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[Thematic Research]

A Way of becoming Human:

Between the Ritualized Body and a Humanizing Action

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1. Ritual Proprieties for self-cultivation and East Asian humanities

What does it mean to cultivate 'humanity' in education? How is it supposed to be connected to 'humanities education'? Humanities education in schools or colleges is expected to cultivate humanity in youngsters. But what does 'humanity' mean here? Different traditions may respond differently. When I was in a junior high school, the school textbook for moral education specified three types of the educated: a man of good character, a man of deep knowledge, a man of high fame. I was taught that the 'man of good character' deserved genuinely to be called the educated. (As a young adolescent, it was really touching to discover this.) When Koreans say that they expect the school to cultivate 'humanity' in youngsters, it usually means the formation of 'good character'. And the core of good character is considered to be the disposition to conform to social norms, i.e., obeying teachers and the elderly and knowing how to behave in relation to other people of a different status, a disposition associated with the essential Confucian virtue of *'jen'*(仁), namely, benevolence or love of others.

This sense of good character is the basis of 'the noble man'(君子, *junzi*), the moral ideal of Confucianism, which has dominated the minds of Korean people since the establishment of the neo-Confucian Chosun dynasty in the 14th century. But the ultimate purpose of the noble man is

to become a sage who discovers 'his Way(道, *tao*). And the discovery of the Way is pursued through self-cultivation, which is to be practiced by two different, yet complementary pedagogical approaches: *bodily* mastery of ritual proprieties and book-reading.[1] Simply put, Confucian education in Chosun dynasty can be said to consist of two stages with two distinct approaches to self-cultivation: embodied character-building through *the Elementary Learning*(小學) and understanding of principle(理) through *the Great Learning*(大學). The former was supposed to cultivate the basic Confucian ethics of conduct by inculcating in young people ritual propriety, namely, proper ways of behaving as a human being (Han, 2001, 31). The latter was expected to motivate them to pursue the ultimate meaning of becoming a human through study of classical Confucian texts.

In the *formal* school curriculum in Korea today, the studies of the classical texts are long gone, having been replaced by modernized humanities curriculum from the West, which is usually centered on modern academic subjects, i.e., math, science, history and languages. Along with this change, the educational power of Confucian ritual proprieties as social norms appears to have been gradually reduced in the *minds* of modern educators in Korea. But what seems often to be unnoticed by them is the fact that, as Roger T. Ames says (1993, 149), "the expression and performance of *the body*, like other Confucian preoccupations such as the practice of ritual, the playing of music, the writing of calligraphy or the composition of literature," was a critical "medium for self-articulation" for the Confucian educated. Thus, even if young Korean students today are taught modernized subject-matters in school, their embodied educational experiences are still greatly influenced by *informal* school culture that is pervasively Confucian, if not dominantly. This means that the kind of humanity to be developed through the official curriculum tends to be at odd with the kind of humanity encouraged for young people through the hidden curriculum.

[1] Here book-reading refers to studies of the following four classical texts of Confucianism: *the Analects of Confucius, the Mencius, The Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean*.

For example, when Martha Nussbaum claims that the humanities education in this globalizing world should aim at educating youngsters as 'good citizens' who have, among other capacities, a capacity to care about others, near and distant, with genuine concern, as well as a capacity for critical thinking to raise a dissenting voice in a given society (2010, 45-46), we Korean teachers may find it appealing as a world-spirit, yet without having it affect the way we lead our lives.

My underlying concern here has to do with the fact that the idea of 'humanity' in the Confucian sense is often found to be at odd with the idea of humanity assumed by the modernized school curriculum. Some qualitative gap between the two kinds of humanities can often be experienced by young students under the modern school system in east Asia. To put it in a more dramatic way, the modern education system in east Asia forces them to live in the Confucian *body* with the western *mind* resulting in their selfhood being seriously split or fragmented. I think that we as educators need to pay due attention to this phenomenon and take seriously how the Confucian body is formed since the latter was traditionally considered critical to Confucian self-cultivation as the educational ideal.

Korean educationalists' apparent lack of appreciation of the educational power of Confucian ritual proprieties (禮, *li*) for modern education may have to do with their modernist prejudice, which regards Confucian rituals as outmoded, being susceptible to misuse as a means of social control. This prejudice prevents them from seeing *how* the Confucian ritual proprieties as social norms have *in fact* shaped and reproduced the distinctive *social body* of modern Koreans through schooling. Resonating from Foucault's work on the role of disciplinary power in the formation of the modern subject, I want to problematize progressive educators' alleged characterization of the Confucian practice of ritual proprieties as a form of mental indoctrination or behavioral conditioning, either through repetitive drills or the effective states induced by group engagement. What is often neglected in this view are more subtle and ambivalent effects of the ritual on our *bodies* in education, especially from participants' perspective. By over-simplifying the function of Confucian ritual as *social* control, we may end up

depriving ourselves of one of the most powerful educational inheritances that could be a way of empowering young people to be *active cultural agents*.

