaiyu*'s successful calculation of equal temperament (12-ET) to the West.[13] However, among all his works, the most well-known is Ricci's unique approach to Confucianism with the aim to harmonize Confucian culture and Catholic faith. This approach, the approach that was called "accomodationism" or "Ricci's position" in English, and "*Li Ma Dou Gui Ju*" in Chinese, is the focus of this Chapter.

Before the discussion, I believe it is important that I briefly address the sources I use. As I have said, Ricci produced at least five works in Classical Chinese: *Tian Zhu Shi Yi* ("*The True Meaning of the LORD*"), *Ji Ren Shi Pian* ("*Ten Essays from 'Ji Ren'*"), *Bian Xue Yi Du* ("*Letters of Debate*"), *Jiao You Lun* ("*On Friendship*"), and *Er Shi Wu Yan* ("*Twenty-Five Advices*"). Among them, *Letters of Debate* is a collection of exchanged letters between Ricci and Buddhists, and it reflects Ricci's fierce attack on Buddhism. *On Friendship* and *Twenty-Five Advices* are very Confucian-styled essays on moral cultivation and self-refinement.

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unit in Chinese is a "logogram"—a Chinese character. Each character represents not a sound, but a distinct meaning. This provides great difficulty for foreigners trying to learn Chinese. Ricci's Romanization of Chinese proved to be a helper for those people.

[12] Baran, Madeleine (December 16, 2009). "Historic map coming to Minnesota". St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Public Radio. Retrieved 12 January 2010.

[13] Gene, J. C. H. O. "The Significance of the Discovery of the Musical Equal Temperament In the Cultural History." *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music* 2 (2010): 002.

"EQUAL TEMPERAMENT". University of Houston. Retrieved October 5, 2014.

The last two, *The True Meaning of the LORD* and *Ten Essays from 'Ji Ren'*, are books with different targets. *The True Meaning of the LORD* is an introduction book for people who have no prior knowledge of Christianity but are curious to learn this religion. It is noticeable that *The True Meaning of the LORD* was based on another book *The True Account of the LORD* (*Tian Zhu Shi Lu*), first written in Latin by Ricci's colleague Michele Ruggieri. When Ruggieri first wrote his book, he thought that China was like Japan—a mostly Buddhist nation. Thus, the main objective of *The True Account of the LORD* was to express Christian ideas using Buddhist philosophy and terminology. However, when, later, Ricci learnt that the main intellectual/religious system in China was Confucianism, he translated Ruggieri's book into Classical Chinese, and, while keeping the structure of the book, rewrote it into a book that aims to reject Buddhism and, at the same time, harmonize Christianity and Confucianism.[14]

Such change may seem rather trivial; nevertheless it represents the whole of Ricci's position: "*He Ru Chi Fo*" ("Harmonize the Confucians and Criticize the Buddhists").[15] To be more

[14] Ricci also changed the style of the book to a dialogical one. The whole book is a series of dialogues between a "Western gentleman" (*Xi Shi*), who is Ricci himself, and a "Chinese gentleman" (*Zhong Shi*), who is a Chinese trying to learn Christianity. The Chinese gentleman asks the Western one various questions, and the Western one answers them and clarifies the Chinese Gentleman's doubts.

[15] Sun Shangyang 孙尚扬. "Cong He Ru Chi Fo Dao Rong Ru Shu Fo—Li Ma Dou Yu Ai Xiang De De Chuan Jiao Fang Lve Bi Jiao" 从合儒斥佛到融佛疏儒——利玛窦与艾香德的传教方略比较. *Jiang Han Lun Tan* 江汉论坛 7 (2016):

specific, the strategy Ricci used to deal with Confucianism is a threefold one: "*He Ru*"—"*Bu Ru*"—"*Chao Ru*".[16] "*He Ru*" is the first stage when Ricci argues how Christianity and Confucianism agree with each other; "*Bu Ru*" is the second stage when Ricci tries to show how Christianity could supplement the weaker parts of Confucianism, or how it has something that Confucianism lacks; "*Chao Ru*" is the last stage when Ricci reaches his conclusion that Christianity is a system that both includes and transcends Confucianism. Thus, the position presented in *The True Meaning of the LORD* became influential to nearly every Christian missionary in China after Ricci; it later also stirred huge debates both in China and in Europe.[17]

While *The True Meaning of the LORD* is used to convert non-Christians, *Ten Essays from 'Ji Ren'* is a book on how to become a good Christian (thus it is written for Chinese Christians). This book is similar to the two essays (*On Friendship* and *Twenty-Five Advices*) in that, instead of telling Chinese Christians a set of statements that they have to believe (in the exact words) just like normally Christians would do in Europe ("catechism"), Ricci, in a very Chinese way, gives detailed advices on how a Christian should cultivate his morals and refine

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18-25.

[16] Shi Hengtan 石衡潭. "Cong He Ru, Bu Ru Dao Chao Ru—Li Ma Dou 'Jiao You Lun' Yu Wei Kuang Guo 'Qiu You Pian' Shi Lun" 从合儒, 补儒到超儒——利玛窦《 交友论》 与卫匡国《 逑友篇》 试论. *Shi Jie Zong Jiao Yan Jiu* 世界宗教研究 5 (2016): 121-127.

[17] By "huge debates" I mean not only the debate between accommodationists and anti-accommodationists—which is the subject of this thesis, but also the "Rites Controversy" that came later.

himself into an ideal Christian "gentleman" (in fact, Ricci even uses the Chinese word "*Jun Zi*", which, according to Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont, should be translated to "exemplary person" in Confucian tradition).[18]

I will talk more about how Ricci presents Christianity in a very Confucian way to the Chinese in the conclusion of this thesis. For now, let us return to the discussion of this Chapter's sources. Since *Ten Essays from 'Ji Ren'* is a book primarily for Christians (and thus presupposes some basic knowledge of Christianity), it should not be considered the best summary of Ricci's position. Also, since it is mostly about moral practice, it does not contain so many arguments and theories that a philosophical writing would discuss. In contrast, *The True Meaning of the LORD*, as I have said, serves as the foundation of Ricci's whole accomodationism and is mostly about exchange of ideas (see footnote 14 above). As a result, *The True Meaning of the LORD* is the primary source of this Chapter.

Now that I defined the source of this Chapter, I will present Ricci's accomodationism. The Chapter will be divided into four main parts: the first part is about Ricci's understanding of God, and how he criticizes or agrees with the Buddhists, Taoists, Neo-Confucians, and Original Confucianism[19]'s understandings of their respective First Principles. In the second

[18] Ames, Roger T., and Henry Rosemont Jr. *The Analects of Confucius: A philosophical translation*. Ballantine books, 2010. Whenever I use an "Ames & Rosemont" translation in this thesis, it is from this book.

[19] I shall make it clear here that, in this thesis, whenever I use the term "Original Confucianism" I am referring to the chronologically "original" Confucianism. That is, Pre-Qin Confucianism. The other type of Confucianism that will be discussed here is "Neo- Confucianism", a system of thinking flourished mainly during the Song (960 CE—1279 CE) and

part I will talk about Ricci's understanding of spirits, and how he demonstrates the existence of spirits with the use of Chinese Classics. The third part will be about souls—how Ricci understands the immortality of the souls, and how he criticizes the Buddhists' point of view on the souls. The fourth (also the last) part will focus on Ricci's evaluation of the statement "*Wan Wu Yi Ti*" and his comment on "the Syncretism of the Three Schools"[20].

2.2 The First Principles in Chinese Traditions

To begin with, let me present how Ricci understands Buddhism and Taoism. Ricci believes that Buddhists and Taoists are mistaken because they believe that the universe does not have a First Principle (True Meaning I, #132).[21] This is to say Ricci understands the first principle of both, Buddhism and Taoism, to be "Emptiness".[22] He admits that such beginning from "emptiness" could make sense, since, for example, a child was originally absent, but after his birth he is present. Or, a chair was originally non-existent, but after its production it exists (True Meaning I, #141). However, Ricci argues that if one thinks deeper, one realizes that

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Ming (1368 CE—1644 CE) dynasties.

[20] "The Syncretism of the Three Schools" is an important intellectual and religious trend in Chinese history. It means the harmonization of the three Chinese intellectual/religious traditions: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Some believe that there are some unified principles that all three traditions agree; some believe that they could actually merge these traditions into one.

[21] All the excerpts of *The True Meaning of the LORD* are from the Internet database "Chinese Text Project". Visit http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=804348&remap=gb. Retrieved March 20, 2017.

[22] Here is the Chinese quote: "西士曰：二氏之谓，曰无曰空，于天主理大相刺谬，其不可崇尚明矣。"(True Meaning I, #132). The Chinese quotations, unless absolutely important, will not be translated. They will be attached as footnotes.

nothing comes from nowhere; everything needs a cause to happen: in the case of the child, the mother's blood and energy are the causes, and in the case of the chair, the raw materials and the worker's efforts are the causes (True Meaning I, #140-152). In other words, the universe could not have originated from "Emptiness"; if it were truly nothing at the beginning, creation would not have happened.

Second, Ricci responds to the argument that, since "Emptiness" is without shape and physical body, it could be another word referring to the Christian God, also being without shape and body. That is, "Emptiness" and Christian God may just be two names for one thing (True Meaning I, #157). Ricci argues though that it will not make sense, since, although the Christian God is shapeless, it still acquires virtues and intellect—qualities that "Emptiness" could not possess (True Meaning I, #158).

In the next step, Ricci starts to attack Neo-Confucianism. He firstly identifies two words as the First Principle of Neo-Confucianism: "*Tai Ji*" and "*Li*" (True Meaning I, #159). He then argues that they are both wrong: as for *Tai Ji*, he thinks that it is just "about the images of odd and even", and has nothing to do with creation (True Meaning I, #167). I think here Ricci is possibly referring to the *Yi Jing*, where it talks about how things originate from 0 to 1 to 2 to 4 and to 8.[23] It would be interesting if this is the case, since what Ricci says is exactly

[23] "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。"

Zhu Xi 朱熹. *Si Shu Wu Jing* 四书五经. Beijing: Shi Dai Wen Yi Chu Ban She, 1985.

opposite to what Leibniz believes: Leibniz takes *Yi Jing* to be an ancient scientific invention of "binary arithmetic", and argues that the fact that every number could be derived from 1 and 0 *illustrates* the process of creation—with 0 referring to emptiness and 1 to God.

As for *Li*, Ricci spends more time on it. He first defines two types of existence: one he calls "*Zi Li Ti*" (the independent), which are concrete objects like a chair or a stone. Another he calls "*Yi Lai Ti*" (the dependent), which are concepts that could only be known through concrete objects. For example, the color "red" could not be known unless one sees a red object; the concept "sweet" is impossible to understand unless one tastes, say, an ice-cream (True Meaning I, #174-185). In other words, to Ricci, concrete objects exist prior to concepts; as a result, *Li* (literally "reason") could not have been the origin of the universe, just like a car will not be born just from the knowledge of how to make a car—there must be someone who actually takes the time to do the work. For Ricci, the Christian God is the one who actually makes the car, and *Li* is nothing more than the knowledge God uses to make that car. Therefore, Ricci concludes that *Li* is not God himself, but his instrument (True Meaning I, #223).

After that, Ricci finally turns to Original Confucianism—which he commends, but with reservation. Ricci believes that "*Shang Di*" and "*Tian*", two words prevalent in Chinese Classics[24], could be seen as equivalent to the Christian God. Let us first talk about the second

[24] Whenever I use "Chinese Classics" in this thesis, I mean the "Five Classics".

one. The literal meaning of *Tian* is simply "sky". However, just like what the ancient Israelites did with their "*Shamayim*", the ancient Chinese extended the meaning of *Tian* to mean other things: it could also mean "heaven", a world above us, or, some kind of deity who rules and judges people. Ricci of course affirms the second meaning; he argues that "deity" or "ruler" is the original meaning of *Tian*, whereas "heaven" is an extended meaning. His argument goes like this: in China, if one politely addresses somebody, for example, the *Tai Shou* of *Nanchang*, one would call him "*Nanchang Fu*" (the place where he or she governs); as a result, when the ancient Chinese thought of *Tian* as "heaven", it was their polite way of addressing the God (i.e., addressing the God by the place where he lives). (True Meaning I, #266)

As for *Shang Di,* it literally means "LORD on high". Ricci has no problem at all dealing with this term, since he has found so many text passages from Chinese Classics that are either (1) eulogies to *Shang Di,* or (2) quotations about serving *Shang Di*, (3) quotations about sacrifices to *Shang Di*, or (4) quotations about how *Shang Di* judges people (see footnote for some examples of these quotes).[25] Unlike Ricci's surprising lack of understanding of Buddhism and Taoism (which I will talk about in a moment), it is clear that he had done a lot

[25]《中庸》引孔子曰：「郊社之礼以事上帝也。」

《周颂》曰：「执兢武王，无兢维烈。不显成康，上帝是皇。」又曰：「于皇来牟，将受厥明，明昭上帝。」

《商颂》云：「圣敬日跻，昭假迟迟，上帝是祗。」《雅》云：「维此文王，小心翼翼，昭事上帝。」

《礼》云：「五者备当，上帝其飨。」又云：「天子亲耕，粢盛秸鞂以事上帝。」

《汤誓》曰：「夏氏有罪，予畏上帝，不敢不正。」(True Meaning I, #236--#246)

of works in these Classics. At least, Ricci does have a point here: all his quotations literally support his arguments,[26] although, nonetheless, from a historical-critical point of view, it is very unlikely that *Shang Di* in the Chinese Classics would have any connection to *Elohim* in Judeo-Christian civilization.

Thus, to summarize Ricci's points: Buddhists and Taoists are completely wrong in taking "Emptiness" to be the First Principle; Neo-Confucians are wrong because they think of God's instrument as God himself; and Original Confucianism, or the ancient Chinese, did have an understanding of God, whom they called *Tian* or *Shang Di*. Besides these two, Ricci also created a new word for the translation of "*Deus*"--"*Tian Zhu*", which literally means "LORD of the Heaven". This was probably due to Ricci's belief that later Chinese had estranged from their ancestors, so the words *Tian* and *Shang Di* were probably already tainted by other meanings (one example he gives is that the Chinese always say *Tian* (Heaven), and *Di* (Earth), together, which is very wrong in Ricci's opinion, since God is unique and could not be mentioned together with Earth) (True Meaning I, # 251-258).

