

對林安梧教授〈後新儒家實踐哲學的一個側面——關於「外王—內聖」問題的一些回應〉之省察

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摘要

在〈後新儒家實踐哲學的一個側面——關於「外王—內聖」問題的一些回應〉一文中，林安梧教授說明了他的學思歷程中對「徹底的反傳統主義」和當代新儒家的批評，以展現他所主張的「後新儒家實踐哲學」。其中，林教授批評當代新儒家的其中一為代表人物牟宗三先生的「良知之自我坎陷」說，只是某種詮釋下的哲學構造，不是真正的歷史事實。另一方面，林教授認為當代新儒家表面上雖然與徹底的反傳統主義對立，但事實上兩者皆全盤接受西方的民主與科學，而且也同樣有「方法論上的本質主義」的問題。本文的目的，即在於進一步省察林教授對當代新儒家特別是牟宗三先生思想的批評。筆者認為，林教授沒有清楚認識牟先生提出的「本質的機緣」和「現實的機緣」之間的區別，以及只著眼於「現實的機緣」，未能注意到西方文化可開出民主與科學，而傳統中國文化則未能有這樣的開展，有其「本質的機緣」。其次，林教授忽略了牟先生曾對西方民主與科學背後所依據的「理性之架構表現」，其中的限制提出深刻的反省。此外，本文也藉由牟先生的觀點，回應林教授對「方法論上的本質主義」之批評。

關鍵詞：當代新儒家、後新儒家、牟宗三、林安梧、方法論上的本質主義

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壹、前言

在〈後新儒家實踐哲學的一個側面——關於「外王--內聖」問題的一些回應〉(林安梧, 2024)一文中, 林安梧教授詳細回顧他個人數十年來的學思歷程, 同時說明了他在各個階段中對「徹底的反傳統主義者」(radical anti-traditionalism) 和當代新儒家的批評, 以展現他所主張的「後新儒家實踐哲學」。在該文中, 林教授批評當代新儒家與徹底的反傳統主義者一樣, 皆陷入「方法論上的本質主義」(methodological essentialism) 之困境, 而且皆全盤接受由西方文化所發展出的民主與科學, 主張應以「方法論上的約定主義」(methodological conventionalism) 取代。林教授分析了「自由科學的因果性」與「人文學問的因果性」之間的差異, 檢討西方民主制度下只強調選舉、罷免及制約平衡 (check and balance) 所衍生的問題, 從而主張「有人倫的人權, 有自覺的自由, 有民本的民主」。林教授也指出「君、父、聖」所構成的「血緣性縱貫軸」和三者混為一體所造成的「道的錯置」(misplaced Dao), 才是傳統中國文化沒有發展出民主制度的癥結所在, 批評牟宗三先生的「良知之自我坎陷」說只是「詮釋學意義下的哲學理論邏輯次序」, 既不是「歷史的發生次序」, 也不是「實踐的學習次序」, 並在船山學式的「本體發生學」(ontogenetic method) 之思考下, 在當代新儒家「本內聖以開新外王」之說以外, 提出「外王—內聖」的說法。

然而, 筆者對當代新儒學家的瞭解, 特別是對牟宗三先生「良知之自我坎陷」說之解讀, 實有別於林教授的看法。受筆者的學識所限, 也因林教授對當代新儒家的批評主要是針對牟先生而發, 筆者只針對林教授的論述, 提出三個問題: (一) 究竟林教授對牟先生「良知之自我坎陷」說之批評, 以及他個人對於為何傳統中國文化沒有發展出民主與科學之回答, 是否已切中問題的癥結? (二) 究竟當代新儒家是否如林教授所言, 全盤接受西方文化所發展出的民主與科學? (三) 當代新儒學究竟是否如林教授所說, 是「方法論上的本質主義」? 即使是「方法論上的本質主義」, 是否必然陷入林教授所說的困境? 希望藉由這三個問題, 就教於林教授。

貳、對「良知之自我坎陷」說的批評

林教授認為牟先生的「良知之自我坎陷」說, 是「由形而上的保存到形而下的開啟的歷程」。雖然從熊十力先生到牟先生, 皆已多次清楚表示, 本心良知是呈現, 而非假定或預設, 但林教授在這裏對牟先生的理解, 似乎已認定牟先生是在思考上先假定了道德是「形而上的真實」, 可作為「乾坤萬有之基」開啟一切。因此, 林教授認為這只是牟先生的哲學構造, 並非歷史事實。他說:

如果我們沒有對整個歷史的浮沉升降，好自理解，只是誤認為我們以前是一片漆黑，現在要把漆黑去掉，迎來光明。或者誤認為我們以前是一片光明，只是光明的灼人眼睛，難以看清楚，恐怕要遮蔭一下，坎陷一下才能開啟真正的清楚分別。這些呼籲，必須落實，而所謂的落實，是實事求是地去理解，我們之所以會往內傾，而忽略了外在結構，這與我們兩千年來的父權高壓、君主專制、男權中心，是有密切關係的。就是這三者所構成的「血緣性縱貫軸」再加上科舉制度、八股取士，教條化、刻板化了人的培育與構成。這麼一來，就使得這「血緣性縱貫軸」固結成難以解開的專制集權結構。正是這樣的結構，讓我們的道德成為太道德了，讓我們的人性成為太人性了，讓我們的內聖成為太內聖了。這一「太」就走向了「封閉」（林安梧，2024）。