This paper will introduce an alternative view on the function of ritual, termed a reality-thesis formulated by Catherine Bell (1953-2008), an outstanding American scholar in religious studies,[2] to show how ritual can be better understood from the educational perspective. And then I will make use of this reality thesis to reinterpret the way Confucian ritual works in forming our social body. This is intended to free ourselves from the politically charged modernist criticism of Confucian ritual and to see if it could be in fact the very source of modern subjectivity, which is usually thought to be repressed by the ritual.

2. Ritual for Social control or Ritual for Reality-forming?

Ritual practice lies at the heart of Confucianism. In Chosun dynasty, the ritualization of political, social, and even economic relationships in a Confucian mold significantly shaped the cultural matrix of the entire society (Deuchler, 2002, 292). On the other hand, according to Bell, "ritualization correlates with and contributes to the restraining effect of *closed* and *highly structured* societies" (1993, 177), whether they may be premodern or modern. Bell also holds that a society governed by ritual assumes a fair degree of consensus, whereas another society characterized by the legalistic rule of law and order assumes much less. Given these descriptions, Chosun society for sure, and modern Korea to a certain extent, can be rightly considered high ritual societies.[3]

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[2] Catherine Bell (1953-2008) is a contemporary American scholar in religious studies, who specialized in studies of Chinese religions and ritual studies. Her book, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992, Oxford), is considered a breakthrough-text in religious studies that changed the framework for understanding the nature and function of ritual. My paper will heavily draw upon her book in understanding the Confucian ritual.

[3] Bell uses the terms, 'ritual,' 'ritual practice,' and 'ritualization,' interchangeably. As following her usage without objection, which is concerned with ritual in general, I treat without further thought Confucian ritual propriety(禮, *li*) as *a form* of ritual to which her general account can be applied because Confucian ritual propriety *as* conventional practice takes a strong formality, fitting the main features of ritual that Bell describes. The detailed discussion of it will be followed in the next section.

What was (is) the function of ritual in Chosun dynasty and in modern Korea if there is any? I am not asking here why Confucianism traditionally takes ritual seriously as a way of governing society and educating people, nor how people in Confucian society justify or explain their ritual practice. This line of internal accounts can be or must have been given by many Confucian scholars and specialists (Han and al, 2001; Kato, 2016). In fact, we can even safely suppose that in participating in ritual, people within the society more or less know what they do and why they do what they do. My question rather comes from a suspicion that they may know what they do and why, but they "do not know *what what they are doing does*" *to themselves* in participating in ritual (Bell, 1992, 108). This question is first inspired by some post-structuralist perspective on ritual in cultural studies, which takes 'the body' seriously in the account of 'ritualization', as in Foucault's and Bourdieu's works. But my question above in regard to ritual is primarily educational in the following two senses. First, it is concerned with what is exactly happening to *the individual*, especially to her *body*, when she participates in ritual; this question is educationally critical because educational practice is supposed to be in the end all about the (trans)formation of the individual selfhood as a unity of one's mind and body. Second, it is concerned with the nature of ritual as a culturally strategic practice for *the fusion* between mind and body, individual and society, thought and action, emotion and belief (Bell, 1992, 21). This fusion is exactly what modern educational practice aspires to offer in the midst of the ever self-alienating and dehumanizing exam-obsessed school culture in Korea.

One of the dominant accounts about what ritual does *to* individual participants engaged in ritual is a *repression thesis* (Bell, 1992, 172-173). It says that the function of ritual is social control over the participants in the form of socialization. Here socialization is defined as a matter of transmitting shared beliefs, or instilling a dominant ideology as an internal subjectivity. In fact, the same understanding of ritual lies behind the above-mentioned modern educators' criticism of Confucian ritual proprieties, such as filial piety or loyalty to the government, as a disguise for the elite class's interest and domination (Shin, 1970). I think this sociological criticism of Confucian ritual is parasitic on a psychological

assumption of the repression thesis: “ritualization is the controlled displacement of chaotic and aggressive impulses” (Bell, 1992, 173). According to the repression thesis, ritualization is central to *any culture* as a means to dominate *nature*, i.e., the natural violence within human beings. This thesis treats ritual as an oppressive device inherently *necessary* to an ordered society by being repressive of the individual; it pays attention to how ritual exercises control the individual’s *affective* state to make them *social* or even *moral*. What is to be noted here is the thesis’s underlying assumption of dichotomies between culture and nature, individual and society, (controlled) reason and (chaotic) emotion.