Compared with his very well written Classical Chinese essays and his knowledge of Chinese Classics, Ricci's understanding of Taoism, and, especially, Buddhism is, with all honesty,

[26] Interpretation of the word "*Shang Di*" in the Classics is a difficult task. Especially, if we want to take a historical-critical approach: nowadays, historians and anthropologists are still debating about how we should understand the ritual and sacrificial systems in Shang and Zhou Dynasties. But, as I have said, as least Ricci's quotations, taken literally, support his argument.

very poor. It is clear from his writings that he probably did little or no readings of Buddhist and Taoist texts at all; all his knowledge of these two traditions he received from other people orally (with a lot of biases). Thus, he totally misrepresented their opinions concerning the First Principle. No wonder, in his correspondence with *Deyuan Yu*, *Yu* suggests that a debate between them is meaningless unless Ricci first read some Buddhist Sutras.[27]

Before I end the discussion of Ricci's interpretation of the First Principle, I would like to make one more comment. When Ricci tried to urge the Chinese to convert to Christianity, he made use of the two very important Confucian moral values---"*Zhong*" and "*Xiao*". The original meaning of *Zhong* is "to do one's utmost" (Ames & Rosemont), and the extended meaning is "loyalty"—be loyal to your nation, be loyal to the work that is assigned to you, and be loyal to your superiors. "*Xiao*" is best translated as "familial reverence"—the correct way to deal with one's parents (Ames & Rosemont). Ricci argues that parents are those who give birth to one, but if one traces back further, one will realize that the ultimate "parent" of humanity is God. Thus, the true object of *Xiao* should be God (Ricci also calls God "*Shi Ren Da Fu*", or "the great father of the humanity"). Similarly, since God is the real ruler of the universe, the real *Zhong* (loyalty) should be directed towards him (God is "*Yu Zhou Gong Jun*", or "the common ruler of the universe") (True Meaning II, #706). This is a very good

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[27] Ricci, Matteo 利玛窦. *Bian Xue Yi Du* 辨学遗牍. Tian Xue Chu Han, 1965. In fact, Yu also believed that once Ricci had correctly understood Buddhism, they could be friendly with each other, since both of their religions teach people "goodness" ("*Shan*").

example of how Ricci creatively reinterprets Confucian moral values in his accommodationism.

2.3 The Spirits in Chinese Civilization

After the discussion of the First Principle, we turn to spirits. The Chinese word for spirits in this case is "*Gui Shen*" (To be precise, *Gui* and *Shen* are two kinds of spirits. However, this distinction seems unnecessary here, since, unlike Longobardi and Leibniz, Ricci does not distinguish between those two). This section will be relatively short: I will first address how Ricci criticizes incorrect understandings of the spirits, and then what is the correct one according to Ricci.

Ricci first enumerates all Chinese opinions concerning the spirits:

(1) Spirits do exist.

(2) Spirits do not exist.

(3) Spirits exist for those who believe in them, but do not exist for those who do not believe.

(4) It is wrong to say "spirits exist", but it is also wrong to say "spirits do not exist" (this is what Ricci literally says). (True Meaning I, #464-500)

Ricci then responds to (3) and (4). For (3), Ricci thinks that one's subjective belief could not influence the actual existence of the spirits. He illustrates it with the example of the lion:

since lion was a "Western" animal, many Chinese who had not seen it believed that lions do not exist. However, that did not change the fact that lions do exist (True Meaning I, #495-496). Those people's disbelief did not make lions disappear. As for (4), Ricci sees it as contradictory from a Western logic's point of view (P and ~P do not exist simultaneously) (True Meaning I, #497-498).

When approaching (2), Ricci again makes use of the Chinese Classics (see footnote for his quotes)[28] to refute it. He gives several examples of how *Gui Shen* appears in Shang and Zhou Dynasties' accounts, and how they are treated seriously. Probably the most important quote he uses here is Confucius's famous sentence "*Jing Gui Shen Er Yuan Zhi*"[29], literally "I respect *Gui Shen* but distance myself from them". Ricci says that many people tend to focus on the second half, and reach the conclusion that people should distance themselves from *Gui Shen* just as Confucius did. However, they forget the first half—that Confucius not only affirms the existence of *Gui Shen*, but also respects them (True Meaning I, #580-581)!

Thus, Ricci's conclusion is that (2), (3), and (4) are all wrong; the only correct one is

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[28] 《金縢》「周公曰：『予仁若考，能多才多艺，能事鬼神。』

《召诰》曰：「天既遐终大邦殷命，兹殷多哲王在天，越厥后王后民。」

《诗》云：「文王在上，于昭于天；文王陟降，在帝左右。」

《西伯戡黎》，祖伊谏纣曰：「天子，天既讫我殷命；格人元龟，罔敢知吉。非先王不相我后人，惟王淫戏用自绝。」

(True Meaning I, #470--#490)

[29] 故仲尼曰：「敬鬼神而远之。」(True Meaning I, #581)

(1)—spirits do exist.

2.4 The Souls in Chinese Civilization

The third topic of discussion is the soul. Although Confucianism has great concerns about funeral rites and sacrifices to the dead, it was and remains to be a tradition with no afterlife narratives.[30] That does not mean, however, that this topic was alien to the Chinese during Ricci's time. In fact, probably most common Chinese people did believe in the immortality of the souls and the existence of the afterlife—it was Buddhism that had introduced these two ideas to them. Thus, Ricci's task here is not so much introducing new ideas; rather, he needs to prove why the Buddhist version of immortality of the souls and existence of the afterlife is wrong, and how the Christian version is the correct one.

Ricci first distinguishes between three kinds of souls: "*Sheng Hun*", the souls of the plants, "*Jue Hun*", the souls of the animals, and "*Ling Hun*", the souls of the human beings (True Meaning I, #322-330). He argues that there are two fundamental differences between the first two kinds and *Ling Hun*. First, *Sheng Hun* and *Jue Hun* are temporary and depend on the physical bodies; they are born together with the birth of the plants or animals, and once the animals or plants die, these souls die together with the bodies. In contrast, *Ling Hun,* or human souls, exist forever once they are created (True Meaning I, #330).

[30] I do not have a source here, but this statement is true to my best knowledge. I have never known a heaven or hell in Confucianism.

The second difference concerns rational thinking. While human souls include the features of animal and plant souls, only human souls have intellect and are able to reason (True Meaning I, #328). Ricci believes that this intellectual part of the soul is what we share with God and what makes us God's best creatures. He gives one example to illustrate his point: human beings always feel conflicted between two thoughts. For example, when one sees wine, a part of oneself wants to just drink and satisfy the desires, while another part seems to tell one to resist the temptation. Ricci argues that the first thought is from the animal part of our soul (since human souls contain the features of animal souls), while the second thought is from our "holy nature" (True Meaning I, #361). Ricci even goes as far as to say that "if one follows that [the second thought], it is the "human heart" (*Ren Xin*), and it makes one similar to God" (True Meaning I, #363).

Now, that we have learnt about Ricci's own understanding of the souls, we shall examine how Ricci criticizes Buddhists' view on the afterlife—to be specific, the reincarnation theory. However, before I begin, I again have to emphasize that it seems clear to me that Ricci did not really dive into reincarnation theory; his understanding of it was from the most basic level and he really did not present this theory fairly.

Ricci has two arguments against the reincarnation theory. He first states that the Buddhists had stolen the ideas of heaven and hell from the Christians and twisted it into their

reincarnation system (True Meaning II, #5-15). We will not spend any time on this argument, since in our time, there is no doubt that the reincarnation theory existed in India as a Hindu idea far before the birth of Christianity.[31]

His second argument is much more interesting. Ricci argues that the reincarnation theory is anti-Confucian and damaging to "*Ren Lun*" (True Meaning II, #54). *Ren Lun* literally means, "human relations"; it is a Confucian idea about the common relationships in human societies, and there are five of them ("the Five Relationships", or "*Wu Lun*"): husband-wife relation, parent-child relation, superior-subordinate relation, older sibling-younger sibling relation, and friend-friend relation.

Ricci demonstrates his point about the destruction of social relations due to reincarnation with two examples: the first one is about husband-wife relation. If reincarnation is true, the woman a man marries could be the reincarnation of his dead mother; thus, the man marries his own mother. Or, when a married woman dies, suppose she reincarnates into another woman and marries again, and at the same time her husband from her previous life is still alive—Ricci argues that it would mean that she has two husbands at the same time (True Meaning II, #59-60). Another example is in superior-subordinate relation: if reincarnation is true, one's servant whom one is punishing could as well be one's dead parent or the dead king (True Meaning II, #61-62). Thus, Ricci concludes that the reincarnation system is

[31] Damien Keown (2013). *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press. pp. 28, 32–38.

harmful to the Confucian *Ren Lun* and thus damaging to the Chinese society.

2.5 Ricci's Other Ideas

2.5.1 Ricci's Criticism of "*Wan Wu Yi Ti*"

Before I end this chapter, I will address two more of Ricci's important arguments. The first one is his criticism of the Chinese philosophical statement "*Wan Wu Yi Ti*". *Wan Wu Yi Ti* literally means "everything is one", or "is one with everything". In this case, it refers to the belief that the First Principle is one with everything. Ricci suggests that there are only three possible ways to explain this phrase (True Meaning I, # 615):

(1) God is literally one with everything.

(2) God is inside everything.

(3) God controls everything in a perfect manner. (True Meaning I, #617-623)

Ricci thinks that (1) is impossible because in nature things attack each other. For example, big animals eat small animals, or water "kills" fire. Ricci suggests that if God is really one with everything, it would mean that, in the above examples, God is killing himself (True Meaning I, #627-628). As for (2), Ricci makes use of Western Logic, and argues that if A is in B, it must mean B has greater qualities than A. In this case, if God is really inside

everything, it would mean that God is "less than" his creations—which does not make sense (True Meaning I, #634-635). For (3), Ricci says that if really God controls everything perfectly, it would mean that the rewards and punishments after death are all meaningless and unfair, since all human actions are results of God's will (True Meaning I, #649-650). Thus, Ricci concludes that this philosophical statement must be mistaken. In the next chapter we will see how Longobardi is different from Ricci and, by interpreting this statement in another way, affirms it.

2.5.2 Ricci's Attack on *San Ji Jiao*

Last but not least, Ricci reserves a special section in his book to attack "*San Ji Jiao*", a religion that affirms the Syncretism of the Three Schools (see footnote 20 for my explanation on this term) (True Meaning II, #605). His arguments in themselves are not so interesting[32]; to me, the interesting part is, why this religion and its ideology concern Ricci so much? Why Ricci in his book repetitively emphasize that Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism could not, and should not become one?

I want to answer my question in this way: because the Syncretism of the Three Schools is an intellectual movement that would undermine Ricci's "core profit"—his mission to convert the Chinese to Christianity. I have two explanations: first, imagine what would happen if

[32] Readers could check True Meaning II, #605-618 if they want to know more about his arguments here.

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism really became one religion? Well, since majority of the Chinese were adherents of one of these three schools, a unified religion for all Chinese would emerge. In that case, there is obviously no room for the introduction of any other religions (i.e. Christianity).

Second, even if these three traditions shared only some common principles/beliefs (instead of actually merge into one religion), it would still be catastrophic for Ricci. This is because, if there existed common principles for all Chinese religions, Christianity certainly had to adapt to these principles if it wanted to take root in China. In that case, Christianity itself had to be the one being incorporated into the larger "Chinese religious system". I do not think Ricci would have wanted that to happen. Although he had no problem allowing Christianity to incorporate other systems into it (i.e., Confucianism), as a 16th to 17th Century Christian, he still held the opinion that Christianity is the only true religion, and *Tian Zhu* (LORD of the Heaven) the only true God (they are mentioned many times throughout the *True Meaning*). However, after all, readers should be aware that this was still 16th Century, and we should understand Ricci in a historical-critical way, and be more tolerant of him.

Besides, it is also noticeable that if all three "native religions"[33] of China would become one

[33] Although Buddhism as a religion originated in India, during Ricci's time (and even two centuries after) many Europeans considered Buddhism a Chinese religion. For example, in Voltaire's *God and Human Beings* (which was written in 1769), Buddhism is mentioned as a Chinese religion (and a "wicked" one), and in the sections on India, only Hinduism is mentioned.

power, it would mean a strong force for nationalism in the area of religion, which is also not good for Christianity as a foreign religion.

2.6 Summary of Ricci's Points

Since now we have reached the end of the part on Ricci, I shall briefly summarize all his arguments before we go to his successor Longobardi. Ricci believes that the Buddhists, the Taoists, and the Neo-Confucians have no understanding of the God; only the ancient Chinese had such an understanding, as shown by the passages in the Chinese Classics/Five Classics. Ricci also criticizes many other things: some popular Chinese arguments on the spirits that he considers false, the Buddhist reincarnation theory, the statement *Wan Wu Yi Ti*, and *San Ji Jiao*, a religion developed as a result of the Syncretism of the Three Schools. I reserve my evaluation of Ricci's accommodationism until the later part of this thesis, since I believe it is important that we look at Ricci's approach in comparison to Longobardi's and Leibniz's.

3 Nicholas Longobardi and His Anti-Accommodationism

3.1 Introduction and the Sources

The Jesuit Missionary Nicholas Longobardi (Italian name: Niccolò Longobardi, 16th to 17th Century) was "chosen by Matteo Ricci as his successor before Ricci passed away"; he led the

Jesuit Missions in China until 1622 CE (Wenchao Li, p. 64). Supported by some of the other missionaries and several Supervisors, Longobardi publicly argued against accommodationism (Wenchao Li, p. 65). His disagreement with Ricci's position caused a huge debate among Jesuit missionaries on the validity of this position. This debate would provoke another important debate, the "Rites Controversy", in Europe, which, at the end, led the Vatican Pope Clement XI to formally ban Ricci's position[34].

According to Ronnie Po-Chia Hsia, "we now have 20 Chinese writings by Longobardo. Some were liturgical and devotional texts; other were short theological treatises" (Longobardo and Shandong, p. 277). Among these treatises, the most famous two are *Si Shuo* (*On Death*), "an explanation of the symbolic nature of death in Western Catholic tradition" (Longobardo and Shandong, p. 277), and *Linghun Daoti Shuo* (*On the Spirits and the Dao*), a short essay comparing the concept "spirit" in Christian tradition with the concept "*Dao*" in the three Chinese traditions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism).[35]

Because Longobardi did not produce long works written in Classical Chinese, some have proposed that his anti-Riccian approach was due to his lack of understanding, and thus a lack of appreciation of Chinese literature. This is not correct in my opinion. First, I think

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[34] Marinescu, Jocelyn MN. *Defending Christianity in China: The Jesuit defense of Christianity in the "Lettres édifiantes et curieuses" & "Ruijianlu" in relation to the Yongzheng proscription of 1724*. Diss. Kansas State University, 2008.

[35] See http://archives.catholic.org.hk/Rare%20Books/CLW/index.htm for an online source of Longobardi's *On the Spirits and the Dao*. Retrieved March 20, 2017. This text will be referred to as "Spirits and Dao".