林教授認為，不論是反傳統主義者將整個中國文化看成是漆黑一片，必須完全拋棄，才能走向現代化，還是當代新儒家認為，雖然傳統儒家在內聖方面已臻完善，但由於知識的發展不夠，未能開出民主、科學，故例如牟先生即主張良知的自我坎陷以開出知性主體，都是未能瞭解清楚中國歷史的整體事實。反傳統主義固然是面對西方文明發展的盛世而要全盤否定傳統文化的一種自卑心態，即使牟先生的坎陷說，也只不過是「某種詮釋下的哲學構造，並不是真正的歷史事實」（林安梧，2024）。對林教授而言，造成傳統儒家偏向內聖、外王得不到充分發展的真正原因，是父權高壓、君主專制、男權中心三者構成的專制集權結構對思想所造成的禁錮。本來儒家要求在位者應有其德，但在秦漢以降專制帝王的制度下，變成統治者無德而自稱有德，由儒家「聖王」的理想變成是「王聖」的事實。本來儒家要求統治者照顧人民「如保赤子」，但同樣在帝制下變成「君父」，要求臣民絕對的服從，君要臣死，臣不得死。

筆者以為，牟先生和林教授對於傳統中國文化外王得不到充分發展的問題，兩者提供的說明之間的差異，涉及到一個重要的問題，即：究竟思想模式是否完全受歷史條件所決定？對筆者而言，牟先生並非不重視歷史文化的背景對思想所造成的影響。例如，當論及「理性之外延的表現」時，牟先生也提到西方的外延表現在政治上有其現實的因緣，此現實的因緣即是在西方歷史中所出現的「階級」，故牟先生說：「他們是在『階級』本身的認定與階級間的限制與爭取中而走上『理性之外延的表現』。（牟宗三，1995，頁145）」對牟先生而言，中國歷史並沒有出現如西方歷史中所謂的「階級」，故這也可以說是中國文化在政治上理性外延表現不足之現實因緣。然而，牟先生同時指出「概念心靈」才是西方文化生命之「本質的因緣」。同樣地，我們可以說，儒家在「理性之運用的表現」下，「概念心靈」不足才是外王沒有得到充分發展的「本質的因緣」，至於歷史中的其他因素都只是「現實的因緣」。對於「理性之運用的表現」，牟先生有以下的說明：

凡是運用表現都是「攝所歸能」，「攝物歸心」。這二者皆在免去對立：它或者把對象收進自己的主體裏面來，或者把自己投到對象裏面去，成為徹上徹下的絕對。內收

則全物在心，外投則全心在物。其實一也。這裏面若強分能所而說一個關係，便是「隸屬關係」(Sub-Ordination)。聖賢人格之「化」是如此，聖君賢相的政體，君相對人民的關係猶如父母對於子女，子女不是父母的敵體，亦是如此；而道心之觀照亦是如此。是以運用表現便以「隸屬之局」來歸定（牟宗三，1995，頁52）。

牟先生在另一處指出，「理性的運用表現」是「據體以成用」，是在具體生活中牽連著「事」說的，而這種運用表現中的「理性」所指的是實踐理性。我們可以說，「理性的運用表現」是就本心良知的明覺作用而說。此明覺作用在具體的物事上表現，其表現時，是與物一體呈現的，在這裏並沒有人、我，心、物的區別。物是在本心的潤澤中的物，本心亦是在具體的物事中所呈現的本心，其實無所謂心，亦無所謂物，分心與物、能與所，都只是分解的、方便的說法，其實只是一大用流行，一於穆不已的作用。當然若要分解地、方便地說能所，則因為此時的物是在心的朗照下的物，所以可以說物隸屬於心，故牟先生說這是一種「隸屬關係」。中國傳統下聖君賢相的政體即是這種理性運用表現下的結果，人民是在君相德政的披澤下安居樂業，猶如子女在父母的庇護下茁壯成長，即孟子所說的「如保赤子」，人民或子女不是與君相或父母爭權利的敵體，所以也是一種隸屬關係。在這種思考模式下，儒家只問在位者有沒有相應的德，有沒有盡照顧人民的責任，讓人民各適其性、各遂其生，而沒有政權、主權、權利、義務、自由、平等，諸政治上的形式概念。這並不表示，儒家的政治思想就一定與透過上述這些政治上的形式概念所建構的民主體制相衝突。相反地，從孟子認為舜之有天下是「天與之，人與之」，而非出於堯之私相授受，即隱含了儒家對民主體制的肯認。牟先生說：