I don’t think this (sociological and psychological) account of ritual is accurate enough to be applied to Confucian ritual, even if it was politically employed that way by oppressive military regimes of the past in Korea. Bell also holds that the social control wielded by ritual is a much more complex phenomenon than the manipulation of affective states or cognitive categories, as described by the repression thesis. She instead proposes an alternative thesis called *a reality-thesis* by drawing upon many different scholars and works in cultural studies, such as Geertz, Douglas, Foucault and Bourdieu among others (Bell, 1992, 175). According to Bell, ritual does not control. It rather constitutes a particular dynamic of social empowerment by *modeling* ideal relations and structures of values. This thesis views ritual as “a symbolic modeling of the social order, with this imaging or iconic quality as the basis of its efficacy” (Bell, 1992, 175). With this use of the word ‘modeling’, the thesis tries to highlight not how ritual ‘controls’ but how it ‘defines’ social situations by being presented to social members as a reality to be rendered and experienced. I think this reality thesis provides us with a better framework through which we can more accurately understand how Confucian ritual actually works *from the participant’s perspective*. Let me briefly reconstruct how the reality-thesis explains ritual as a general account of it.

According to Bell, the purpose of ritual practice is the production of the *ritualized* (social or public) body. But what is noteworthy about this practice is that it does not see itself doing that, namely, the production of the ritualized body. What is the ritualized body, by the way? Bell says: it is “a body invested with a sense of ritual” (Bell, 1992, 98). And ‘a sense

of ritual,' she continues to say, is what we are embodied with *as* "an implicit variety of schemes whose deployment works to produce sociocultural situations that the ritualized body (of ours) can dominate in some way". This seems to say that our repeated practice of ritual brings to us a variety of schemes that open to us as participants a certain bodily horizon in which we can orient ourselves in such a way as to make ourselves feel that we *fit t*o given situations. How well we are attuned to the given situations is a matter of our practical mastery of the strategic schemes in ritualization. What is to be noted here, according to the reality-thesis, is that ritual's ability to define an order *as the real* in both its internal structure and its limits is a form of control, yet a very unique kind of control that is not experienced *as such* by the people involved. In other words, ritual exercise helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society by deflecting people's attention from other ways without their noticing of that very fact (Bell, 1992, 175-176). How is it possible?

According to Bell, ritual does this job by being deeply implicated with the human body. Drawing upon a series of post-structuralist theories that identify the human body as a social construction in the image of society and a microcosm of the universe, the reality thesis considers the human body as one's existential site where the mediation of the simple dialectical interaction between the individual (perception of the world) and the social world (of categories) takes place (Bell, 1992, 94). Thus, it is said that through ritual the construction of cultural reality focuses on the body, which in turn experiences the construction *as* natural to itself (Bell, 1992, 95); it is *the body* that makes us not notice what the ritual does to us by taking it as natural to itself. This means that ritual grants the body a critical site for the social construction of reality, and the body is shaped or socialized by rituals into the *social* body. Turning to this social body is a key to the relationship of one's self, society and cosmos. Ritual as modelling this whole process of socialization, that is, the transformation of natural body into cultural body, transforms one sort of man into another sort of man.

Then, how exactly does this happen through the human body? According to Bell, the invisibility of what and how ritual does is possible because ritual *naturalizes* arbitrary assumptions of reality, so as to make

them *look* necessary or real to the people involved. Creating this misrecognition within ritual participants and making this very act invisible to them are essential to the successful operation of ritual in defining reality. In Bell's view (1992, 112), the reason ritual could function in this manner has to do with the way it communicates with the participants. Ritual communication differs from linguistic communication in its function in two ways. First, the way ritual expresses its codes or principles is not discursive but *performative* as in such speech-acts as 'promising' or 'declaration of wedding'. What is distinctive about ritual is not what it says or symbolizes but what it *does things* to the people involved in it. Ritual is always a matter of the performance of gestures and the manipulation of objects. Ritual languages are *deeds* in themselves that accomplish things; they operate by showing and creating things to be perceived and interpreted. There is no message to be conveyed; they act upon reality (Bell, 1992, 111) and thereby create a situation that supplies to the participants the opportunity to infer and master the codes underlying the ostensible activity of the rite for their future actions. Second, this means that ritual communication plays on *ambiguities* with the symbolic meanings of ritual codes when it produces model-experiences in the participants. Its underlying codes or scheme are not determined enough to instruct specific meanings to the participants; the specific meanings are supposed to be *inferred and mastered* by them (Bell, 1992, 181). We may describe this (internal and personal) inference and appreciation as part of physical self-cultivation in the Confucian context. Thus, we can say that ritual is a matter of programmed learning through activities that involve the participants' appreciation of codes, principles, and concepts, and their reproduction *in* practice and *in* action. These two strategies of ritual inevitably elude the full articulation of *the work ritual does to* the participants themselves; full articulation is not a medium that can grasp the ritual practice (Bell, 1992, 97 & 114).