Longobardi's *On the Spirits and the Dao* is also written in good Classical Chinese. In addition, he is very likely more knowledgeable than Ricci about Buddhism and Taoism, as shown by the Buddhist and Taoist terminologies he enumerated in *On the Spirits and the Dao*. Consequently, Longobardi's anti-accommodationism, his recognition of some of the fundamental differences between the Chinese and the Christian civilizations, must be taken seriously.

Longobardi's criticism against accommodationism is twofold: a theoretical one and a practical one. These two could be summarized as follow:

(1) Theoretically, Ricci's interpretations are mistaken, because the Chinese do not have a First Principle equivalent to God, and they do not have any understanding of the spirits.
(2) Practically, Ricci's position is damaging to the Jesuit missions in China in the long run.

This Chapter will be divided into three sections: The first section will give the readers an introduction to Longobardi's general understanding of Confucianism. The second and the third sections will focus on his two criticisms respectively. Before I go to the main parts, I will, again, briefly analyze the sources I have. Probably the most important of Longobardi's works is his *Traité sur quelques points de la religion des Chinois* (or *Religion Treatise*), the work that was sent to Leibniz by Nicholas de Remond. (To recall, Leibniz's *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* is based on it.) Although this work does have an English

translation, due to the author of this paper's inability to obtain it, he decides to use *Yang Ziyan*'s incomplete Chinese translation[36]; as a result, whenever he quotes from *Religion Treatise*, please keep in mind that he is translating the Chinese translation to English. As for Longobardi's Chinese writings, *On the Spirits and the Dao* will be the main focus.

3.2 Longobardi's General Understanding of Confucianism

When Longobardi wrote his *Religion Treatise*, he needed to introduce Confucianism to many Europeans who knew nothing about China. Thus, from Section 3 to Section 6 of that book, he made two distinctions about Confucianism that seemed significant to him: the first one is a distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrines, and the second one is between *Xian Tian Xue* and *Hou Tian Xue*.

3.2.1 Exoteric and Esoteric Doctrines

Longobardi first states that "nearly all pagan philosophies have used some symbols, riddles, or images to cover what their prophets really wanted to say" (Religion Treatise, p. 155). He then gives some Western examples, such as how in the first volume of Conimbre's *La*

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[36] Longobardi, Nicholas 龙华民, and Yang Ziyan 杨紫烟. "Long Hua Min 'Lun Zhong Guo Ren Zong Jiao De Ji Ge Wen Ti' (Jie Xuan)" 龙华民《论中国人宗教的几个问题》(节选). *Guo Ji Han Xue* 国际汉学 1 (2015): 150-160. I will refer to it as "Religion Treatise".

Physique, Pythagore's teacher Pherecyde was the first one to suggest that one "should not reveal all the secrets" of one's philosophy "to the public", and should "present it metaphorically" (Religion Treatise, p. 155). In addition, not only the ancient Greeks (Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoreans according to Longobardi), but also the ancient Egyptians and the Chaldeans had such a belief.

Then Longobardi turns to China, and argues that the three Chinese schools (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) are no exceptions to this rule. First, Longobardi states that Confucianism is very similar to Aristotle in that they both believe that, although "philosophical wisdom should not be publicized", it is incorrect to "let everything remain in chaos" or use "an education that covers truth with mistakes" (Religion Treatise, p. 155). Longobardi believes that "the founders of Confucianism" "used their symbols, images, and numbers" to "represent being, ontology, end, and everything in the word" (Religion Treatise, p. 155). The symbols that Confucianism mainly uses are "odd and even numbers, dashed lines, black and white dots, circles and squares, and positions and directions, etc." (Religion Treatise, p. 155). Longobardi gives two examples that he thinks could best represent the symbols in Confucianism. One is, of course, The *Book of Change* (*Yi Jing*). Longobardi does not name the other one in *Religion Treatise*, but he describes it as "a book that studies the mysteries and the effects of the numbers" (Religion Treatise, p. 155). Since Longobardi mentions that this book is in Book 12 of the "Compendium" (the collection *Xing Li Da Quan*), I checked and can confirm that this book is *Huangji Jingshi Shu*. Longobardi thinks

that “both these two books could be used to reconstruct the lost Pythagorean School in the West” (Religion Treatise, p. 155).

As for Buddhism and Taoism, Longobardi suggests that Buddhism mainly uses symbols about “false Gods and asceticism”, such as “human beings, animals, clouds, snakes, demons”, etc. (Religion Treatise, p. 155). And about Taoists he says that they use “nearly same images” to represent “the power of the soul” and “the constituents of human beings” (Religion Treatise, p. 155). Thus, Longobardi concludes that all three schools have their own symbols and meanings to them.

Longobardi thinks that, while the three schools distinguish each other by the use of such different symbols, they all make a distinction between two doctrines: “one doctrine is esoteric, seen as the truth, and only explained and taught by scholars with various symbolisms”, and another one “is exoteric”, “seen by scholars as wrong interpretations of the passed philosophers’ true meanings” (Religion Treatise, p. 156). However, although the second one are seen by scholars as wrong explanations, they are still used to make the public “do good and stay away from evil” (Religion Treatise, p. 156). Longobardi parallels this kind of separation between esoteric and exoteric doctrine with the separation presented by Augustine in his *The City of God*, where this church father distinguishes between three kinds of philosophies: the “magical philosophy” by the poets, the “natural philosophy” by the philosophers, and the “worldly philosophy” on public governance (Religion Treatise, p. 156).

Longobardi argues that in Buddhism, in order to teach asceticism, the Buddhists invented the karma and the reincarnation theory as exoteric doctrines for the public (Religion Treatise, p. 155-156). He does not give an example from Taoism. As for Confucianism, Longobardi gives four quotations from the *Analects* to illustrate his opinions on Confucius. Since his translations of the *Analects* are not all accurate, I will not quote them here. Instead, I will just summarize the conclusions Longobardi draws on Confucius from these four quotes. They are: (1) Confucius does not talk about human nature or afterlife; (2) Confucius does not want the people to know about Gods or spirits; (3) Confucius lets his disciples focus on the learning of "what is visible" (the physical world); (4) we really do not know much about the "esoteric side" of Confucius's philosophy (Religion Treatise, p. 156).

Longobardi proposes that Confucius hid his esoteric doctrines from his disciples and the public because he believed that "if the public had known the whole of his philosophy", it would cause either "the destruction of his [Confucius's] philosophy", or "the chaos in the nation" (Religion Treatise, p. 156). However, at the end of this section, Longobardi condemns Confucius for hiding his esoteric doctrines, suggesting that since Confucius refused to teach his esoteric doctrines and wanted his disciples to focus on "what is visible", it limited all the Chinese to the study of the physical realm only, restricted their wisdom, and made them all atheists (Religion Treatise, p. 156). Thus, it is clear that the Longobardi makes such a distinction to illustrate his point that all the Chinese who considered themselves

students of Confucius are, in fact, atheists.

3.2.2 *Xian Tian Xue* and *Hou Tian Xue*

Next, Longobardi makes a distinction between two areas of learning in Confucianism, *Xian Tian Xue* and *Hou Tian Xue*. *Xian Tian* and *Hou Tian* literally mean "before *Tian*" and "after *Tian*", and, for Longobardi, *Xian Tian Xue* is the study of "the First Principle and the other common factors from it", "such as what is being itself, what is the nature of the First Principle" and the effects of the First Principle, and *Fu Xi*'s study belongs to it. "*Hou Tian Xue*" is the study of how the nation and the society should be governed according to the laws of nature, and it is the subject studied by scholars such as King Wen, Duke of Zhou, and Confucius. Thus, we can conclude that Longobardi sees *Xian Tian Xue* as the study of things *a priori*, and *Hou Tian Xue* as the study of things *a posteriori*. (Religion Treatise, p. 157)

Now let us turn to how Longobardi expresses the *Xian Tian Xue* of Confucianism. Longobardi thinks that the Chinese do not believe that the world could have originated from nothingness, because they are unaware of an infinite power (God) that is able to do so (Religion Treatise, p. 157). Thus, the Chinese attributed the beginning of the world to a state of chaos (Religion Treatise, p. 157). At the beginning, when the state of chaos starts to make a change, there exists a first cause that is "the reason or cause for all qualities"; this reason, Longobardi suggests, is called *Li*—which is believed by the Chinese to be "infinite and

eternal", and "without beginning or ending" (Religion Treatise, p. 157).

However, Longobardi argues that, since *Li* itself is incapable of motion, thus not creative, the Chinese invented another concept *Qi* to help them explain the process of creation (Religion Treatise, p. 157). *Qi* is emanated from *Li*, and through "volatilization and transformation" it became the current matters we have (Religion Treatise, p. 157). *Li* and *Qi* together form *Tai Ji*, "an infinite globe" that means "the ultimate perfection" (Religion Treatise, p. 157).

As I have discussed above, Longobardi suggests that the Chinese think the first step of creation is the birth of *Li* from chaos. The second step is the birth of two kinds of *Qi*, *Yin* and *Yang*, from *Li*. The birth of heaven, earth, and human beings is the third step of creation: *Yang* is light and rises above to form the heaven, and *Yin* is heavy and falls down to form the earth, and *Yin* and *Yang* act together to form human beings (Religion Treatise, p. 158). There are two things noticeable here: first, Longobardi believes that both *Li*—he also calls it "the prime matter", and *Qi* are material instead of spiritual; the only difference is their "level of materiality" (Religion Treatise, p. 157). Second, Longobardi emphasizes the fact that these three steps are all coincidental in nature, so the Chinese do not have an intelligent being in the process of creation (Religion Treatise, p. 158).

After *Xian Tian Xue*, we focus on the other category—*Hou Tian Xue*. Longobardi introduces it as a study on how "seasons", "time, months, dates", and "celestial movements" affect

human beings (Religion Treatise, p. 159). In short, it is the study of how nature affects human beings, and how human beings should harmonize their lives and actions with the force of nature (Religion Treatise, p. 157). For example, Longobardi describes how the Chinese start their activities during the spring, when all the plants start to germinate and grow, or how they execute their prisoners during the winter, when they think the destructive power of the nature is the strongest (Religion Treatise, p. 157).

Longobardi thinks that the terms *Di* (as in *Shang Di*, the LORD on high), and *Zhu* (means LORD, as in *Tian Zhu*, Heaven's LORD) are both referring to this natural force (Religion Treatise, p. 157). This makes him different from Ricci: Ricci believes that *Shang Di* and *Zhu* in the Chinese Classics refer to a personified ruler, so these two words are good translations for God (*Deus*). Longobardi, on the other hand, thinks that, since these words only refer to a natural force, they are not good word choices for translation.

3.3 Longobardi's Theoretical Criticism of Accommodationism

Now that we have addressed how Longobardi understands Confucianism in general, we will discuss why Longobardi thinks that the Riccians misunderstand Confucianism. But before we turn to his arguments, I need to give some background information to help the readers better understand Longobardi's position.

First, as Wenchao Li points out, in 1613, when Francisco Viera became the supervisor, he ordered the Jesuit missionaries Diego de Pantoja, Alfonso Vagnone, and Sabatino De Ursis to present their ideas on the three Chinese concepts *Shang Di*, *Tian Shen* and *Ling Hun* in writing (Wenchao Li, p. 65-66). These three concepts are the most likely candidates for translations of "God", "angels", and "spirits" ("souls"). Wenchao Li also reminds his readers that "the 'Rites Controversy', which became very important later, was not yet in the areas of debate at that time" (Wenchao Li, p. 66). Longobardi himself, in his *Religion Treatise,* also mentions that the main areas of disputations are about "*Dieu*", "*Anges*" and "*Ame*" (or "*Ame raisonable*") (Religion Treatise, p. 151). Thus, we could conclude that during Longobardi's time, the main debate among the Jesuits is about the question how the Chinese understand *Shang Di*, *Tian Shen* and *Ling Hun*, and whether they could be translated as "God", "angels", and "spirits".

Second, unlike Ricci who denies the validity of the Syncretism of the Three Schools (see Section 2.5.2), Longobardi thinks that the three schools have some fundamental similarities, allowing him to really see them as one. The best example is in *On the Spirits and the Dao*, where he compares and equals the Confucian saying "everything has a *Tai Ji*", with the Taoist one "everything is the Great *Dao*", and the Buddhist one "everything has Buddha Nature" (Spirits and Dao, p. 7). He concludes that all three quotes express the same opinion on the First Principle in Chinese Philosophy, even though they call this Frist Principle by different names (*Tai Ji*, Great *Dao*, and Buddha Nature).

In *On the Spirits and the Dao*, Longobardi uses two different words to refer to the Chinese First Principle: one is *Daoti*, and another one is simply *Dao* (Spirits and Dao, pp. 3-4). Since *ti* simply means "thing itself", and since Longobardi himself does not distinguish between these two terms, I will only use *Dao* for all the following discussions to make it easier for the readers.

On the Spirits and the Dao, as its name suggests, is a comparison between the Chinese First Principle *Dao* and the Christian concept "the spirit". Readers might wonder why Longobardi makes a comparison between these two instead of a comparison between the Chinese First Principle and the Christian God. Well, as I already have explained in Section 3.2.2, Longobardi believes that the Chinese First Principle is equal to the so-called prime matter that is not spiritual at all; as a result, the Chinese First Principle cannot be compared with God. In fact, even when he is comparing *Dao* with "spirit", he will conclude that "spirit" is superior (He says that confusing *Dao* with "spirit" is "making human beings equal to matters", and confusing *Dao* with God is "making the great Creator equal to the thing he created" and thus would produce "such a great confusion") (Spirits and Dao, p. 14).

Now, let us take a look at how Longobardi distinguishes between the spirits and the *Dao*. I will not address his discussion on the spirits, since it is mainly the general Christian conception. As for *Dao*, Longobardi gives the following seven characteristics to describe it:

(1) It is *Zi Cun Zi Li*—exists for itself, and *Yong Yuan Bu Mie*—eternal.

(2) It is unable to act or create.

(3) It is the first thing the Christian God ever created, and nothing is prior to it.

(4) It is forever one and unable to divide.

(5) It is not human beings, not animals, not plants, and not objects.

(6) It does not have an intellect and listens to the order of another (Christian God).

(7) It is shapeless, but all the shapes come from it (Spirits and Dao, pp. 7-8).

Longobardi then talks about two similarities of the spirits and the *Dao*:

(1) They are both created by the Christian God.

(2) Both of them have "no ends". (Spirits and Dao, p. 8)

As for the differences between them, Longobardi gives the following six:

(1) Although *Dao* forms everything in the world, it is ultimately one and inseparable, whereas spirits are many—each individual has one distinct spirit.

(2) God only created *Dao* once at the beginning of his creation, but he has been creating spirits from the beginning of humanity until now. That is, as long as there are newborn babies, it means God is still creating new spirits.