……「天子能薦人于天，不能使天與之天下。」此是首先提出「推薦」一觀念，即今之所謂競選提名也。「天與之」是通過「人與之」而表示。「人與之」是通過其人之行與事之得民心而表示。故「人與之」，「天與之」，無異於說經過一普選而得人民之熱烈擁護。而熱烈擁護是自然而然的，不是強為的，把持的，虛偽的。即由此「自然而然」，遂說「天與之」。……這種經過「推薦」與「普選」而得天下，踐天子位，完全是「公天下」的觀念，是「德」的觀念。這裏並沒有人權運動，也沒有訂憲法，完全就這最具體最實際的行事與民心之向背而表天理合當如此。……這天理一經被正視，被認定，就成了不可搖動的信念，良心上不能違悖的真理。這是政治世界實踐上的最高「律則」（牟宗三，1995，頁115）。

在儒家的理想政治中，堯禪讓於舜完全是出於堯的公心，即不以天下為個人的私產，只傳子而不傳賢，而是完全以人民的福祉為考量，所以堯不是要天將天下授與給舜，因為如果堯可直接要求天將天下授與給舜，則天下似乎只是天原先給予堯的私產。故堯是將舜推薦給天，由天決定，而天之決定完全是依於人民對舜的歸心與否。牟先生認為，堯之薦舜於天，已等同於今天的選舉提名；而舜相堯多年施澤於民，得到人民的擁護，故天因舜得到人民的認受、接受堯的舉薦，讓舜踐天子之位，也與今天民主制度下政府

是經人民普選產生、得到人民的認受之意相同。然而，由於在理性的運用表現下，沒有發展出政權、主權等政治上的形式概念，故當孟子仍以「天與」為理由來肯定繼世之君的合法性時，便顯得不合理。牟先生說：

是以「天與子，則與子」，在開始時，(即照孟子所說的禹、益、啟的情形說)，是公的，然到世襲下去的時候，則即不能納在「推薦、天與」的觀念下而一例說。這中間似乎起了一點突變。當該分別視之，另說另講。孟子未能正視此突變，而卻把長期連續的世襲亦納在「推薦、天與」的觀念下，而說「匹夫而有天下，德必若舜禹；繼世以有天下，天之所廢，必若桀紂」。……「天之所廢，必若桀紂」，這個天廢(天不與)，是須要革命的，須要用「力」來打的。本來「繼世以有天下」不是經過「推薦、天與」之方式的，乃是未經過天與人與之同意而自居的，所以其為天之所廢亦不是經過「天與或不與」之和平方式而被廢，而是經過革命而被廢。由推薦而天與或不與，這其中並不函有革命。但經過「繼世以有天下」這一突變，則必函有革命。這就是亂之源私之源(牟宗三，1995，頁133-134)。

本來禹也是要效法堯舜，將益舉薦於天，但人民寧願奉禹之子啟為天子，而這仍是得到人民的認受。但啟之後夏朝的經世之君，卻從未經過人民的認受，而孟子卻仍以「天與」為由，說明啟之後經世之君的合法性。本來「天與」應以「人與」為本，今只言「天與」，便喪失其正當性，而孟子仍一條鞭地以「天與」說明經世之君的合法性，足見「理性的運用表現」之不足，而在此意義下所說的「天與」，適足以成為歷代繼世之君維護其政權的藉口，事實上只是將天下視為一家之私產。既然政權缺乏正當性，到了出現暴君如桀紂時，人民已不堪其苦，必定透過革命推翻前朝，而這種朝代更替的方式，必須是以「力」來爭，完全是與在禪讓中和平演變的方式不一樣。牟先生認為，孟子以至於傳統儒家之所以沒有認清其中的差異，主要的原因在於在理性的運用表現下，人我皆為一體，並非將彼此視為獨立的個體；復由於人我是一體的關係，沒有發展出民主體制所依以建立的政權、主權、權利、義務等政治上的形式概念。要有這些概念，必須依賴於理性的架構表現。牟先生說：

而架構表現則相反。它的底子是對待關係，由對待關係而成一「對列之局」(Co-Ordination)。是以架構表現便以「對列之局」來規定。而架構表現中之「理性」也頓時即失去其人格中德性即具體地說的實踐理性之意義而轉為非道德意義的「觀解理性」或「理論理性」，因此也是屬於知性層上的。(運用表現不屬於知性層)。民主政治與科學正好是這知性層上的「理性之架構表現」之所成就(牟宗三，1995，頁52)。

在理性的架構表現下，我與其他萬事萬物並非一體，我已將其他萬事萬物推出去而加以對象化，成為科學基於觀解理性或理論理性所研究的對象。同樣地，在此架構表現下，我也並非將其他人以一體視之，而是將所有人皆視為獨立的個體，人與人之間成為