Let me pause here to examine more closely exactly how the participants do *not* notice the work ritual does to themselves or what is happening to themselves while ritual does its job. Adapting Bourdieu's discussion of practice, Bell holds (1992, 98-99) that we can speak of the natural logic of ritual, logic embodied in the physical movements of the body and thereby lodged beyond our grasp of consciousness and

articulation. The principle underlying this logic can be made explicit only with great difficulty; they are rarely in themselves the objects of scrutiny or contention. In other words, for Bell, the molding process of our social body within a highly structured environment of ritual often does not come up to our inner state of mind. Rather it primarily acts to *restructure* our bodies in every performance of our acts themselves. Hence, for example, a required bowing (to the elderly) in the Confucian ritual does not merely communicate our subordination to the person we bow to. For all intents and purposes, our practice of bowing *produces* a subordinated bower in and through the act itself. Of course, sometimes on another level within ritualization, such an act of bowing may actually set up a bifurcation between the external show of subordination and an internal act of resistance. But in either case, the ritual practice shapes one's *deep ontological* orientation to the social life, involving the setting up of oppositions and differentiation in the orientation, i.e., social oppositions of the elderly and the young or man and woman, combined with geographical oppositions of right and left or above and below.

Through the privileging of a certain set of categories built into such an exercise of generating hierarchical schemes, a loose sense of totality and systematicity is produced in one's order of the world (Bell, 1992, 104). This means that ritual's function in our life, since it is so deeply implicated with the way our body is oriented, is more ontological than social in its nature. In this way, ritual dynamics afford and develop our experience of order as well as our sense of fit between the taxonomic order and the real world of experience, which leads us to find the connection so natural and organic as if it were part of the way things are. Therefore, we can conclude that these structured and structuring experiences of the world through ritual practice guarantee the reality and value of its underlying schemes by means of our sense of fit or coherence between the instincts of the socialized body and the environment in which it acts.

What we can see here is that ritual does not simply act to bring the s ocial body to the participants. The participants also actively seek and app ropriate the coherence in terms of their ontological concerns or social int erests, as persons or groups, so as to experience it as more or less *redemp tive*; this means that they are also empowered by the schemes of the ritual

s (Bell, 1992, 114-115). This is how, as Foucault's concept of micropower well shows (Foucault, 1995), ritual makes the body an arena where more local social practices were linked to the larger scale organization of power. This is also how ritual leaves room for the social body to turn into an active cultural agent in the form of consent, negotiation and resistance in the process of internalizing the schemed order of reality defined by rituals. Bell says it is because the process of internalization of the scheme differentiates the private from the social selves in the actors, involving a distancing within them of their private and social identities. This distancing is integral to what ritual does through its elaboration of symbolic meanings, but it can be problematic, of course, if taken too far (Bell, 1992, 217; Butler, 1997, 19). The relationship between any instance of ritualization and its immediate social reality by means of the participant's acts does not seem to be the mere reflection of power of given order but that of their interplay. Ritualization cannot be understood apart from the immediate situation, which is reproduced in a misrecognized or transformed way through the production of *ritualized agents*. Thus, we may conclude that, honoring Foucault's terms (1995, 192 & 194), ritual does not just control or subordinate the subject, but *produces* it as well.

3. Cultivation of the Ritualized body as a Way of Self-cultivation; a Case of Confucian Ritualization

How can this general account of ritual be applied to Confucian ritual in particular?[4] In what follows, I will try to make use of the reality-thesis to see the extent to which Confucian ritual can be understood as a social practice that shapes the *social body* in the form of self-cultivation that could create an empowered subject. Confucianism, especially neo-

[4] Bell (1992, 220) summarizes several features common to all forms of ritualization: 1) strategies of differentiations through formalization and periodicity, 2) the centrality of the body, 3) the orchestration of schemes by which the body defines the environment and is defined in turn by it, 4) ritual mastery, and 5) the negotiation of power to define and appropriate the hegemonic order of the society. I think all these features are also true of Confucian rituals as conventional practice.