(3) Without *Dao* there is no matter, and without matter there is no *Dao*. In other words, *Dao* could not exist separately from matter. Spirits, on the other hand, could exist without bodies.
(4) *Dao* relies on physical properties such as size, thickness, or temperature, whereas spirits rely on intellectual properties such as knowledge, academics, or morality.
(5) *Dao* is "throughout the physical objects and acts as the 'bone' of them". Thus, it could be holy if it is with a holy thing, or contemptible if it is with a contemptible thing. Spirits, however, are the most unique and the greatest of God's creations and could only be holy.
(6) *Dao* is unintelligent thus has no free will; spirits have free will. As a result, *Dao* is unable to receive rewards or punishments, but spirits could. (Spirits and Dao, pp. 9-10)

As the readers could see, to Longobardi spirits obviously compare favorably with *Dao*. Longobardi then concludes that human beings are special, since they not only have *Dao* in their physical bodies, but they also possess spirits (Spirits and Dao, p. 13). Thus, it is important that the Chinese should know both of them, but careful to not confuse the two or see them as one (Spirits and Dao, p. 13).

Before I end this section on Longobardi's "theoretical criticism", I want to mention a particularly noticeable disagreement between Ricci and Longobardi. While Matteo Ricci rejects the statement *Wan Wu Yi Ti* (meaning "everything is one" or "is one with everything", check Section 2.5.1 for Ricci's point), Longobardi accepts it (written as *Vuen-Vue-Iety* in *Religion Treatise*). Ricci interprets this statement to mean that "God is one with everything"

and thus condemns it as foolish. Longobardi, on the other hand, interprets it as to mean "*Dao* is one with everything". As I have mentioned, Longobardi thinks that *Dao* is always one with everything in the material world; thus he accepts *Wan Wu Yi Ti* (Spirits and Dao, p. 7).

3.4 Longobardi's Practical Criticism of Accommodationism

In Section 3.3, we concluded that Longobardi sees the Chinese First Principle, *Dao*, to be the physical prime matter. He also argues that the Chinese have no true understanding of the spirits. As a result, he warns the Chinese to not confuse their *Dao* with God or with the spirits. Now, we can finally turn to the last Section in this Longobardi Chapter—about how Longobardi criticizes Ricci's position as harmful to their Christian missionary work.

The main *practical* divergence between Ricci and Longobardi is simple, and could be summarized in one question: do the Jesuit missionaries have to invent new Chinese words for the translations of their Christian concepts, or can they use terms that already exist in Confucianism? (Wenchao Li, p. 71) The second position implies, of course, that these terms in Confucianism must have similar or the same meanings as the Christian terms. Here, Longobardi supports the first position, and Ricci the second.

As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, Ricci thinks that the Neo-Confucians have estranged themselves from their ancestors and misinterpreted their Classics. Those Classics, if only

taken literally, could support the claim that the ancient Chinese concepts of *Shang Di* and *Tian* are equivalent to the Christian God. Thus, to Riccians, their task is to persuade the Chinese to not use the Neo-Confucian interpretations of their Classics, but to follow the missionaries' "correct" version of interpretation. Anti-Accommodationists, on the other hand, emphasize the inner unity of Confucianism, and are inclined to see it as an independent and continuous tradition (Wenchao Li, p. 77).

In his *Religion Treatise*, Longobardi summarizes four main arguments in support of accommodationism given by the Riccians Pantoja and Ursis:

(1) It is obvious that the true meaning and philosophy of any school should be found in its own documents, not later people's interpretations. Thus, the true philosophy of Confucianism is in the Chinese Classics themselves, not Neo-Confucians' annotations.

(2) Most Neo-Confucian annotators lived during the Song Dynasty (960 CE---1279 CE)—a period when Buddhism had already been introduced into China. Thus, these annotators were most likely wrongly influenced by the Buddhists, and their annotations estranged from their ancestors' original meanings.

(3) Most well-learned and respected Chinese Christians suggested that the Jesuits should stick to Ricci's position.

(4) If we use Chinese Confucian terms to express our doctrines, it would make us easier to associate with them and convert them. (Religion Treatise, p. 153)

Longobardi first responds to (3) and (2). For (3), he argues that those Chinese Christians are perhaps either unaware of the seriousness of this problem for the Jesuits, or want to put some features of their own culture into Christianity (Religion Treatise, pp. 154-155). He thinks that it is important that Jesuits listen to the opinions of these Chinese people, but a missionary should have a deeper insight, and should not follow others but make his own decisions and instruct others what is right (Religion Treatise, p. 155). It is more important that the Chinese Christians follow the role of the missionary.

As for (2), Longobardi does acknowledge that many annotators were probably influenced by Buddhist ideas. He argues, however, that even so, a lot of the annotators claimed to be pure Confucians and deny that they ever absorbed other religions' opinions into their writings (Religion Treatise, p. 155). In addition, he suggests that not all annotators lived after the introduction of Buddhism into China; some of them lived "2000 years prior to the birth of Jesus" (Longobardi must have made a mistake here☺) (Religion Treatise, p. 155). Thus, Buddhism is not responsible for *all* the "mistakes" those annotators made.

As for (1) and (4), Longobardi's responses to them are in fact similar. The key here is that, as discussed in Section 3.2.1, Longobardi thinks that the Chinese Classics are full of symbolisms that even the Chinese themselves sometimes could not fully understand without the help of the annotators (Religion Treatise, p. 153). He emphasizes that the Chinese see

their tradition as a continuous one, and whenever they read the Classics, they read them with the annotations. “These annotations have the same status as the texts themselves”, and “in China”, “suggesting that these two (texts and annotations) disagree with each other is considered heresy” (Religion Treatise, p. 154). He also notes that even “the compositions in *Ke Ju* (the Imperial Examination) need to be written in strict accordance to the annotations” (Religion Treatise, p. 153).

If the Jesuits use, for example, *Shang Di*, to translate God, the Chinese would naturally associate the meaning of the word *Shang Di* in their own tradition instead of the Jesuit one. This could become a huge problem for the missionaries, since, when the Jesuits want the Chinese to accept their version of interpretation, it will rather irritate the Chinese—for them, it must seem that these foreigners intend to teach the Chinese what is the “correct” Chinese philosophy (Religion Treatise, p. 154). Also, since every Chinese Confucian spend decades learning their own texts, it is very unlikely that Jesuits could ever succeed in arguing with him over the meanings of these Chinese terms (Religion Treatise, pp. 153-154).

Longobardi gives a very vivid example here: once the Jesuit missionaries approached some Chinese and told them that *Shang Di* is the creation of *Tian*, these Chinese replied that, according to their tradition, *Shang Di* and *Tian* are one. When the Jesuits wanted to further argue with them, these Chinese interrupted them and said, “…you only need to explain what *Dieu* means, not what *Shang Di* means, since we know the meaning of *Shang Di* better than

you do." (Religion Treatise, p. 155)

What Longobardi concludes here is that (1) is a meaningless statement, since what matters to the Jesuits is not whether the annotators are right or wrong, but *whether the Chinese think them right or wrong*—because ultimately, the aim of the Jesuit missionaries is to convert the Chinese. If the general consensus in China is that the annotations are the correct way to understand the texts, and if it is unlikely that the Jesuits could change that consensus, there is no need to discuss the validity of the annotations anymore (as long as the Chinese think them to be correct) (Wenchao Li, p. 77).

As for (4), Longobardi thinks that the exact opposite of this statement is true: if the Jesuits use Confucian terms, it will make it more difficult to convert the Chinese—because they would be irritated by the fact that foreigners are trying to teach them the "correct" Confucian philosophy, and they would not accept the Jesuit interpretation of what these Chinese words mean (Religion Treatise, p. 155) (Wenchao Li, p. 74). Thus, this strategy would in the end add more difficulty to the missionary works.

3.5 Summary of Longobardi's Points

Now let me summarize the points I have made in this Chapter on Longobardi. Longobardi not only sees the Original Confucianism and the Neo-Confucianism as a unity, but also the

three Chinese traditions (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) as one. He thinks that all three traditions use symbolism to hide their esoteric doctrines, and all of them share a common First Principle—*Dao*. *Dao* is purely material and passive, and should not be confused with God or with the spirits. Longobardi also differentiates between *Xian Tian Xue* and *Hou Tian Xue*, and argues that Confucius's teachings belong to the later one. Finally, he criticizes the four accommodationist arguments as presented by Pantoja and Ursis.

Readers may have already noticed some interesting differences between Ricci and Longobardi. I will compare these two in Chapter 5; for now, let us put the Jesuits aside, and turn to the famous German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. I will discuss how Leibniz got interested in Confucianism and recognized in it some similarity to his own metaphysics. It is from this insight that he takes Ricci's side and refutes Longobardi's ideas in his *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*.

4 Leibniz's Position

4.1 Leibniz's Writings on China

Leibniz's writings on China could be classified into two groups: "the first is the letters he wrote to European—usually Jesuit—missionaries in China, or their peers in Europe" (Preface, x). For example, the Jesuit missionary that Leibniz had the largest number of exchanged

letters with is Joachim Bouvet (1656—1730); today we have 15 letters between them[37]. Another group includes some longer writings dedicated solely to the discussion of Chinese philosophy, and this group has four pieces: Preface to the *Novissima Sinica* (1697/1699), *On the Civil Cult of Confucius* (1700/1701), *Remarks on Chinese Rites and Religion* (1708), and finally, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (1716) (Preface, x).

Civil Cult was a brief essay Leibniz wrote to express his opinions on the "Rites Controversy", and was "sent as appendices to letters to a few among his numerous correspondents" (Preface, xi). Both *Remarks* and *Discourse* are works Leibniz wrote in order to attack the anti-accommodationist Longobardi. Leibniz first wrote *Remarks* as a short essay in 1708; eight years later, he finally decided to extend and further develop his ideas in *Remarks* within a long letter he sent to Remond (Introduction, p. 6), which is the *Discourse*—since it represents Leibniz's final and most comprehensive understanding of the Chinese philosophy, it will be the main source of this Chapter.

This Chapter will be divided into two main sections: in the first section I will talk about how Leibniz understands religions in general. I will address three main characteristics of his understanding of religions: (1) how love is at the center of a true religion, (2) how Leibniz has a rationalist approach to religions, and (3) how Leibniz understands the relationship between God and individual spirits. The second section will be about Leibniz's understanding

[37] The English translation of the complete Leibniz-Bouvet Correspondence can be found in this website: http://leibniz-bouvet.swarthmore.edu Retrieved March 20, 2017.

of "Chinese Philosophy" in particular, and it will also have three sections, dedicated respectively to Leibniz's discussions on God, spirits, and the souls in "Chinese Philosophy".

It is noticeable that, throughout his Discourse, Leibniz never uses the word "Confucianism" once, even when he is talking about Confucius's teaching. When referring to an idea or a term in Confucianism, he always uses phrases like "Chinese philosophy", "Chinese philosophers", or "Chinese opinions", etc. It is very likely that he basically equals Confucianism with Chinese philosophy in general—that is, he considers Confucianism to be the "orthodox" philosophy of the Chinese. Thus, readers should be aware that, in this Chapter, whenever "Chinese Philosophy" appears, it actually means "Confucianism".

4.2 Leibniz's Understanding of Religions in General

4.2.1 Love at the Center of Religions

At the beginning of the Preface to *Theodicy*, Leibniz expresses his worry that men are "impressed by what is outward, while the inner essence of things requires consideration of such a kind" that "few persons are fitted to give"[38]. This is also true for religion. Here, people are "resorted to" two kinds of "outward forms": "ceremonial practices" that "resemble virtuous actions", and "formularies of belief" that "more or less" approach the true

[38] Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, the Freedom of Man and the Origin of Evil*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000.

understanding (Preface to Theodicy, p. 50).

For Leibniz, it is fine to use these two outward methods of religion as long as they are used correctly--"to withdraw us from any approach to vice, to inure us to the Good and to make us familiar with virtue" (Preface to Theodicy, p. 50). However, Leibniz argues that all the "pagans" only had ceremonies without correct beliefs, that they "knew not whether their Gods were real persons or symbols of the forces of Nature" (Preface to Theodicy, p. 50), with the only exception of ancient Israelites, a group that "established the belief in one God, source of all good, author of all things", and a people that was "more enlightened than the rest of the human race" (Preface to Theodicy, p. 50).

It is noticeable that besides praising the ancient Israelites, Leibniz, in this Preface, also mentions other religions such as the "Mohamet" (Muslim) religion and Zoroastrianism. He explicitly states that the "Mohamet" religion "showed no divergence from the great dogmas of natural theology" (Preface to Theodicy, p. 51). Readers in 21st Century may find this comment rather ordinary. However, we should not forget that even Immanual Kant (1724-1804), who was born about 80 years after Leibniz, still held the opinion that Christianity is the only religion that teaches morality in public. Thus, from a historical-critical point of view, Leibniz's acknowledgment of other "moral religions" shows his religious tolerance.

Then Leibniz turns to Christianity, and argues that what Jesus Christ brought to humankind was the idea that "Divinity should be the object not only of our fear and veneration but also of our love and devotion" (Preface to Theodicy, p. 51). In other words, Leibniz believes that Jesus Christ taught people "love": it is Christianity that taught morality in "the purest form", and it is Christianity that brought the promise of an afterlife for those who follow the moral law.

Thus, we conclude that, for Leibniz, the true dogma, the inner core of religion is love—while all the outward ceremonies and formularies of belief should be tools aiming at that love. Also, he thinks that this dogma of love is only fully and universally taught by Jesus Christ. In the following paragraphs, I will talk in detail about Leibniz's philosophical conception of "love". I will first give Leibniz's definition of love, and then discuss how Leibniz argues that love should be the foundation of a "natural society" (a society demanded by God).

4.2.1.1 Leibniz's Definition of Love

Before going to Leibniz's definition of love, I will first give the traditional Christian idea of love, and then the Hobbesian modern approach to it. I will try to prove how Leibniz's notion of love is actually a solution to the conflict between these two.

In the Hebrew bible, "love" is usually not an emphasized concept, and ancient Middle East in

general had a very different understanding of what the word "love" means compared to us moderns.[39] (As Brettler points out, "love" in ancient Middle East means more like "obedience".) However, with the development of Christianity, "love" became the central part of this religion. Thus, many people living in Christendom tend to understand their religion in terms of "the two principles": "to love God", and "to love your neighbors". For these people, "love" is at the core of both divine (human beings to God) and interpersonal (human beings to each other) relationships.

But the early modern philosopher Thomas Hobbes does not agree with this definition. Hobbes's influence on the young Leibniz was prominent: Leibniz in various occasions suggested that he had been amazed by the compelling force of Hobbes' arguments that were laid down with the use of the geometrical method in such a way that people who accept his definitions have to naturally accept his conclusions. His letter to Hobbes in 1670 definitely shows us his admiration to Hobbes, especially his "political philosophy" (Goldenbaum, p. 257). It is said that "in January 1670", "he agreed completely with the modern political thinking that human beings do not do anything except for their own personal use or advantage" (Goldenbaum, p. 259). This is how Hobbes defines love—the striving to self-preservation.