牟先生所說的「對列之局」。在這種關係下，就必須透過理論理性去思考，如果政權或主權應由一個國家中全民所共有，而不應由一家一姓所私有，則政權具有甚麼性質？統治國家的權力即治權應如何安排，始不損害政權的本性？依牟先生的分析，政權「為一民族集團所有」，是「對應全集團而起的一個綜攝的『形式的實有』，『靜態的實有』」。既非一動態之具體物，亦非一個人之屬性。因其非具體，故不可以取，因其非個人之屬性，故不可以隸屬於個人（牟宗三，1995，頁19）。」。相應於政權的概念，即有維持政權本性之政道。牟先生認為，只有民主政治才可以有政道可言。因為民主政治肯認主權在民，不贊成政權可以為一家一姓所私有，正合乎政權為民族集團所共有的原則，故能保持政權為一「定常的實有」之本性。而且在民主政治中，政權與治權分開，政府通過選舉而取得治權，這代表政府的治權是由擁有政權的全體人民所賦與的，即治權以政權為依據，治權因而得其客觀的意義，而且政權也不因治權持有者的改變而有所變化。

由此可見，雖然傳統儒家特別是孟子已有「公天下」的思想，肯定政權的取得必須得到人民的認受，但由於沒有清楚界定，在這種「公天下」的思想下，意含了政權應具有甚麼性質，以及應以甚麼制度來保障政權的這些應有的性質維持不變，而徒以對君主德性上的要求來限制君主，這對牟先生而言，都是因為只有理性的運用表現而缺乏架構表現所產生的問題。只有在理性的架構表現下，開出「對列之局」，視每個人為獨立的個體，進而運用理論理性，確認政權為一定常的實有，並建立民主制度以保障政權的定常性，才能使「公天下」的思想得以落實。另一方面，既然民主政治是以理性的架構表現，亦即理論理性為其必要條件，而理論理性其本質又與理性的運用表現即實踐理性相違反，因此，牟先生認為實踐理性必須坎陷為理論理性，使其本身有足夠的條件以應付形成民主政治所需要的知識，使政治知識暫時與道德分開而有其獨立的意義。這種轉變對實踐理性而言是必要的，而且是很自然的，因為實踐理性既然要求民主政治，但民主政治卻因為知識上的問題而不能形成，這對實踐理性來說是一種缺憾；要彌補這種缺憾，實踐理性必要求自身轉到政治知識的探求上，如此實踐理性實現民主政治的要求始能實現。

我們現在可以進一步省察林教授對牟先生良知自我坎陷說的批評。林教授認為，坎陷說只是某種詮釋下的哲學構造，並不是真正的歷史事實。造成傳統儒家在外王方面得不到充分發展的真正原因，是由於專制集權結構對思想造成的限制。然而，在孟子的時代，秦漢以降的專制帝王制度尚未形成，因此專制集權結構似乎與孟子的思想無關。林教授或許可主張，正由於孟子的時代尚沒有專制集權的體制，故孟子可發展出「公天下」的思想。但牟先生並不認為孟子「公天下」的思想即已足夠，因為孟子並未進一步依於其「公天下」的思想，發展出相應的民主制度，這正是由於在理性的運用表現下、缺乏架構表現所產生的結果。從孟子對繼世之君合法性的說明，以及牟先生對孟子的批評中，即可知道理性運用表現的不足之處。若依牟先生的區分，在理性的運用表現下缺乏架構表現，才是傳統儒家在外王方面得不到充分發展的「本質的因緣」；至於有沒有專制皇權

的限制，只是「現實的因緣」。同理，林教授所說的「道的錯置」（林安梧，2024）¹¹⁶，或許也可以依此方向去說明。也就是說，傳統儒家的「聖王」理想，希望在位者必有其德，希望以道德的要求來限制君主，或是希望在位者愛民如子，也是理性的運用表現下所產生的結果，而到最後變成是在位者無德也自稱有德，由「聖王」的理想變成「王聖」的事實，由如保赤子變成君父，成為必須絕對服從的對象，則亦可見理性的運用表現之不足，而這才是「本質的因緣」。至於專制皇權的出現，也只不過是「現實的因緣」。筆者認為，從牟先生的理論中我們可以發現，思想模式並非完全由歷史條件所決定，反而是歷史發展往往受思想模式左右。

參、當代新儒家是對西方的民主與科學全盤接受嗎？

林教授認為，當代新儒家雖然反對徹底的反傳統主義者認為傳統中國文化是阻礙科學與民主的發展之看法，主張傳統中國文化只要經過轉化，便可以開出科學與民主，但他們對西方文化所發展出的科學與民主，仍然是全盤接受，只是偶有批評（林安梧，2024）¹¹⁷。林教授也指出，民主不能只是選舉、罷免、制約平衡，就能解決問題，如果沒有德性作主導，制約平衡也只不過是權力的傾軋而已（林安梧，2024）¹¹⁸。因此，林教授批評，徹底的反傳統主義者與當代新儒家之間，對於中國文化是否妨礙現代化的爭論是毫無意義的，同時主張「不可摒棄人倫談人權，不可摒棄自覺談自由，不可摒棄民本談民主」，要努力實踐「有人倫的人權，有自覺的自由，有民本的民主」（林安梧，2024）¹¹⁹。