Confucianism, is a highly sophisticated system of rituals. It is not an exaggeration to say that Confucian education is all about rituals, i. e., learning how to obey or conform to rituals in one's actions on every level of everyday life. But what exactly does ritual (禮, *li*) refer to in the Confucian context? First, it refers to institutionalized forms of rites, which people usually tend to take as a tradition, i.e., periodic or celebratory rites of royal courts or ancestral worship ceremonies as a set of formal procedures. Second, Confucian ritual (*li*) more commonly means some patterns of overt behavior of actions that are instructed on the way we carry our bodies and make physical gestures, as well as a set of specific rules of conducts that prescribes our *role-performances*, roles such as a king, a father, or a son. Lastly, *li* can be described as a set of more general rules of conduct that govern one's *personal relationship* with others, such as reciprocal respect, loyalty or good faith, which is almost synonymous to what we call today *moral* norms of action (Han, 2001, 16).

Let me give you some examples for these:

> Do not listen with the head inclined on one side, nor answer with a loud, sharp voice, nor look with a dissolute leer, nor keep the body in a slouching position. Do not saunter about with a haughty gait, nor stand with one foot raised. Do not sit with your knees wide apart, nor sleep on your face (*The Elementary Learning*, 3:2:2, trans, Lee, 1999, 135)

> When he was in the carriage, he did not turn his head quite round, he did not talk hastily, he did not point with his hands (*The Elementary Learning*, 3:2:7, trans. Lee, 1999, 140)

> Parents are sometimes liable to faults and mistakes. Then the child must try to correct them, using, however, only the mildest and most indirect of means. If the parent refuses to change ways, the child must wait and try to correct them again only after his respect and filial piety please them. Even if the parent is not pleased, the child must try to correct them not to let him susceptible of

> dishonor for the family. If the parent punishes the child for criticizing, the child is not to feel any anger or resentment, even if beaten until blood flows. The child must continue to try to please him with high respect and filial piety (*The Elementary Learning*, 2:1:22, trans. Lee, 1999, 55)
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> Tzu-kung asked about how friend should be treated. The Master said, "Advise them to the best of your ability and guide them properly, but stop when there is no hope of success. Do not ask to be snubbed" (*The Elementary Learning*, 2:5:4, trans. Lee, 1999, 108-109)

These passages are all from *the Elementary Learning*, an anthology of selections from the Confucian classical texts, which greatly influenced the way the Koreans oriented education for their children.[5] The Neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hui created this text for the purpose of fostering specific and concrete modes of behavior that are both practical and ritualistic (Kelleher, 1989). The first two passages reveal the physical aspects of self-cultivation in young people. *Li* includes very trivial acts of our everyday life from sweeping and sprinkling to talking and posing the head. The last two passages touch upon more subtle manners of conduct as a son and as a friend in learning how to converse with the elderly and relating *affectively* with people around us as young people.

Young people are expected to love their parents, respect the elderly, and esteem teachers. The mastery of all these physical appearances and behaviors prepares them to advance to the next level, that is, the pursuit of the goal of *the Great Learning*: cultivating the self, regulating the family, ruling the country, and finally establishing one's peace of mind in

[5] *The Elementary Learning* is a text edited in 1187 by a well-known Neo-Confucian scholar Chi-Hui from the Song dynasty in China. But his educational influence on the Chosun dynasty of pre-modern Korea was so vast, pervasive and lasting that his teaching from *the Elementary Learning* still remains deep inside of everyday moral psychology of most of Korean middle-class parents. This text was an important part of the Neo-Confucian core curriculum, which was taught in official educational institutes in Korea from the early Chosun dynasty until the period of Japanese colonialism in Korea in the 1900's. But the educational philosophy and spirit underlying the text is still with us in our everyday moral psychology and school culture, even if it has been rapidly disappearing (or disintegrating) for the last few decades.

the world. The distinctiveness of this educational approach is to make young people adopt the specific codes of behaviors, i.e., the way they carry themselves, their facial expression, and even the tone of one's voice, just exactly the way the text instructs us to do *up to the level* of their becoming part of our unconscious self. This means that they are supposed to make them part of their bodily habit without raising any questions; this obedience is critical in building their 'good character' as the early development of their personality.