However, as a Lutheran, Leibniz's acceptance of Hobbes was an unwilling one—he still

[39] Brettler, Marc Zvi. "How to read the Jewish Bible." (2007).

found concepts of Hobbes' naturalism problematic. That is, if all human beings act solely on the principle of self-preservation, how could we have the Christian love of God and of neighbors? Also, Leibniz does not accept Hobbes' idea that "justice and law would only exist within a state, granted and guaranteed by an enforcing power" (Goldenbaum, p. 260). For Leibniz, an ideal legal system should be one that each individual could figure out with his or her own reason. Thus, Leibniz developed his notion of love as an attempt to solve the conflict between the Christians and the Hobbesians; what the young Leibniz wanted was a notion that is compatible with both the moderns and the pre-moderns.

Since Leibniz bases his definition of "love" on his definitions of "pleasure" and "happiness", I will show how Leibniz attempts to solve this conflict after I have discussed these two terms. Leibniz defines "pleasure" as "the feeling of a perfection or an excellence, whether in ourselves or in something else" (Loemker, p. 697). Leibniz believes that the "excellence" of others is naturally agreeable to us. This "excellence" includes a variety of categories: it ranges from physical "beauty" to "understanding" and "courage", and it ranges from "in another human being" to "in an animal" or "even in a lifeless creation" (Loemker, p. 697). Thus, we could find perfection or excellence in, for example, "a work of craftsmanship", or in a good idea (Loemker, p. 697).

As Leibniz himself notes, perfection is in general an "elevation of being" (Loemker, p. 699). This means an increase of our own being that produces joy or pleasure. Leibniz defines "joy"

as “a pleasure which the soul feels in itself” (Loemker, p. 797). There is no real difference between “joy” and “pleasure” for Leibniz, and the readers could simply see them as one. The reason Leibniz mentions “the soul feels in itself” is to emphasize the point that this “feeling of perfection” is something we want as an end in itself; we simply want “pleasure” or “joy” itself, not because of anything that follows from it. This point is the key to Leibniz’s successful harmonization of the two kinds of “love” mentioned above.

The next definition Leibniz gives is of “happiness”, which is “a state of permanent joy” (Loemker, p. 697). As we can see, what further separates “happiness” from simply “joy” is this idea of “permanence”. This should be a reminder to us that the word “*beatitudino*”—the Latin word for happiness that Leibniz is using, and even the Greek word “*Eudemonia*”, both have some differences in meaning from the usage of the word “happiness” in contemporary English. One of these differences is what Leibniz is emphasizing here—that “happiness” has to be a permanent state! (I would also argue that the English word “happiness” is closer to Leibniz’s “joy”/ “pleasure”.)

Nevertheless, Leibniz does not refer to a state of unification with the divine that allows one to feel happiness all the time, as some mystics do. He is aware of the fact that it is impossible to “feel joy at every moment”, since one “sometimes rests from [one’s] contemplation”, and “usually also turns his thoughts to practical affairs” (Loemker, p. 697). Leibniz makes a concession though suggesting that a good human being would be fine as long as “[he] is in a

state to feel joy whenever he wishes to think of it and that at other times there is a joyousness in his actions and his nature which arises from this" (Loemker, p, 697). This is to say, people could gain long-term happiness by training themselves to more and more act in ways that bring them joy as their *habit*. Thus, although they may not be in a state of joy at this very moment, we could still say that they possess joy as a kind of permanent "potentiality" in them. Whenever they act, this potential joy is transferred to an actual joy that could be felt by their souls. I think that is what Leibniz means when he talks about the "joyousness" in one's "nature" (Loemker, p, 697).

Now we can give Leibniz's definition of "love". Leibniz states that "to love" is to "find pleasure in the happiness of another" (Loemker, p.208).[40] In the discussion of "pleasure" I have emphasized that it is about "excellence" in others as well as feelings in our own souls. Since Leibniz includes "pleasure" and "happiness" in his definition of "love", we conclude that the two keys to his "love" are:

(1) Love is triggered by the perfection of other beings or objects.

(2) Love is felt by one's own souls as pleasure.

If the reader still does not know how Leibniz's notion of love is compatible with both Hobbes and Christianity, just take a look at (1) and (2) together. (2) is within Hobbes' framework,

[40] Leibniz also uses other terms to refer to "love", such as "charity", or the "universal benevolence", etc.

since it is about the fulfillment of one's self-interest. However, this fulfillment is caused by the perfection of others, so it is necessary that we have to "love our neighbors" if we want to feel this happiness in ourselves. Thus, with this definition, the distinction between self-preservatory love and Christian altruistic love vanishes for Leibniz.

It seems also necessary that we address how Leibniz understands "justice", since he bases his definition of "justice" on this definition of "love". Throughout his *Elements of Natural Law*, he gives a number of different definitions of "justice", some of the earlier ones he then rejects, and some of the later ones he revises further. At the end, he finally states that the "true and perfect definition" of "justice" is " the habit of loving others, or of finding joy in the expectation of the good of others whenever an occasion arises" (Loemker, p. 215). This definition is in short "to love everyone else whenever an occasion arises" (Loemker, p. 215).

Although from the above paragraph it seems that Leibniz nearly equals "justice" with "love", there is still another important factor to consider in the practice of "love". That is, one has to love *wisely*, and only the love with "wisdom" is considered "justice". Leibniz defines "wisdom" as a "science" that guides us (Loemker, p. 697). He believes that "when pleasure and joy are directed towards satisfying the senses rather than the understanding, they can easily lead us to unhappiness as to bliss" (Loemker, p. 699). In other words, if one sacrifices long-term happiness for temporary sensual pleasure, it will in the end give him or her "greater pain" (Loemker, p. 214). Thus, Leibniz concludes that the "enjoyment of the senses

must be used according to the rules of reason" (Loemker, p. 699).

Leibniz is also aware of the fact that in actuality often "the perfections of others" "displease us" (Loemker, p. 697). He explains that this is "not because of the perfection itself but because of the circumstance which makes it inopportune for us" (Loemker, p. 697). The example Leibniz gives is the "courage of any enemy": when we hate a courageous enemy, we do not hate "courage" itself, and we do not even hate this courageous person; what we hate is the fact that this person is our enemy, so his courage could bring bad consequences to us (Loemker, p. 697). Thus, Leibniz concludes that it is neither the person nor his virtue or strength, but the specific circumstance that causes our hatred. The cure to this hatred is, again, "wisdom": Leibniz argues that we need to practise more to the point that we do not get distracted by the circumstances and can love the person and the virtue whenever we want to (Loemker, p. 697).

Although Leibniz places "love" at the center of any true religion, it still needs the company of reason, or "wisdom". Thus, we conclude that "love" itself is an emotion, but "justice", or the practice of "love", does not consist of only an emotional part, but a rational one as well. Next, we shall see how Leibniz builds his understanding of an ideal society on his notion of "love".

4.2.1.2 Love as the Foundation of a "Natural Society"

Different from Hobbes who sees human society as a mean to escape from a "natural society"—which is seen as a horrible war of all with everybody, Leibniz seems to believe that an ideal society should be the one "demanded by nature", and the laws of such society should be "natural laws", or laws that "[preserve] or [further] natural societies" (Loemker, p. 702). Thus, for Leibniz there does not exist a dualism between the artificial realm and the natural realm when it comes to the human societies—a human society is a natural one.

"Justice" is at the center of the formation of such as "natural society", because "justice is a social virtue, or a virtue which preserves society" (Loemker, p. 702). Since we have already known that "justice" is the practice of "love" with "wisdom", we deduce that Leibniz places "love" as the foundation of all human relationships in a society. Leibniz solves the Hobbesian dualism between a "natural society" where each individual is the enemy of each individual, and an artificial society based on law and order, by arguing that: first, if our relationships are based on our natural ability to "love" others, we would not have such a devastating "natural society". Second, if the laws of the state are "natural laws", we could as well see the state as an extension of the "natural society".

In the following paragraphs, I shall list the six stages of Leibniz's natural (or moral) society and then analyze them. I would like to add that these six stages are logical rather than historical, so they may not have actually happened chronologically in history.

The first natural society is between man and woman, or, husband and wife. When the two have children, we have the second natural society between parents and children. Leibniz argues that, during these two stages, the primary purpose of human beings is the sustenance of their lives. “Parents exist primarily for the sake of children”, and children must be “reared”, “governed”, and “nourished” (Loemker, p. 703). At this stage, although individuals have the ability to “love” others, they could not freely do so, since the perseverance of themselves, their partners, and their children comes first.

The third one is between “master and servant” (Leomker, p. 703). Some have “enlightened” themselves, and, with greater mental strength (sometimes also greater physical strength), they become the masters (Leomker, p. 703). Others, however, only have the “strength to nourish” themselves but “lack understanding” and become servants. That said, Leibniz then criticizes the view that there exists a natural servitude (or natural slavery), and confesses that, as a rationalist, he believes that each individual has the capacity to learn and to reason. Thus, it would be strange to say that only some have understanding while others do not. He concludes that probably only the “natural society” between people and animals is of this type.

Next, Leibniz gives us his fourth and fifth stages of “natural societies”: “household” and “civil society” (Leomker, p. 703). It seems to me that Leibniz sees the purposes of these two “natural societies” as similar, in that they both aim to achieve “temporal welfare”; the only difference is that a “household” is to achieve daily or short-term benefits, whereas a “civil

society" is to achieve long-term benefits.

At the end, he turns to his sixth "natural society"—the "church" (Leomker, p. 704). He argues that although people naturally "love" the "perfection" of others, it is only within a "church of God" that people could freely do so and feel "eternal happiness", as this society orients people toward the wise love of all (Loemker, p. 704). The important point here is that Leibniz sees a "church" as a "natural society". That is to say, a "church" is not limited to Christianity; there could be other "churches" that "probably have existed among men even without revelation and have been preserved by pious and holy men" (Loemker, p. 704). Again, Leibniz emphasizes that people without the Christian revelation could become "pious and holy men" as well. From this, we see why Leibniz is able to praise Chinese philosophy as a "natural religion" that teaches morals.

4.2.2 A Rationalist Approach to Religions

Leibniz believes that the true dogma of religions can be "figured out" by individuals with reason alone. That is to say, reason will necessarily bring one to the conclusion that there exists a unique and most perfect being (God). Thus, his understanding of religion is characteristic of him as a rationalist. In this section I will discuss Leibniz's rationalist approach to religions. I will first give his definition of "truth", and then discuss what is "rationalism".

Leibniz distinguishes between two kinds of truth: the first one is “truth of reasoning”, or, “necessary truth”, and the second is “truth of fact”, or, “contingent truth”. This distinction not only serves as the base of Leibniz’s epistemology, but also has an important position in Leibnizian philosophy as a whole. “Necessary truths” are such as mathematical propositions, demonstrated by the geometrical method, or logical statements, demonstrated by deduction. These truths are governed by the “principle of contradiction”: a statement is true if the opposite indicates a contradiction. Or, with the language of logic, P and ~P could not coexist. We are able to tell their correctness independent of any experience (*a priori*).

“Contingent truths”, in contrary, are those we know by experience, and are governed by the “principle of sufficient reason”. The word “sufficient” suggests that “there can be found no fact that is true or existent” “without there being a sufficient reason for its being so and not otherwise”. It reflects Leibniz’s view that, since God does not create anything arbitrarily, nature itself must have a perfect order in it. This order is what we could study with reason.

These two kinds of truths give two kinds of knowledge: “necessary truths” give us “absolute knowledge”, whereas “contingent truths” give us “scientific”, or, “hypothetical knowledge”. Leibniz is aware that “we cannot know these (sufficient) reasons in most cases” (Loemker, p. 1049). That is, we do not have access to “necessary truth”; or, we do not know the mechanism behind phenomena. What he also suggests is that, for many people, since they

have so little “absolute knowledge”, it is hard for them to see the inner coherence of nature. When they have more of it, they might be able to better appreciate this perfect order that nature is.

To use a metaphor, for Leibniz, necessary truths are like a “net”—we use it to “capture” contingent truths. That is to say, necessary truths are not only good to know in themselves. They can also help us to better understand contingent truths by providing a framework for what could be possibly true in natural phenomena in contrast to what is impossible. Thus, we could say that necessary truths are contingent truths understood fully, and contingent truths are incomplete necessary truths. Leibniz also believes that all necessary truths are in God’s intellect. Although, for God, since the analysis of contingent truths into necessary truths is infinite, the distinction between these two types of knowledge still holds.

In addition, Leibniz believes that human beings will increase in their perfection as a result of “acting”, while reduce in perfection as a result of “enduring” from outside factors. He explains that an increase in activity is not merely an action, but a kind of rational understanding based on an increased necessary truth in close connection with contingent truth. Thus, for Leibniz, being more “active” is the necessary consequence of knowing more “necessary truths”.

When we say Leibniz is a “rationalist”, we use the word in contrast to “empiricism”. The

distinction here concerns an epistemological question: whether the primary source of knowledge should be our intellect or our experience. Leibniz and Spinoza belong to the former school, whereas people like Isaac Newton and John Locke belong to the latter one. Locke believes that human beings could only be certain about three things: (1) the existence of God, (2) the existence of themselves, and (3) mathematical knowledge. For all the other areas, they have to rely on their sense perception. Locke thinks that human beings do not have "innate ideas" because children and idiots do not have them; as a result, he also rejects the possibility that religions contain "moral principles".

Leibniz, on the other hand, suggests that only animals rely solely on sense perception. He argues that animals acquire knowledge from their sense perception, and figure out patterns with the help of their memory—which is the accumulation of either similar or different experiences. Thus, if human beings have nothing besides sense perception, they would be the same as animals. Leibniz is also different from Locke when it comes to "scientific knowledge". Locke suggests that since we understand the world through our sense perception, we can never understand things in their essence; only God, the creator of the world, has an adequate knowledge of them.

Leibniz challenges this notion by arguing that, since God is "the most perfect" being, its creation is not arbitrary, but a process with perfect order. Thus, although we may not understand all the "necessary truths", we can still be satisfied as long as we have some

necessary truths and more and more "contingent truths". The role of science should be to organize phenomena based on the "principle of possibility", i.e. of contradiction, and to give us scientific rules that help us to explain how things work.

Leibniz's rationalism is closely related to his understanding of religion: we can apply the epistemological distinction to the ethical realm: for Leibniz, "moral laws" are "necessary truths", and "social laws" are "contingent truths". Leibniz argues that, since human beings not only know from experiences, but also from their "innate ideas", morality must be universal among humankind. That means, if the core of all religions is love and morality, no one could really "be an atheist". This view is also, again, the basis for Leibniz's position, different from Locke, that affirms of the possibility that non-European civilizations could develop a "natural theology" teaching morality.