然而，當代新儒家是否對西方文化所發展出的科學與民主全盤接受呢？就牟先生而言，他雖然也肯定西方藉「理性之架構表現」所發展出的科學與民主，但他絕非全盤接受。從他對「外延表現之缺處」之分析中，即可發現牟先生對現代的科學與民主的批評，而且牟先生的批評絕非如林教授所言只是偶有的、仍是現代性的思維方式的，而是對西方的科學與民主提出根本的反省：

理性自始即客觀地向外延方面施展，而其客觀的落實處即在那些形式概念之建立，故形式概念所成的網維網一旦造起，理性即歸寂而無著處。他自己不能見其自己在何處，而人們亦可懷疑什麼是理性，理性究竟在那裏。如是，人們把那網維網只看成是時代中一個特定的政體形態，一個既成的空架子。理性既歸寂，虛脫，而遠颺，而這空架子也截斷了其理性之根，沈澱，下墜，而膠著（牟宗三，1995，頁 157-158）。

¹¹⁶ 林安梧（2024）。後新儒家實踐哲學的一個側面——關於「外王--內聖」問題的一些回應。《本土諮商心理學學刊》，15（3），1-51。

¹¹⁷ 同上註。

¹¹⁸ 同上註。

¹¹⁹ 同上註。

也就是說，理性的架構表現所擅長的，是形式架構的建立，包括科學理論、民主制度的建立，以及政治學中各種概念形式上的規定。然而，一旦這些形式架構建立後，我們就很容易忽視了這些形式架構有其在理性上的根源，而只在這些形式架構中操作。牟先生認為，這種順外延表現而截斷其理性之根的操作方式，在自然科學的研究上尚不會產生嚴重的問題，但在政治社會上也如此操作，則造成嚴重的惡果。因為在截斷了理性之根後，人們可將此形式架構只視為偶然在人類的歷史發展中出現的特定政治形態，可有可無，而一旦在此形式架構中出現嚴重的問題，例如經濟上的問題時，則便可以主張將此套形式架構完全推翻。即使是想要努力維護此套形式架構的人，也很容易只知道在此架構中運作，只認定通過此架構所產生的或通過其驗證的，才是有價值的，因此批評「理性」為玄學的名詞，批評「普遍的人性」為抽象的空名。至於個人方面，由於在此形式架構中，只界定了形式上的自由與權利上的平等，但不過問個人如何調適其生命的問題。因此，雖然個人的自由和權利得到保障，但到最後只知道利用自由和權利去追逐個人利益，或是放縱情欲，演變成今天個人主義所產生的流弊，這些惡果皆足見理性的架構表現之限制，以及由之而建立的西方民主和科學所造成的問題（牟宗三，1995，頁158）。牟先生認為，要解決這些問題，必須重新認識到科學與民主所依以建立的形式架構，有其理性的依據；而且在政治上，理論理性只有助於民主制度的建立和政治上的形式概念之界定，但政治的實踐必須以實踐理性或道德理性為依據：

但須知這種分開劃開，祇因政治有獨立的意義與境域，而可以純政治學地討論之之「政治學上的權法」。在此獨立境域內，不牽涉那形而上的道德理性而使民主政體內各種概念清楚確定，這種清楚確定亦不過是為名言的方便，名言上的清楚確定，即不必牽連那麼多，祇在民主政治的大括弧下就對等平列的事實而確定地說出就夠了。……至於說到真實的清楚確定，則講自由通著道德理性，通著人的自覺，是不可免的（牟宗三，1995，頁60）。

牟先生認為，把政治學劃為一門獨立的學科，使之與道德暫時分開，只是為了滿足形成民主政治的知識條件，如權利、義務、自由、平等諸概念之確定，或其他民主制度所需要的知識。但政治活動是人的活動，牽涉到價值的問題，單靠知識或理論理性是無法解決的，所以必須通於道德理性。對牟先生而言，自由通於道德理性與人的自覺，是實踐上的定然事實，而且講自由、權利必須通貫於道德理性和人的自覺，才能真正認識到，歷代先賢為了爭取這些價值的實現，不惜犧牲自己的性命，究竟所為何事。不能說只要從道德理性與人的自覺去講自由和權利，便只是形而上學的無謂爭論，更不能說這就是泛道德主義，有助於極權。牟先生更進一步認為，政治實踐的三項最高律則，可以透過理性的運用表現來加以肯認，其中一項原則是道德上確立「先富後教」，「嚴以律己，寬以待人」之教化原則。他說：

在政治措施上，就個體而順成，生存第一。即以其為一「存在的生命個體」而必

須保住之。顛連無告，不得其所，非仁者所能忍。然就個體的「生活之全」而言之，不但生存第一，暢達其物質的生活幸福，亦須暢達其價值意義的人生而為一「人道的存在」。故曰「謹庠序之教，申之以孝弟之義，頒白者不負戴於道路矣」。教者，即教此孝弟忠信，禮義廉恥之道。完整言之，即孟子所謂：「父子有親，君臣有義，夫婦有別，長幼有序，朋友有信」也。亦中庸所謂「天下之達道五，曰：君臣也、父子也、夫婦也、昆弟也、朋友之交也。」此皆起碼而普遍的人道，非外在的概念與理論而加於人民者，乃是根於人性人情之實事與實道，故曰：「達道」。教者不過教此（牟宗三，1995，頁126）。