The significance of the Neo-Confucian teaching from *the Elementary Learning* usually lies in its greater attention to 'the social process' of building a good character, and how it can contribute to individual self-development. The high level of specificity in instructing young people's physical aspects of self-cultivation, namely, person's comportment, dress and habits of eating and drinking as a way of disciplining oneself and reverencing others seems to assume a strong connection between the orientation of physical body and moral character. That is, a ritual act itself would somehow empower them into a good character; the former is considered the mirror of the latter. A person's posture and carriage would both reveal his (or her) character *and* influence upon forming it. Thus, learning at this stage is not just to master prescribed code of behaviors but also to *internalize* the idea that behavioral prescriptions and role models most effectively inform one's character. This is why it is extremely important in Confucian education for young people to learn how to *unconditionally* accord their bodily orientations and behaviors to the specific prescriptions of conducts instructed by the elderly and the text without reflecting or raising questions on the norms themselves underlying the behavioral codes. It will form their character by way of shaping their moral psychology, i.e., orienting their every little emotion and attitude for their everyday situations in accordance to a set of Confucian norms. On this first stage of teaching, evoking action is more important than reflection. Here we may say that this process of building a good character is the very process of shaping *the social or ritualized body* in terms of reality thesis.

But how convincing is the Confucian assumption of a strong connection between the orientation of physical body and moral character (of the social body)? It may not be as convincing as we think it would be

for two reasons. First, it seems to be *empirically* possible to conform to the prescribed behavioral norms and rituals without the expected moral psychology accompanied. We can *pretend* to conform to them, if it is necessary. In fact, most of us who have not reached the level of "the noble man" in the Confucian sense can be said not to be fully free from this pretension since only "the noble man" can succeed in finding "the Way" in the sense that his every little act in the everyday life *naturally* goes along with the heaven's Way without involuntary wills on his part. Second, it is *logically* possible to conceive another set of behavioral norms and rituals the commitment to which can lead young people into the individual self-cultivation, or perfection of one's character, which is the ultimate purpose of the Confucian education. In other words, the specific codes of behavioral norms and rituals prescribed by the text can be said to be arbitrary in connection to the Confucian ideal of self-cultivation; the connection is not necessary, but contingent. This means that there is *no guarantee* to make a shift from the former to the latter. Then, what is the point of Confucian ritual as a way of physical self-cultivation? Or what would possibly facilitate the connection between them in Confucian education?

It seems that one's participation in Confucian ritual *somehow* facilitates the connection between *li* and good character. The question is how it does this. At this point, we may need to call out the reality thesis discussed earlier, and ask: What is 'the work' that Confucian ritual does in facilitating the *actual* connection between them? How does it do the job? We can say that Confucian ritual does this job by awakening *jen*(仁, benevolence or love of others) in the participant. This potential answer directs our attention to the relation between *li*(禮) and *jen*(仁) in the formation of the Confucian self. And Herbert Fingarette, a well-known Confucian scholar, gives us a helpful description of the relation between *li*(禮) and *jen*(仁). He says:

> *Li* and *jen* are two aspects of the same thing. Each points to an aspect of the action of man in his distinctively human role. *Li*

> directs our attention to the traditional social pattern of conduct and relationships; *jen* directs our attention to the person as the one who pursues that patterns of conduct and thus maintains those relationships. *Li* also refers to the particular act in its status as exemplification of invariant norm; *jen* refers to the act as expressive of an orientation of the person, as expressing his commitment to act as prescribed by *li*. *Li* refers to the act as overt and distinguishable pattern of sequential behaviors; *jen* refers to the act as the single indivisible gesture of an actor, as his, and as particular and individual by reference to the unique individual who performs the act and to the unique context of the particular action.
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> Our more familiar Western terminology would be misleading. We are tempted to go further than I have above and to say *jen* refers to the attitudes, feelings, wishes and will… (Fingarette, 1972, 42-43).

Interestingly enough, Fingarette describes *li* and *jen* as two different aspects of *the same thing*; *li* refers to the observable bodily objectification of patterns of conduct, whereas *jen* to an act that expresses the orientation of the particular actor *as a person* who delivers *li*. But, as suggested in the last part of the passage, Fingarette keeps warning us that we should not take *li* as an overt and objective behavior *in contrast* with *jen* as a subjective inner state, as the dualistic Cartesian mindset in the West often mistakenly conceives the human mind. In fact, this is why Fingarette starts with the sentence which says that "*li* and *jen* are two aspects of *the same thing*."