4.2.3 God and the Individual Spirits

4.2.3.1 God

After the discussion on how Leibniz understands religions from a rationalist point of view, I will now present his notions of "God" and the "spirits" respectively. Leibniz defines "God" as a "supreme" or "absolute perfect" substance, "being unique, universal, and necessary…having nothing outside of it which is independent of it…incapable of

limits…contain as much reality as is possible" (Loemker, p. 1050). The phrase "Contain as much reality as possible" again emphasizes the point that God knows everything *a priori*, and for him the distinction between necessary and contingent truth does not mean a limit in knowing both intuitively. While God's intellect contains all possible ideas, that is all ideas that can be thought without contradiction ("omniscient"), his absolute perfection also guarantees his absolute goodness making him choose the best of all possible worlds as well as justice in this world.

Following this definition of "God", and recalling Leibniz's definition of "love", we can easily explain why one should love God besides loving one's neighbors: because happiness comes from other beings' perfection, and because God is the most perfect being, people naturally "love God himself above all things because the pleasure which [they] experience in contemplating the most beautiful being of all is greater than any conceivable joy" (Loemker, p. 208). Thus, Leibniz gives his readers both of "the two principles": "to love your neighbors", and, "to love God".

It is also noticeable that Leibniz talks about how God's intellect and will is one and inseparable. This is in accordance to his belief that God never acts arbitrarily and creates in perfect order. Nonetheless, Leibniz does admit that sometimes we cannot easily grasp the order of God; is a kind of "higher order" above the natural order we see everyday. Thus, some of the things we find "unreasonable" may as well fit perfectly into this higher order of

God. He illustrates his point with the example of Christian mysteries, and argues that from God's perspective these miracles are just natural, but since we are unaware of the "higher order", we may find them peculiar.

Similarly, Leibniz argues that human beings also necessarily act in accordance to what they think to be the best, and nobody will voluntarily do things they consider wrong. In that sense, Leibniz is a "determinist": he rejects the common understanding of free will as having the indifferent freedom of choice, since no matter how tiny the choice is, making such a choice always needs a reason.

4.2.3.2 Individual Spirits

Leibniz first distinguishes between two kinds of substances, "simple substance", or, "monad" that "has no parts", and "compound substance" that is "a collection of simple substances" (Loemker, p. 1034). Since simple substances cannot be further divided, Leibniz argues that they "can neither be formed nor unmade" and "last as long as the universe" (Loemker, p. 1034). That is to say, all the simple substances are created by God at once, and there will be no more or less of them later.

Another statement Leibniz deduces from the indivisibility of simple substances is that a simple substance "by itself and at a single moment cannot be distinguished from another"

(Loemker, p. 1034). The only ways to distinguish them are through “perceptions”--“the representations” of the compound, and “appetitions”---the “tendency” to change “from one perception to another” (Loemker, p. 1034). In other words, simple substances are “separated from each other by their own actions” (Loemker, p. 1034).

If the simple substance (monad) has the power of “sensation”--“a perception accompanied by memory”, Leibniz calls this monad a “soul”, and the living substance that it forms an “animal”. If, say, the “soul” is able to know “necessary truths”, it is called a “spirit”, and the living substance that it forms is considered a “rational animal” (Loemker, pp. 1036-1037). Because each monad “represents the universe according to its point of view”, “each monad is a living mirror” (Loemker, p. 1035).

This means, “one could learn the beauty of the universe in each soul if one could unravel all that is rolled up in it” (that is, if one could know by necessary truths all the interconnectedness of one thing to another) (Loemker, p. 1040). However, although each soul “knows everything” (or, has a perception of everything), its knowledge is often blended with other “confused perceptions” and does not allow for necessary truth (Loemker, p. 1040). Leibniz argues that human beings are not always capable of distinguishing what is “distinct and heightened” from what is “confused”; “only God has a distinct knowledge of everything” (Loemker, p. 1040).

In addition to mirroring the whole universe, Leibniz suggests that "spirits" in particular are also mirrors of God himself. This is because only rational souls have the ability to reflect and to create ("even capable of producing something which resembles" "the works of God") (Loemker, p. 1041). This characteristic enables all the spirits to "enter by virtue of reason and the eternal truths" "the most perfect society" "formed and governed by" God (Loemker, p. 1041). Leibniz describes such a "City of God" as a place where reward and punishment are perfectly calculated, and members of this "best of all worlds" gain "as much virtue and happiness as…possible" (Loemker, p. 1041). Thus, Leibniz concludes that God, in his relationship to the spirits, is not only that of "an inventor to his machine", but also of "a father to his children" (Loemker, p. 1059).

4.3 Leibniz's Understanding of "Chinese Philosophy" in Particular

4.3.1 Leibniz and His *Discourse*

Having finished the discussion on Leibniz's general conception of religions, I now turn to his specific opinions on "Chinese philosophy" (i.e. Confucianism) in his *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*. As I have stated in Chapter 1, Leibniz wished to have "more complete accounts and greater quantity of extracts of the Chinese classics accurately translated" (Discourse, p. 78). However, due to the lack of such translations, Leibniz ironically had to rely mostly on Longobardi's quotes from Chinese sources when he wrote his

Discourse—even though the primary purpose of the *Discourse* is to refute Longobardi.

This, on the one hand, definitely raises a difficulty for Leibniz. Obviously, the quotes that Longobardi picks are most likely those in favor of his position. However, Leibniz develops his own way to deal with this difficulty. What he does in his *Discourse* is to pick two or more of Longobardi's statements, and tries to show how they are somehow contradictory to each other. Through this strategy, Leibniz can say to his readers: if Longobardi contradicts himself in his book, how could you trust his arguments? Besides, Leibniz can also choose that of the meanings that he is inclined to embrace.

Another strategy, Leibniz uses, is his distinction between the ancient and the modern Chinese. Since a lot of the materials in Longobardi's *Religion Treatise* are his "interviews" of his contemporary Chinese scholars, it is hard for Leibniz to refute Longobardi's opinions based on the actual words of the Chinese people. To counter such evidence Longobardi can provide, Leibniz refers to the discrepancy between what the Classics say and what these contemporary Chinese say, and argue that it is very likely that those people interviewed by Longobardi have already strayed from their ancestors, just like during Leibniz's time there are a lot of young people becoming "free-thinkers" (Leibniz uses this word in a derogatory manner). Thus, whatever "atheistic" or "materialistic" opinions these "recent Chinese" hold, their ancestors and the Chinese civilization as a whole, cannot yet be blamed to hold them.

However, this distinction does not mean that Leibniz is aware of the differences between Original Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. This can be shown by how he believes that "*Li*" and "*Tai Ji*" are existent since the ancient time of China—even though they are both concepts in Neo-Confucianism and were invented more than a thousand years later. Actually, Leibniz's "excuse" that I just mentioned works very well only because a lot of the topics are absent in Original Confucianism. So, for example, Leibniz could argue that, from all of Longobardi's quotes, he has not seen any example of Confucius and other ancient authors interpreting "*Tai Ji*" wrongly—which is of course true, since they do not write about this term at all!

On the other hand, Leibniz thinks that his heavy reliance on his opponent's book could also somehow be beneficial to him. If all the quotations he uses are picked by Longobardi, Leibniz's writings will be "less subject to the suspicion of flattery" (Discourse, p. 79). In other words, Leibniz thinks that the arguments he makes based on those quotes from Longobardi's book are more likely to be "a reasonable meaning to the authoritative dogmas of China" (Discourse, p. 79)

Another fact worth mentioning is that, in the *Discourse*, Leibniz also attacks the opinions of another anti-accommodationist missionary, the Franciscan Antoine de Sainte-Marie. Sainte-Marie wrote a text criticizing Riccians "shortly before his death" (Introduction, p.15), and the text was also translated to French, under the title *Traité sur quelques points*

importants de la Mission de la Chine (or the *Mission Treatise*) (Introduction, p.15). Remond sent this text together with Longobardi's *Religion Treatise* to Leibniz. Thus, in *Discourse* (especially the second half of it), Leibniz refutes some of Sainte-Marie's ideas as well.

Before I proceed with the arguments, let me summarize the main areas of dispute between Longobardi and Leibniz. They are, first, whether the Chinese have an understanding of the Christian God or not; second, how should the Chinese "spirits", or, "*Gui Shen*", be understood, and what is their relation to God; and third, whether the Chinese and the Christians have a similar understanding of the human souls and the afterlife or not.

4.3.2 The First Principle in "Chinese Philosophy"

This section is divided into three sub-sections. The first one focuses on *Li*, the concept that Leibniz sees as the First Principle of "Chinese Philosophy" and spends the most time on. The second sub-section discusses Longobardi's objections to equaling *Li* and the Christian God, and how Leibniz responds to these objections. In the third sub-section I will list three other Chinese terms that Leibniz considers to be the equivalences of *Li*, and explain them.

4.3.2.1 Leibniz's Discussion on *Li*

Since, according to Longobardi, *Li* is the first principle of the Chinese, Leibniz thinks that it

is natural to compare it with the Christian God and look for their similarities and differences. The literal meaning of *Li* is "reason", and Leibniz understands it as "the foundation of all nature, the most universal reason and substance; there is nothing greater nor better than the *Li*" (Discourse, p. 79).

The primary characteristics of *Li*—that it is "pure, motionless, rarified, without body or shape, and can be comprehend only through the understanding"—makes it seem rather similar to the Christian God (Discourse, p. 79). However, in order to further investigate, Leibniz mentions several other characteristics that the Chinese use to describe *Li*, and analyzes them one by one.

The first such characteristic of *Li* is that it is the origin—the origin of both the material world and the virtues in human beings. Leibniz sees *Li* as the "Aggregate". That is, it is "the most perfect multiplicity" that "contains the essences of things as they are in their germinal state" (Discourse, p. 80). This is similar to Leibniz's description of the Christian God—the one that contains all "the primitive grounds, the prototypes of all essences" (Discourse, p. 80). Leibniz concludes that *Li* is "the principle of the physical basis of Heaven and Earth and other material things" (Discourse, p.80), and the "basis of all the essences which are and which can exist in the world" (Discourse, p. 81). That is, *Li* is the "ground" of existence.

Aside from being the origin of the physical world, *Li* is also the origin of individual's virtues.

As Leibniz himself notes, "from the *Li*" "emanate five virtues" ("*Wu Chang*", or the "5 constant"): "piety, justice, religion, prudence, and faith" (Discourse, p. 79)[41]. Leibniz concludes that *Li* serves as "the principle of the moral basis of virtues, customs, and other spiritual things" (Discourse, p. 80).

Leibniz also calls *Li* the one that gives law and order. He says, " *Li* is the Law and universal Order, according to which Heaven and Earth have been formed" (Discourse, p. 79). Leibniz believes that God's intellect contains all the necessary truths; they are the "laws" that are true regardless of specific time and space. When Leibniz says that "*Li* is the Law", he probably implies that *Li* contains all the necessary truths.

Leibniz also thinks that *Li* is indivisible, and calls it "the Summary Unity", or the "absolutely unitary" (Discourse, p. 81). He mentions other examples of how the Chinese figuratively describe their First Principle, including the terms "globe" (in the sense that God is "a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere" (Discourse, p. 82)) and "the Grand Void" (or the "immense capacity", in the sense that a "Universal Essence contains all particular essences" (Discourse, p. 81)). Leibniz interprets these terms in such a way that they fit with the Christian understanding of God, and he concludes that *Li* is "the supreme power, the supreme good, the supreme purity" and "it is so perfect that there is nothing to add" (Discourse, p. 83).

[41] However, as the commentators (Rosemont & Cook) suggest, the accurate translations of these five are "benevolence", "righteousness", "rituals", "wisdom", and "sincerity" (Discourse, p. 79).

A term that has to be mentioned together with *Li* is, *Qi*. Leibniz believes that *Qi* is the "primitive air" or the "primogeneous air" that comes from *Li* and acts as the "instrument of the *Li*" (Discourse, p. 97). He then concludes that *Qi* is most likely similar to "Aether"—"matter in its original form" that is "completely fluid, without bonds or solidarity…without limits" (Discourse, p. 97). "Aether" for Leibniz is what mediated between mathematical truth and empirically observable physical motion and it is seen as God's tool to adapt the real functioning of the world to abstract mathematics. *Qi* is a notion closely related to *Li*, and one of the differences between Leibniz and Longobardi is about how to understand the relationship between *Li* and *Qi*.

4.3.2.2 Leibniz's Responses to Longobardi

Longobardi, however, argues that "if you penetrate to the very heart of the matter" "you will see that this *Li* is nothing other than our prime matter" (Discourse, p. 83). He gives five arguments to support his claim, but they could be summarized as the following three:

(1) The Christian God is independent and self-sufficient, whereas the Chinese *Li* is dependent on *Qi*.

(2) The Christian God is active and has an intellect, whereas the Chinese *Li* is passive and devoid of life.

(3) The Christian God is purely spiritual and has no body, whereas the Chinese *Li* is purely material. (Discourse, p. 83)

Longobardi concludes according to his three claims that the Chinese *Li* is not equivalent God. In the following paragraphs, I will show how Leibniz refutes these three arguments one by one.

To begin with, Longobardi suggests that "*Li* performs no operations itself, it commences to do so after having produced [*Qi*]" (Discourse, p. 97). This is to say, *Li* cannot create anything directly besides *Qi*, only when *Qi* has been produced and works back on *Li* the creation will begin. *Li* has to depend on *Qi* and is itself powerless. Leibniz sees this argument as contradictory: if *Li* produces *Qi* by itself, that means *Li could* produce something without the aid of *Qi*, so how could one say that *Li* is completely powerless without *Qi*?

Also, Leibniz suggests that Longobardi possibly misinterprets the Chinese. He thinks that, when Longobardi reports that some Chinese told him that *Li* could not create by itself, what those Chinese really mean is that *Li* "produces things only by means of prime matter (*Qi*)" (Discourse, p. 90). That is, *Li* is not dependent on *Qi*; rather, *Li* uses *Qi* as an instrument to create. If that is true, Leibniz suggests, it will indeed lead to the conclusion that *Li* is God in Christianity, and *Qi* is the "prime matter".