牟先生上述的構想，其實就是孟子的民本思想。他認為在教化上要先確立「先富後教」的原則。因為老百姓遭遇到生活上的匱乏，顛沛流離不得其所，當然為仁者所不忍，所以必先使老百姓得溫飽，進而在物質生活上得到幸福，才能夠施以教化。而且政治上的教化也只能限於人倫的維持上，不能要求每一個人當聖人。因為道德實踐是個人之事，在位者應要求自己勉力為聖，至於對待人民，則應「直接以主觀服從客觀」，尊重每一位人民為獨立的「存在的生命個體」，把每個個體都視為目的，而不是當作手段，以疆化的教條去迫使人民服從，這樣反而是不道德的。因此，在位者應先自修其德，再以其德感化人民，使人民亦自覺其固有的德性，這就是儒家「以德治天下」、「嚴以律己，寬以待人」的精神。至於政治上的教化限於人倫的維持，也只是要致力讓人民維持其「人之所以為人」的身分，教以普遍的人道，不能因此就認為是妨礙自由。但也只能止於此，過此則非在位者所應過問，不能責望人民成為聖人，這顯示了政治與道德之間的分際。

由此可見，林教授認為當代新儒家對西方的民主和科學採全盤接受的態度，至少就牟先生的思想而言並非如此。事實上，牟先生對理性的架構表現之不足，以及由之所開出的西方民主和科學，有相當深入的批評和反省。另一方面，林教授所主張的「有人倫的人權，有自覺的自由，有民本的民主」，其實早已見於牟先生的思想中。對牟先生而言，不論是理性的運用表現還是架構表現，皆有其不可取代的價值和應有的分位，缺一不可，兩者的充分展現和相互調和，始見理性之全。

除此之外，筆者也希望以上述兩節的分析為基礎，進一步檢視林教授「外王-內聖」的說法。林教授認為，從東亞各國在民主科學上「歷史的發展次序」和「實踐的學習次序」來看，並非如牟先生所說，是「本內聖以開出新外王」，而是在新外王的學習過程中，調整內聖學的內容，其中最重要的，是由「君子儒學」，轉化為「公民儒學」，即以「心性修養」為優位的道德學，轉化為以「社會公義」為優位的道德學。「社會」是經由「公民」以「契約」締結成的總體，而「公義」則是經由一「話語的公共論域」而達致。林教授說：

進入到現代化的社會中，契約性的社會連結是優先於血緣性的自然連結的，原先長自血緣性的自然連結的「仁愛之道」，現在當長成一「社會公義」。真切的涉入

到公共領域中，經由「交談」互動，凝成共識，上契於社會之道，在這樣的社會公義下，才有真正的「心性修養」，才有真正的內聖（林安梧，2021）。

然而，從內聖到外王的先後次序，是儒家對政治的基本主張。從孔子言「政者，正也。子帥以正，孰敢不正？」，孟子言「先王有不忍人之心，斯有不忍人之政」，到大學言「自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本」，莫非如此。對儒家而言，本心良知是隨時皆可呈現的，不論外王是否實現皆可呈現，而且不論是在專制社會還是在民主社會中，也可呈現，皆可在不同的社會中，為吾人指向處之之道。若說「在這樣的社會，才有真正的心性修養，才有真正的內聖」，難道並非處在林教授所說的公民社會的人例如孔孟，就沒有所謂心性修養嗎？他們就不是聖人嗎？「孝弟也者，其為仁之本與」，難道沒有在公民社會中，就沒有所謂孝道嗎？若果真如此，則林教授所主張的「有人倫的人權，有自覺的自由」，其中的自覺難道只是政治上自覺為公民嗎？而且沒有人權就沒有人倫可言嗎？

肆、「方法論上的本質主義」是否一困境？

林教授認為，徹底的反傳統主義和當代新儒家，表面上是兩個對傳統中國文化的價值持相反意見的敵對陣營，但事實上他們的思想同樣是基於「方法論上的本質主義」，容易造成偏至化、教條化、專制化。因此，林教授主張應以「方法論上的約定主義」取代，視語言文字只是一套定位系統，並不是存在本身；而定位系統也只不過是約定的，必須不斷地經過檢覈，使之更能趨近事實，取得大家的共識。即使已取得共識的定位系統，仍必須不斷地檢覈，不能一錘定音。對於徹底的反傳統主義和當代新儒家皆是「方法論上的本質主義」之問題，林教授提出以下的說明：

他們一樣都採用了方法論上的本質主義，一個說中國文化傳統本質上並不妨礙現代化，另一個說中國文化傳統，其本質上是徹底妨礙現代化的。須知：依著本質主義的方法論來思考，極容易陷入片面性，兩者相較，徹底的反傳統主義的片面性則更為嚴重。因為，他們握有較大的勢頭，須知握有愈大勢頭的，愈會走向片面性、甚至專斷、專制，乃至極權。當代新儒學之作為新傳統主義者，最可貴的是對於這樣的徹底反傳統主義，提出另一個相對反的主張。但方法上，兩者則是同一個對立面的兩端（林安梧，2024）。