But what does he mean by 'the same thing' here? One interpretation could be that they are 'ontologically' the same thing. What does this mean? By this I mean that they are interconnected in their origin or derived from each other. Let me explain why this can be the case by exploring some textual evidence. Confucius says in *the Analects* in responding to the question raised by his disciple on how to *be jen*:

> He who can submit oneself to *li* is *jen* (*The Analects*, 12:1, trans. Fingarette, 1972, 42)

> When abroad, behave *as though* you were receiving an important guest.
> When employing the service of the common people, behave *as though* you were officiating at an important sacrifice.
> Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire. (*The Analects*,12:2, trans. Lau, 1979, 109)

> Man of *jen* helps others to take their stand in that he himself wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in that he himself wishes to get there. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can be called the method of *jen* (*The Analects*, 6:30, trans. Fingarette, 1972, 41)

The first passage says that being *jen* is all about being able to submit oneself to *li*. This phrase sounds surprisingly puzzling to modern ears since it says that all we need to do to *be jen* (humane or benevolent) is to obey to the specific norms of actions rectified by *li*. But the second passage gives us some clues towards a more intelligent understanding of the phase. It suggests that one's observance of *li* is not a mechanical nor even a practical process; it is a *symbolic* process since we are supposed to deliver *li* in a certain manner, that is, *an as-if mode*. This symbolic process of imagining other hypothetical situations in delivering *li* seems to give the practitioner a certain normative orientation, which leads into *being jen*. The last passage clearly specifies that being *jen* can be cultivated by our ability to make the as-if analogy given the situation we are in.

By connecting this to the reality thesis, we can make sense of my claim that *li* and *jen* are 'ontologically' the same thing. First, as Fingarette holds that *jen* develops *only* so far as *li* develops (1972, 48), they can be said to be *developmentally* connected. The more one practices *li* up to the point of naturalizing it as part of oneself, the more he or she turns into being *jen* or being humane. How? It was said earlier that ritual primarily acts to *restructure* our bodies in every doing of our acts. By restructuring our bodies, ritual involves the setting up of the fundamental *schemes* of the world in us whose deployment works to produce the ritualized body, i.e., schemes of social oppositions of the elderly and the

young, or man and woman. This means that submitting oneself to *li* is the social process of embodied internalization of the *underlying schemes* of *li*, which prepares the social body with the ability to cultivate *jen* in it; for the latter is developed with one's ability for the symbolic manipulation of the very schemes at given situations. For example, we cannot have profound and intelligent filial pieties toward one's parents unless one has practical knowledge about how to behave in specific socio-familial relations as well as extensive experiences by participation in the specific social and family affairs, and the practical knowledge and experiences are made possible only with the embodied schemes of the social and cosmic world. This means that *jen* is to be developed out of one's observance of *li*, which restructures our body with the basic Confucian schemes of oppositions and differentiations that order the universe and society.

Secondly, being *jen* by submitting oneself to *li* is not just a matter of being familiarized with *practical* knowledge on how to do things in certain social situations. It is a matter of being able to attentively appreciate the *symbolic* meanings of the conducts rectified by *li*. More specifically, being *jen* is deeply related to our ability to attribute some *idealized* meanings and purposes to the social norms rectified by *li*, as indicated by the 'as though' phrases above. It can be described as a *personal* process of appropriation of social norms rectified by *li*. Thus, we can say that the observance of *li*, which equips us with bodily schemes of social norms, teaches young people not only practical skills on how to behave; it also evokes some *power* over them that awakens *jen* as their imaginative capability for the idealization of the norms they submit to. Where does this power come from about *li*, then?

Third, I think that the observance of *li* could lead us to actively conjure up Confucian ritual acts *as* real because, as the reality thesis says earlier, ritual dynamics afford and develop our experience of order as well as our sense of fit between the taxonomic order and the real world of experience. It makes us find this connection so natural and organic as if it were part of the world. And the very sense of naturalness is likely to create a sense of *sacredness* in us who deliver *li*. This means that the successfully ritualized body, let's say, the noble man (君子, *junzi*), would, willingly and repeatedly, *conjure up* Confucian ritual acts *as* real *with a*

sense of sacredness, especially when he has an *organic* sense of fit between his instincts of the ritualized body and the environment in which it acts. This sense of sacredness can deeply touch the participants and awaken their sense of *jen*. Ritual acts can give them an ontological orientation to life with a fulfilled sense of finding themselves as part of the universe. We can see here that *li* and *jen* are ontologically inseparable because they depend upon each other in generating the ritualized body.

On the other hand, in distinguishing one from the other, Fingarette emphasizes above the nature of *li* as a set of *patterned* behavior and the nature of *jen* as an act of *a particular person*. While warning us not to take them as dualistic, namely 'an overt act of *li*' versus 'inner mental state of *jen*', he seems rather to highlight the *social* or *collective* dimension of *li* and *jen*'s special connection to *the person* who delivers the acts. Thus, we may conclude that *li* and *jen* refer to the same act, but address different dimensions of the same act: *li* addresses the social or public dimension of one's conduct performed by the ritualized body, whereas *jen* the personal orientation or commitment reflected in the same conduct.