Longobardi's second point is that *Li* is "inanimate, without life, without design and without intelligence" (Discourse, p. 90). It is a kind of "natural law of Heaven" that "by its operation all things are governed" (Discourse, p. 92). This is to say, even if *Li* seems to act, it is in reality a form of "natural propensity" "just as fire burns and stones fall" (Discourse, p. 92). *Li* does not have the intelligence to make decisions or to judge, but only serves as a part of the bigger natural order. Longobardi then gives quotes in support of his opinion. For example, "Heaven…neither sees, nor understands, nor hates, nor loves", or "Heaven and Earth have neither reason, will nor deliberation", etc. (Discourse, p. 90)

Leibniz offers two responses to this argument. First, he again mentions the possibility that Longobardi might have misread the Chinese. Here, Leibniz makes an analogy between those Chinese authors who deny the power and intelligence of *Li* and the Christian mystics who deny that "God could be a Being" (Discourse, p, 91). The idea here is that since God is the creator and the foundation of all the beings, it is itself something higher and greater than all other beings. Similarly, Leibniz argues that when some Chinese authors say that *Li* has no "power" or "intelligence", what they really mean is that the "power" and "intelligence" of *Li* are far greater than our common understandings of these two words, that they are different in kind. That is, these Chinese believe that people should not imagine *Li*'s "power" as the "power" of a king, or its "intelligence" as that of a scholar, etc.

Second, Leibniz supposes that Longobardi must lack the right understanding of the concepts

of “voluntary” or “deliberation” correctly. Leibniz believes that the Chinese understand “voluntary action” as “an act of design and deliberation where at first one is uncertain and then one makes up one’s mind afterwards” (Discourse, p. 93). Thus, for God this kind of “voluntary” actions should be absent, since all of God’s actions are “directed by the supreme order of reason” (Discourse, p. 93). To put it in another way, since God is “the most rational”, his will must be “determined and infallible” (Discourse, p. 93). The same goes for *Li*: since it is the “supreme reason”, it, of course, has no “voluntary action” or “deliberation”. (This is again very much linked to Leibniz’s own philosophy. Recall in Section 4.2.3.1 I talked about how Leibniz is a “determinist” and rejects the indifferent freedom of choice.)

Thus, Leibniz concludes that Longobardi’s second point is only based on his two wrong interpretations. Longobardi’s third point is that in China all the “*Gui Shen*” (“spirits”) have physical bodies; thus the Chinese can have no understanding at all of spiritual substances separated from matters (Discourse, p. 93). Leibniz refutes this by pointing out that just because the Chinese think their Spirits have bodies does not necessarily mean that they also think their *Li*, or First Principle, has a body. In fact, Leibniz tells the readers that even many European Christians hold the opinion that all Angels have bodies, and God alone is purely spiritual; obviously, among them, Leibniz counts himself, and states that this opinion is harmless to Christianity on the basis of Leibniz’s metaphysics (Discourse, p. 93). Leibniz therefore concludes that the Chinese probably also share this opinion, so their spirits having bodies is not an indication of their *Li* being material (Discourse, p. 93).

4.3.2.3 Three Equivalences of *Li*

Leibniz thus concludes that *Li* is the Christian God, not, as Longobardi suggests, the prime matter. Before I end this section on the First Principle in "Chinese Philosophy", I want to make an additional remark. Leibniz believes that the Chinese refer to their First Principle in different terms, and these three terms—*Tai Ji*, *Shang Di*, and *Tian* are basically words the Chinese invented as the equivalences of *Li* (Discourse, p. 98).

Leibniz argues that, according to the descriptions of Longobardi, *Tai Ji* "has attained the ultimate degree of perfection and consummation" and gives things "pre-established order". Therefore, it is most likely that *Tai Ji* is *Li* (Discourse, p. 98). The only difference, Leibniz suggests, is that *Tai Ji* refers specifically to *Li* as "working on the *Qi*" (Discourse, p. 98). In other words, *Tai Ji* is nothing more than *Li* "considered under [a] different [predicate]" (Discourse, p. 98).

Shang Di is another term that Leibniz equals with *Li*. The literal meaning of it is "King-on-high", and Longobardi proposes that the Chinese use this term for "a royal sovereign" who "lives in the Heaven from which he governs the world, rewards the good and punishes the wicked" (Discourse, p. 102). Leibniz comments that this description demonstrates why *Shang Di* is exactly the Christian God.

Last but not least, *Tian* means "Heaven" (as I have stated several times in this thesis). Leibniz believes that, since the Chinese also "attribute the same qualities (the qualities they have attributed to *Shang Di*) to Heaven", these two terms are most likely interchangeable (Discourse, p. 102). In short, Leibniz would say that there is no real difference between *Li*, *Tai Ji*, *Shang Di*, and *Tian*.

To summarize Leibniz's ideas on *Li*: it is the First Principle in the "natural theology" of the Chinese, and it is the same as the Christian God. It is indivisible yet everywhere; it is the origin of both the physical and spiritual (moral) world. The Chinese also call it *Tai Ji*, *Shang Di*, and *Tian*. From *Li* there emanates *Qi*, or the "prime matter" that is used by *Li* in its creation. Now, let me turn to the debate on the "spirits" (or *Gui Shen)*, and their relation to *Li* (or God).

4.3.3 The Spirits in "Chinese Philosophy"

Unlike Ricci, Longobardi (and thus Leibniz who relies on his quotes) distinguishes between *Gui* and *Shen*. *Gui Shen* is a combination of two Chinese words: *Shen*, which is the "pure rising spirits", and *Gui*, which is the "impure or descending spirits" (Discourse, p. 109). Sometimes "*Gui Shen*" is also used to only mean good spirits (Discourse, p. 109). In the context of Leibniz's *Discourse*, *Gui Shen* not only refers to natural spirits such as the spirits

of mountains, rivers, celestial bodies, etc., but also the spirits of ancestors that every Chinese worships. Leibniz writes, "the Chinese…believe that their ancestors and great heroes are among Spirits", and comments it as a statement "rather close to the words of our Lord…which suggests that the Blessed resemble the Angles of God" (Discourse, p. 78). To summarize, for Leibniz, whatever beings the Chinese worship besides their First Principle (*Li*) are considered "*Gui Shen*".

Jesuit Missionaries interpret *Gui Shen* in two ways: one group says that they are independent Gods, and the Chinese are "pagans" who "multiply individual spirits beyond measure and need"; that is, the Chinese are polytheists (Discourse, p. 123). Another group says that these spirits are really equivalent to Angels or "*genni*" in Christianity, and when the Chinese worship them, they are actually worshiping *Li* through these Angels. I will first address the former position—which is held by Longobardi, and then the latter one that is held by Leibniz.

At first glance, Longobardi's position seems to be more adequate. In Chinese "popular religion", most *Gui Shen* take the shape of human beings and are worshiped in images. Moreover, when the ancestors are worshipped, the Chinese often burn fake money and model objects as sacrifices. Taken these into consideration, it does not come as a surprise that Longobardi concludes that the Chinese picture "a material God suffused throughout the Universe" who aims "to govern it with other, subaltern gods" (Discourse, p. 123).

Leibniz, however, first admits that he does not want to "examine to what extent the manner of worship of the Chinese could be condemned or justified", and wants to focus mainly on the "doctrines" (Discourse, p. 123). That being said, Leibniz does spend some time talking about the ceremonies of the Chinese. He mentions that according to *Zhu Xi*, the Emperor would worship Heaven and Earth, and the scholars worshiping "spirits of great philosophers and legislators", and everyone "virtuous souls of their families" (Discourse, p.123). Leibniz argues that, "the intent of [the Chinese] sages was to venerate the *Li* or supreme reason...be it directly in brute objects…or be it through lower spirits…serving as ministers" (Discourse, p.123).

He then gives an example to illustrate his point: in a passage about ancestral worship, it says that, when sacrificing to ancestors, one must "elevate [one's] spirit and reflect upon the creator from which his first ancestor is descended" (Discourse, p. 124)[42]. Leibniz argues that this passage indicates, "the souls of the ancestors are regarded as subaltern spirits to the supreme spirit and universal Lord of the Heaven and the Earth" (Discourse, p. 124). Thus Leibniz concludes that when the Chinese worship their ancestors, they contemplate on how *Li* made their first ancestors, and worship *Li* through the ceremony.

Another argument that Leibniz refutes here is Sainte-Marie's statement that "Spirits are in truth united and incorporated with all things, from which they are unable to separate

[42] The commentators (Rosemont & Cook) believe that it is a passage from *Li Ji.*

themselves without being totally destroyed" (Discourse, p. 112). Leibniz struggles to confute this point because Sainte-Marie attributes this opinion to Confucius himself. This makes the excuse that Leibniz has been using—that the contemporary Chinese whom Longobardi talked with have strayed from their ancestors—ineffective. Here, Leibniz has to make a concession and admits that probably the ancient authors of China taught things in this way in order to adapt to the common people, whose minds are not enlightened enough to understand the "natural theology" (Discourse, p. 112).

However, Leibniz does question the validity of Sainte-Marie's claim. He gives another quote from Confucius mentioned by Sainte-Marie: "Oh, the rare virtues and the grand perfections of these…[*Gui Shen*]…Is there any virtue superior to them...One does not hear them, but the marvels which they never cease to effect speak enough" (Discourse, p. 109). Leibniz suggests that if Confucius really holds such an opinion (that spirits are incorporated into physical bodies and die together with bodies), it would be quite implausible that he "ascribes to these Spirits…those rare virtues and great perfections" (Disourse, p. 113). Thus, Leibniz thinks that what Sainte-Marie says are "opinions…on the basis of modern interpretations" (Discourse, p. 112).

4.3.4 The Souls and The Afterlife in "Chinese Philosophy"

Last but not least, Leibniz believes that after he has addressed spirits in general, it is

important that he also presents how the Chinese understand human spirits (souls) in particular—that is, spirits "when… separated from gross bodies" (Discourse, p. 124). Leibniz reports that Longobardi uses the Chinese word "*Ling Hun*" for human souls, and sometimes also "*You Hun*", emphasizing that souls could move "freely" (Discourse, p. 125). Leibniz believes that although one could find some modern Chinese who hold a "mechanical" view and believe that human beings simply disappear after death, just as many contemporary Europeans do, their ancient authors speak about afterlife "almost as if [they] had read the Holy Scriptures" (Discourse, p. 126).

Leibniz first gives several quotes to illustrate that the Chinese do acknowledge the existence of the afterlife. For example, in "the [*Shi Jing*], Book 6, page 1", it says that the ancient king of China "[*Wen Wang*]" (King Wen) "is on high in Heaven" and "at the side of the [*Shang Di*] or the King-on-high" (Discourse, p. 125). Leibniz then argues that the Chinese believe that, after one dies, one's "*Hun*, or soul, rises to Heaven", and one's "*Po* or the body…returns to the earth" (Discourse, p. 125). To illustrate this point, Leibniz refers to the quotes of *Cheng Zi*[43] in Book 28 of the "Compendium" (*Xing Li Da Quan*), where it says that "Universal Nature does not come (for it is already present)" when a man is born, and "Universal Nature does not leave (for it is always everywhere)" when a man dies (Discourse, p. 126). (Compare this statement with Leibniz's opinions on the "monads" in Section 4.2.3.2—Leibniz must had been pleased by the similarity between this statement and his metaphysics.) Further, he

[43] Meaning "Master Cheng". There are two *Cheng Zi*, and commentators (Rosemont & Cook) say that here it is referring to Cheng Yi.

explains, when a man dies, what happens is “the air” (“the animated air, the Soul”) “which is the essence of Heaven” “returns to Heaven”, “and the corporeal element”, “which is the essence of the earth”, “returns to earth” (Discourse, p. 126).

Another example Leibniz uses is the “ancestral worship”. He argues that such practice means that the Chinese must “have conceived of [their ancestors] as continuing to subsist” after death (Discourse, p. 130). Leibniz also mentions that the Chinese believe that “virtuous ancestors” in Heaven are “capable of obtaining good and evil for their descendants” (Discourse, p. 130). That is, while the offspring worships the ancestors, the ancestors also bless the offspring.

Leibniz further argues that the Chinese conception of the immortality of the souls “will become clearer” if taking a look at whether the Chinese have an understanding of the “rewards and punishments after this life” (Discourse, p. 130). Leibniz first admits that in “the Literati sect” (i.e. Confucianism) there are neither the descriptions of “Paradise” nor “Hell”, and it is Buddhism that “propounds both” (Discourse, p. 130).

Leibniz mentions, however, that the Chinese have a belief that certain people after passing away become “wondering souls”—souls that are “lost” in the mountains or forests (Discourse, p. 132).[44] Leibniz argues that although this opinion on the surface sounds like a pagan one, if

[44] This one is, of course, still a Buddhist idea.

looking at it from another perspective, it could be said that those "wondering souls" are "in a sort of purgatory" (Discourse, p. 132). Leibniz even gives the example of St. Conrad, who states that he and his friend "had discovered souls in the form of birds condemned to the waterfalls" (Discourse, p. 132) (*Note*: to me, this seems like the Buddhist reincarnation theory). Thus, it is possible that the Chinese do have an understanding of the punishments (or at least the denial of reward) after death, despite being somehow different from the European view.

4.4 Summary of Leibniz's Points

To conclude, Leibniz believes that, since human beings can possess "necessary truths", it is possible that, besides Christianity, other "natural religions" have an understanding of God as well. He also believes that people have the ability to find pleasure in others' "excellence", and he places "love" at the center of a true religion. Because human spirits can reflect and reason, Leibniz sees them as God's children living in the "City of God".

In his *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, Leibniz argues that the Chinese use four different terms (*Li*, and *Tai Ji*, *Shang Di*, and *Tian*) for their First Principle, all of them equivalent to the Christian God; this is not a problem, for a Christian used to speak of three persons but one God. The Chinese *Gui Shen* are not independent deities but Angles that connect worshipers to *Li*; and the Chinese do have an understanding of the immortality of the

souls and a, probably not the clearest, understanding of the rewards and punishments after death.

5 Conclusion

At the beginning, I mentioned that the purpose of this thesis is to answer the question whether there is any deeper connection between Leibniz's appreciation of China and "Chinese philosophy", and himself as a thinker. Now, since I have finished presenting the ideas of these three men and reached the conclusion, I will try to answer my question in two dimensions: first, I will give a discussion on the differences between the approach of Leibniz as a philosopher and that of the other two as missionaries. Second, I will place Leibniz's interest in "Chinese philosophy" under the broad category of Leibniz's interest in all civilizations and humanity as a whole. However, before I finish this thesis with the final discussions on Leibniz, I will give some of my own opinions on the idea of "accommodationism" in general and my comparison of Ricci's and Longobardi's positions first.

5.1 Accommodationism in General

I have summarized five essential characteristics of Ricci's accommodationism. They are:

(1) The absence of detailed theologies.

(2) The main focus of his teachings on moral cultivation and self-refinement.

(3) The creative reinterpretations of Confucian Classics and Confucian moral values.

(4) The minimization of the role of Christian mysteries.

(5) The minimization of the role of Jesus Christ in Christianity.

Let me explain (4) and (5) first. Throughout *The True Meaning of the LORD*, these two (mysteries and Jesus) are only mentioned very briefly at the end of the book. Ricci does write that Jesus was born by a virgin and performed miracles. However, he emphasized especially the fact that Jesus was the "Holy Son" predicted by "ancient sages in the West" (True Meaning II, #729). In other words, it is the acknowledgement of the Western "sages" (*Sheng Ren*) that proved Jesus to be the "Holy Son", not his miracles. Also, the idea of "Trinity" is not mentioned at all.