當代新儒學究竟是否如林教授所說，是「方法論上的本質主義」呢？如果所謂「方法論上的本質主義」，是指只認定一套方法，來解決一切人生宇宙的問題的話，則林教授所批評的「徹底的反傳統主義」，似乎更接近「方法論上的本質主義」。因為這一類反傳統主義者大抵認為，只有科學方法才能為一切人生宇宙的問題提供正確的答案，即所謂「科學一層論」。相比之下，當代新儒家基本上認為，許多有關倫理道德人生的問題，並

非科學方法所能解決。例如牟宗三先生的兩層存有論，即意含了科學真理以外還有其他真理，並非科學方法所能知，或可被科學方法所否定，科學真理也只不過是俗諦。對牟先生而言，由本心良知在現實生活中顯露而逆覺體證，始能體證吾人真實生命之所在，以及吾人與天地萬物為一體，吾人的生命與天地萬物之感通無礙。而由於道德問題一定涉及知識問題，所以本心良知也同時必須自我坎陷，開出認知主體，同時將天地萬物對象化以加以瞭解，這自是本心良知自身的必然要求。不論是本心良知還是認知主體，對牟先生而言皆有其定常，即使作為俗諦的科學真理也有其諦性。或許這就是林教授所謂的「本質」，但儒家對於本心良知、或是對人的本質之肯認，並不是透過思辨去設想一個形而上的本體，也不是透過定義去界定人是甚麼，而是透過道德實踐去體證，而且儒家相信人人皆可以有這樣的體認。牟先生在深入瞭解康德哲學和西方近代邏輯的基礎上，分析純理的自我展現，以及時空、範疇和知性為自然立法之實義，並依儒家德性之知、見聞之知的區分、佛家一心開二門的義理，會通康德哲學，給予認知主體恰當的定位，也有其堅實的學理依據。套用林教授的話，筆者相信，牟先生不論是對道德主體還是認知主體的體會和掌握，皆可以經得起回到存在自身去不斷檢覈。反觀林教授所稱許的「方法論上的約定主義」，到最後是否只是淪為相對主義？難道我們在乍見孺子將入於井的情境下，當下呈現的既是吾人之性、同時即是天理的怵惕惻隱之心，都只不過是在特定時空人與人之間約定下的結果？如果都只是一種約定，則究竟有沒有所謂的天理？如果沒有天理，所有道德規範都只是個別社會中人與人之間約定下的產物，則與相對主義有甚麼分別？如果所有道德規範只是如此，則林教授所肯定的易之三義，簡易、變易、不易，其不易者何在？對於「科學一層論」者，牟先生曾提出以下的批評：

美其名曰科學方法，斥「理性」為玄學名詞，斥「普遍的人性」為抽象之空名，斥言「本質」者為本質主義，只落於現象主義，唯名主義，只著眼於既成之事實，截斷其所維護者之理性之根，忘其為前人本「超越的平等性」之理性與理想奮鬥而得之結果，好像前人皆在玄學之迷妄中，惟我今日才是在科學之清醒中，此即今日自由世界一般知識份子之心態，吾總名之曰無體，無理，無力者（牟宗三，1995，頁158）。

在此，牟先生引用黑格爾的說法，認為西方基督教「在上帝面前人人平等」的說法所顯示的人之「超越的平等性」，是西方發展出民主制度的基礎，因為此超越的平等性「必然函著對於階級限制的衝破，爭取現實存在上的權利之平等（牟宗三，1995，151頁）。」科學一層論者否定對理性、普遍的人性及本質的探求，對牟先生而言其實是截斷了理性之根。依牟先生的思路，筆者也不認為只要講「本質是甚麼」都注定是錯誤的，而是要看此講法究竟是否經得起理論上的驗證和實踐上的體證。同樣地，不能只因為牟先生認定道德主體和認知主體兩者之超越的區分，而且皆有其定常性，或是肯定西方在科學和民主方面的成就，就只以「方法論上的本質主義」為由，認定必然是錯誤的，而

是要看牟先生的兩層存有論其理據何在，是否經得起理論上的驗證和實踐上的體證。如果牟先生兩層存有論的講法，有其充分的理據，則為何只因為此理論意含了道德主體和認知主體有其定常性，就注定是錯誤呢？至於方法論上的本質主義是否即趨向獨裁專制，也應取決於持此論者是否只以自身所有的權力，排斥所有的批評和其他的方法。若某套認為天地宇宙皆有所謂「本質」的理論有其客觀實在性，且樂於回應並能充分回答所有問題，則不能因為這套理論認定有所謂「本質」，就必須視之為專制獨裁。不過，林教授所說的「方法論上的本質主義」，似乎是另有所指。他說：