Fingarette further articulates the differences as follows:

> *Li* stresses the act as overt, the series of movement through space and time. As such, the act is analyzable into segments, into a series of steps, each step a prerequisite for its successor. There is therefore a way to carry out *li*, but not so with *jen*. When we look at action from the standpoint of the actor, we use categories that do not provide us with complex patterns of action analyzable into spatial and temporal relationships but with "simple" acts. To put it another way; to look at an act from the standpoint of the actor is not to shift from outer space and time, and to look instead into an inner mysterious realm, but it is to characterize the act in terms of categories that do not have the same logical features as the ones that characterize the act as overt behavior (Fingarette, 1972, 49).

Fingarette holds that two different logical features govern *li* and *jen*: one analyzable in spatial and temporal terms and the other not so. Even if Fingarette seems to be interested in articulating the logical differences

between them, I am more interested in articulating how a dynamic shift from *li* to *jen* or from *jen* to *li* internal to an actor, takes place. This shift is supposed to take place in the ritualized body, a shift from *li* as the *external imposition* of social norms to *jen* as the *personal appropriation* of *li*, which is key to the formation of good character. Even if we cannot take for granted this shift, practicing *li* seems to be the *necessary* means to be *jen*. This is why Fingarette holds that practicing *li* with *persistence* is the only way to secure the participant the way to be *jen* (1972, 51).

Thus, we may conclude that the practice of *li* facilitates *jen* by making one embody the schemes of *li* in one's participation in *li*, and that *jen* secures and fulfills *li* by making one relive *li* through one's active interpretation of the symbolic meanings of the schemes. Here the relation between *li* and *jen* in shaping the ritualized body looks circular. But it is not an empty circularity; in the process, a human power seems to be created. It is a power that emanates from human beings as actors in ritual, and it is directed toward other human beings and influences them (Fingarette, 1972, 54). The way this human power is produced in Confucian ritual could look miraculous or mysterious, especially when one's participation in *li* often looks so mechanical. But the practice of *li* itself is dynamic and alive if participants try to persist with it in pursuit of *jen*. It is a way of re-orienting one's whole being, living in a new way at every moment of practicing *li* with an act of *jen*. If we follow the reality thesis, we can say that, with this humanizing act at every moment, one can create one's reality in a new way where one lives.

4. Conclusion

This essay starts with a *deliberate* suspicion about our inheritance of Confucian ritual, only to reconsider it as a legitimate educational resource for our future generation. It is attempted not because Confucian ritual is simply *ours*, but because we realize that there is no way we east Asians can get away from it: it deeply constrains us, that is, constraining not only the way we see the world but also the way we orient ourselves in life; it has shaped our whole mode of being. This recognition should lead us to appreciate more of what is unique about an east-Asian tradition of humanities embodied in our tendency to obey social norms or ritual

formality, which is usually considered negative in contrast with the western tradition of humanities that emphasizes free-thinking or independent-mindedness.

In making this argument relevant to contemporary schooling in east Asia, one of the biggest challenges would be to create a form of educational ritual where the circularity between *li* and *jen* is made *more* dynamic and productive, rather than mechanical and routine. To do so, it seems inevitable that we examine more consciously the implicit varieties of hierarchical schemes of Confucian norms and see how they could be revised in such a way as to be compatible with the horizontal schemes of modernity. The schemes behind any educational ritual need to be reasonably coherent with each other while loosely connected; otherwise, it would be hard to invite young participants to engage in the ritual with lived experiences.

Lastly, I want to add that my educational interest in Confucian ritual, which looks somewhat politically conservative, hides an ambition for a new perspective on education. In contrast to the view of education in east Asia, which has traditionally taken ritual as central to humanities education, as well as to the view of modern education in general, which tend to take ritual as a pre-modern tool for social control, I think that ritualization can potentially be a good pedagogical tool as the strategic embodiment of schemes for power relationship that can promote the forces that have been traditionally thought to work against social solidarity or control. Bell's words below may support this somewhat seemingly paradoxical possibility for the creation of modern subjectivity that is embedded in east-Asian culture:

> It is possible that ritualization itself can generate and deploy such bifurcations of the self as that described by Durkheim as "two things facing in different and almost contrary directions." If so, it would be a feature of ritualization in a particular historical and cultural setting, a setting in which such schemes would have some efficacious value outside the ritual (Bell, 1992, 217).

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