It is likely that Ricci made this choice deliberately. In his book, Ricci tries to compare Christianity favorably to Buddhism: while Buddhists are idolaters who worship human beings, Christians worship the shapeless and infinite God. If Ricci had spent too much time on the importance of Jesus Christ as the "Holy Son", it would definitely have confused his readers and made it more difficult to persuade them.

For (3), I have already given a lot of examples throughout this thesis. For example, Ricci

interprets the words *Shang Di* and *Tian* in the Classics to mean an intelligent God. He also reinterprets the Confucian moral values *Zhong* and *Xiao* to make them not only refer towards parents and superiors, but also towards God.

As for (1) and (2), I believe they can be discussed together, since, to me, Ricci nearly replaces many of the teachings of Christian theology by the moral teachings of Confucianism when he was preaching. In Section 2.1, I explained how Ricci, instead of giving the Chinese Christians a number of statements they had to believe just like the Christians in Europe did, wrote his *Ten Essays from 'Ji Ren'* as a book full of advices on moral cultivation.

I want to discuss this interesting phenomenon in light of the research in Religious Studies. Stephen Prothero, in his book *God is Not One*, argues that it is wrong to simply understand the word "religion" in a single way, since a religion is a system with multiple dimensions, and each of the eight major religions in the world today puts more emphasis on several dimensions and less on the others.[45] For example, the analysis of and the debates between very detailed theological points is characteristic of Christianity. As for Confucianism, as its name "*Ru*" suggests (meaning "to refine"[46]), it heavily focuses on self-refinement and cultivation.

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[45] Prothero, Stephen. *God is Not One: The Eight Rival Religions That Run the World, And Why Their Differences Matter*. Black Inc., 2011.

[46] Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: philosophy and the defense of ritual mastery* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990), 190–197.

Thus, what Ricci did in his accommodationism is not only the reinterpretation of Confucian ideas, but also adopting what is characteristic of Confucianism as a tradition into Christianity. That, I believe, is the more valuable part of Ricci's thinking. As Wenchao Li states, the Jesuit missionaries' interpretation of Chinese Philosophy is mainly "one-sided, full of biases, and from Christianity's point of view" (Wenchao Li, p. 78). This kind of interpretation is probably not that meaningful to readers in a post-modern multicultural context. However, a study of how Ricci's "accommodated" Christianity differs from the standard European Christianity may give us some insights into not only the differences between Confucianism and Christianity as two religions, but also the differences in thinking between Europe and China as two civilizations.

5.2 Ricci and Longobardi

While Ricci separates Original Confucianism from Neo-Confucianism, Longobardi sees the whole Confucianism as a unified system, and while Ricci distinguishes between Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, Longobardi sees the three schools as having nearly one and the same philosophy. We can say that Ricci tries to analyze the different aspects of Chinese philosophies, and whenever he finds something that is similar to Christianity, he accepts it; whenever he finds something that contradicts Christian teaching, he rejects it. Longobardi, on the other hand, tries to give a general understanding of Chinese philosophy

based on things that are agreed by all Chinese (of course, he does it in order to reject Chinese philosophy altogether).

Ricci believes that the terms *Shang Di* and *Tian* in the Classics refer to an omniscient intelligent being, whereas Longobardi thinks that they simply refer to a "natural force". Despite their different opinions on Original Confucianism, both of them fiercely criticize Neo-Confucianism. Longobardi thinks that the whole Chinese civilization is materialistic and atheistic, and has no understanding of either "spirits" or afterlife. Ricci, on the contrary, thinks that the modern Chinese have a confused understanding of the "spirits" while the ancient Chinese had a clear one; and the common Chinese have an "incorrect" understanding of the afterlife taught by the Buddhists.

Wenchao Li argues that the debate between Ricci and Longobardi is, in its nature, an argument about which strategy is practically better for the mission works, not about who's interpretation is the correct one (Wenchao Li, p. 77). I only agree with it partially. For one, in Ricci's *Journals*, it clearly shows that he did have some affection towards China and many of the Confucian culture elements in that nation, needless to mention his high evaluation of the Five Classics. Thus, probably he intended to combine Confucianism and Christianity not only for a practical aim but also because of his personal preference. As for Longobardi, I think at least a part of the reasons why he took his time and efforts to do all the interviews and research is because he wanted to produce an "authentic interpretation" of the Chinese

philosophy.

That being said, I do think, however, since both of them are missionaries, their religion and the conversion of the Chinese were at the very center of their efforts. Their approaches were mostly developed as "useful tools" to convert the Chinese people. I already mentioned that Longobardi considers his anti-accommodationism to be the better choice for missionaries (Section 3.4 above). Ricci, similarly, may also have believed that his approach is the most efficient and implementable one. Overall, I am aware that many readers might see this kind of "dialogues" between Christianity and other civilizations in Early Modern time as very one-sided and "Eurocentric", thus not worth studying. I want, however, to encourage the readers to think about them from a different angle: they could still serve as examples of what would happen if our dialogues become one-sided and biased—that is, they have, at least, revealed to us some of the problems in this kind of dialogues. Thus, I believe there are still things that we could learn from them—in that respect, they are meaningful to the readers today. Today, when the Clash of Civilizations (COC) that Huntington suggested seems to become more and more of a universal problem, I think the study of the early contacts between European and Chinese civilizations, as brought about by those Jesuits, might help us to better understand some of the problems we still face now.

5.3 Leibniz

5.3.1 Leibniz and the Jesuits

If the excellences of their opinions are judged solely by their objective knowledge of Confucianism, Leibniz does not even stand a chance against the two Jesuits. Both of the Jesuits have read through primary documents written in Chinese and were in direct contact with Confucians and scholars, while Leibniz had very little authentic knowledge of Confucianism and had to rely mostly on his opponent's book. Leibniz cannot even distinguish between an idea in Original Confucianism and one in Neo-Confucianism (i.e., he attributes ideas like *Tai Ji* and *Li* to Original Confucianism). However, interestingly, among these three, Leibniz seems to be the most inclusive thinker of various ideas in Confucianism—only Leibniz accepts *Li* and *Tai Ji* as possible translations of the Christian God (together with *Shang Di* and *Tian*). When it comes to other concepts such as "spirits", "souls" or afterlife in Chinese philosophy, Leibniz basically shares Ricci's view, namely that the Chinese more or less have an understanding of them.

One might wonder whether this paradox that—among these three men—Leibniz is the most ignorant of Confucianism and yet the most inclusive one rather indicates that his appreciation of Confucianism is due to a lack of knowledge, thus producing a wrong judgment. Personally, I do not know. If Leibniz had known Chinese and had read more of the primary texts, he would probably have realized some important incongruences between these two traditions and changed some of his opinions.

However, still, I think Leibniz is fundamentally different from the other two Jesuits in his "starting point": in the introduction, I mentioned that Leibniz was not so interested in China at the beginning. I think what caused him to change his attitude may be his realization of the similarities between some of the statements in Chinese philosophy and his own. As Mungello points out, to Leibniz, Chinese philosophy is "corroborative" (Mungello, p. 64); when he realized the striking similarities between his own philosophy and that of an ancient civilization, it strengthened his "faith" and "confidence" in his thinking as true.

Thus, we could speculate that Leibniz took Ricci's side in the debate only after he had grown affectionate towards Chinese philosophy. That is, Chinese philosophy itself, not a religious aim, made Leibniz support accommodationism. Leibniz recognizes in Chinese philosophy the major structures of his own metaphysics: a God who creates with perfect order and reason, may be considered similar to the Chinese understanding of *Li*; the "Aether" that connects the metaphysical realm with the physical, concrete world may be considered similar to the Chinese *Qi*; and the notion that each individual spirit should strive for perfection by an improvement in understanding can be seen as somehow similar to the Confucian belief that human beings "become" what they are in the process of learning and self-cultivation.

However, many scholars, including Eric Sotnak, suggest that "Leibniz's comparison of Chinese concepts to his metaphysics is forced" and "Leibniz had limited and secondhand

access to Chinese philosophy" (Mungello, p. 64). Well, I think at least the second claim is true. Most of the translations and interpretations of the Chinese philosophy by the Jesuits were done in the following manner: when they found a term in Chinese, they tried to search for similar concepts in European languages, and when they believed that they had found the closest one, they would start to use that European term as both the translation and the way to understand such Chinese concept. In fact, this is also the method all three men whose approaches I discussed in this thesis have used—looking at Chinese philosophy with the glasses of their terminology -- "God", "angels", "souls", "material" versus "spiritual", "physical" and "metaphysical"—concepts or categories that today many would argue not even exist in Chinese intellectual tradition. Obviously, these kinds of interpretation "behind the glasses" can never produce an authentic interpretation of what Chinese philosophy really means.

If the readers still do not get how dangerous this kind of approach is, running the risk of being too tangential, let me do some "analytical philosophy" here. When the Chinese concept "*Yi*" (義) was first translated into Latin, it became "Justitia". I believe the Jesuits made this choice because both of the two terms concern "doing the right thing". However, although, on the surface, they appear similar, further analysis shows some huge differences: "Justitia" in the Western civilization has a strong connection to "equity" and "fairness"; it means "doing what is right" by giving each individual what he or she deserves, and it is connected to "retributive actions". Because it is a "public virtue" that concerns each member of society, it

is also a virtue that holds society together. In fact, “Justitia” from its beginning is so deeply connected to the Western legal traditions that some people see these two as inseparable.

Yi, an important term in Confucianism and one of the central teachings of Mencius, is about “doing what is right” by “doing what is proper” (Ames & Rosemont). In other words, it has nothing to do with “equity” or “fairness”, and it is not connected to the Chinese legal tradition at all; it concerns not everyone in a community getting what he or she deserves, but a single individual, when facing different situations, making the most proper decision out of every situation—not what is, in an absolute sense, “right” or “wrong”. This concept reflects the Confucian idea that human beings, in the process of associating other people, taking up different roles such as father, brother, subordinate, etc., and these different roles will produce different situations that require different virtues to deal with. Thus, although “Justitia” is from the society’s point of view and concerns each individual, *Yi* is from the individual’s point of view and concerns his or her different roles. They may be both about “doing the right thing”, but the Western and the Chinese civilization can have very different ideas when it comes to what is the “right thing” and how to do it.

To make an analogy: when one sees two leaves on the ground that are really similar, one may conclude that they can be seen as the same. However, what one does not see is the “history” that has brought the two leaves here—they may come from completely different places and had completely different experiences. What I am trying to say here is, although in

philosophical discussions many believe that they made no presumptions and base all their arguments on reason alone—which they see as "universal", doing philosophy in a certain language itself could imply a lot of presumptions already made. It is probably unavoidable, but we, at least, have to be aware of them. Or, it can in the end become the so-called "narrative violence".

Back to Leibniz, at the end of the day, I can only conclude that, I believe Leibniz supported accommodationism because he sincerely appreciated Chinese philosophy (in the way it was presented to him)—which he saw as similar to his own. As to whether there are actual similarities between Leibnizian thinking and the Chinese philosophy in itself as an independent tradition, it remains debatable, in my view.

5.3.2 Leibniz's Concerns for the Humanity

Even though it is hard to make a definitive judgment on the similarity between Leibniz's and the Chinese philosophy, what we can be sure of is the fact that Leibniz's study of China is within the larger frame of his efforts to make the whole humanity advance and become better. Right at the beginning of his Preface to *Novissima Sinica*, he writes,

"I consider it a singular plan of the fates that human cultivation and refinement should today be concentrated, in Europe and in [China], which adorns the Orient as Europe does the

opposite edge of the earth. Perhaps Supreme Providence has ordained such an arrangement, so that as the most cultivated and distant peoples stretch out their arms to each other, those in between may gradually be brought to a better way of life" (Preface to NS, p. 46).

Leibniz even believes that the Chinese Empire in general surpasses Europe in respect to morals (Preface to NS, p. 46). He suggests that the two civilizations should learn from each other's advantages: the Chinese should learn from the Europeans the "contemplative (demonstrative) sciences", "logic", and "metaphysics", all of which are "knowledge of things incorporeal", whereas the Europeans should learn from China the "practical philosophy", or "the precepts of ethics and politics adapted to the present life and use of mortals" (Preface to NS, pp. 46-47). Leibniz writes,

"[The] Chinese have…virtually accomplished more than the founders of religious orders among us have achieved within their own narrow ranks. So great is obedience toward superiors and reverence toward elders, so religious, almost, is the relation of children toward parents…the Chinese peasants and servants…behave to each other so lovingly and respectfully that they challenge all the politeness of the European magnates" (Preface to NS, pp. 47-48).

I think, when Leibniz was praising the "civility" of the Chinese, he probably knew that such behaviors of the Chinese are somehow connected to their philosophy (i.e., Confucianism).

That may be another reason why he urged to Jesuits to keep the Confucian elements when preaching, and, possibly, learn more about China.

That said, it is arguable whether Leibniz's descriptions of China is more of a "romanticization" than a real understanding. Personally, I think there are definitely some exaggerations in his descriptions; however, since most of his knowledge of China was received from missionaries who had actually been there, we can say that at least his claims are not "utterly baseless". In fact, I find that some of the good points about China that Leibniz mentioned (e.g., the politeness of the commoners when they meet each other) are very similar to Ricci's descriptions in his *Journals*.

Thus, I conclude that Leibniz's interest in China is not only about Christian mission; he is truly interested in its philosophy and its society and orderly governance. Leibniz wants to learn the "past" of China for the "future" of humanity—that is, he wants to learn how the Chinese developed such a society, and use the experience of the Chinese to help all the civilizations on earth. This should be a good point to end my thesis. Despite the complexities between Leibnizian and Chinese philosophy, one thing we can be certain about is that, this spirit of Leibniz—the spirit to improve the whole humanity based on mutual learning from the advantages of others, is so simple yet so powerful; it is true regardless of being said in the era of 500 BCE when the ancient Chinese lived, in the 17th Century CE when Leibniz lived, or in the 21st Century when we live now.

List of Abbreviations

Introduction----Introduction, "Writings on China."

Preface----Preface, "Writings on China."

Discourse----*Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, "Writings on China."

Loemker----"Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz: philosophical papers and letters."

Mungello----"How Central to Leibniz's Philosophy Was China?."

Goldenbaum----"It's love! Leibniz's foundation of natural law as the outcome of his struggle with Hobbes' and Spinoza's naturalism."

Longobardo and Shandong----"Christian Conversion in Late Ming China Niccolo Longobardo and Shandong."

Leibniz and Jesuits----"Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and the China Mission of the Jesuits."

Wenchao Li----"龙华民及其《 论中国宗教的几个问题》."

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