當代新儒學雖對徹底的反傳統主義者多所批評，但他們所提出的中國政治傳統「只有治道，而無政道」，中國古代「只有科技，而無科學」，中國重視的是「道德」，並不重視「知識」，這些論點，看似分明，其實並不準確。其實，有治道當然也就有政道，只是這政道不是西方近現代以來的政道；有科技當然也就有科學，只是這科學不是西方近現代以來的科學。中國當然有道德、有知識，西方也是，只是彼此的道德之長成、知識的習得，卻大有差別。西方以前的君主專制，其專制的嚴苛絕不下於中國古代，甚至是有過之無不及。但與中國古代的專制是有不同之處，西方的民主並不是他本質上就如此，他也是在歷史發展歷程中長成的，中國文化傳統當然也可以在學習的過程中，長育而成。我以為打破了文化的理解上所使用的方法論上的本質主義 (methodological essentialism)，而待之以方法論上的約定主義 (methodological conventionalism)，這是使得「道的錯置」，撥亂反正的最重要理由：經由這樣的撥亂反正，就可以回到我謂的「道的正置」(林安梧，2024)。

由此可見，林教授所說的「方法論上的本質主義」，是針對那些認定文化有某種「本質」的研究方法而發，而牟先生提出傳統中國文化是「理性之運用的表現」所產的結果，西方文化是「理性之架構的表現」所產生的結果，明顯是林教授其中一位批評的對象。然而，即使不論是東西方都有說明政權的合法性之各種理論，但這些理論是否皆符合牟先生所說的政道，即「政治上相應政權之為形式的實有，定常的實有，而使其真成為一集團所共同地有之或總持地有之之道」呢？即使西方文化並非一開始就出現民主，但如果其理性的架構表現不足，在後來是否即能發展出符合政道的民主制度？即使孟子也有「公天下」的思想，但為何也沒有發展出符合政道的民主制度？即使西方也有他們的道德，但他們有發展出各種實踐工夫論，使人雖有限而可無限，達致人我、物我為一、天人為一的境界嗎？如果林教授所說的「道的錯置」，的確如我所分析的，是理性的運用表現不足所造成的結果，則是否即可證明，牟先生所瞭解的傳統中國文化與西方文化之間的差異是正確的？如果林教授也承認中國與西方「彼此的道德之長成、知識的習得，大有差別」，則這些差別只是牟先生所說的「現實的因緣」所造成的嗎？還是有其「本質的

因緣」之差別？如果這兩種文化的差異，的確有其「本質的因緣」上的差別，則即使當代新儒學是林教授所說的「方法論上的本質主義」，也不會構成任何問題。

伍、結語

經過上述的分析，筆者已以牟宗三先生的兩層存有論為例，針對林安梧教授對當代新儒家所提出的批評加以回應。對於林教授批評牟先生的「良知之自我坎陷」說只是某種詮釋下的哲學構造，不是真正的歷史事實之問題，筆者認為林教授沒有清楚認識牟先生所提出的「本質的機緣」和「現實的機緣」之間的區別，以及只著眼於「現實的機緣」，未能注意到西方文化可開出民主與科學，而傳統中國文化則未能有這樣的開展，有其「本質的機緣」。對於林教授批評當代新儒家事實上與徹底的反傳統主義者一樣，皆全盤接受西方的民主與科學，筆者已徵引牟先生批評西方文化在理性的架構表現下、科學與民主之缺失為證，以明林教授的批評有待商榷。對於林教授批評當代新儒家是「方法論上的本質主義」，筆者也對方法論上的本質主義必然錯誤提出質疑。限於文章的篇幅和筆者的學識，本文大部分都是藉由牟先生的思想，以回應林教授的問題，未能觸及當代新儒家其他代表人物包括熊十力、唐君毅及徐復觀等諸先生的思想，也未能全部回應林教授所提出的所有問題，希望在未來的研究中，能進一步探究上述幾位先輩的思想，以展現當代新儒學的全貌。

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A Reflection on Professor An-Wu Lin's "A Side View of Post Contemporary Neo-Confucianism Practical Philosophy: Some Responses to the Issue of 'Outer Kingliness and Inner Sagehood'"

Hon-Chung Wong*

Abstract

In "A Side View of Post Contemporary Neo-Confucianism Practical Philosophy: Some Responses to the Issue of 'Outer Kingliness and Inner Sagehood'" An-Wu Lin elaborates his critique on radical anti-traditionalism and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism to demonstrate his practical philosophy of post-Contemporary Neo-Confucianism. He criticizes "the doctrine of self-negation of Liang-zhi" developed by Mou Zongsan, one of the main figures of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, arguing that it does not align with the historical development of democracy and science and regards it as a philosophical construction under Mou's interpretation. Moreover, Lin also thinks that both radical anti-traditionalism and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism uncritically endorse democracy and science developed from Western civilization, and both involve the fault of methodological essentialism, although they usually oppose each other. This paper examines Lin's critique of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, especially the thought of Mou Zongsan. It argues that Lin's critique of Mou's thought is based on his misunderstanding of the difference between the "essential cause" and the "factual cause" suggested by Mou and his failure to recognize that the essential cause of Western democratic and scientific development is derived from a civilization of its own, which is lacking in traditional Chinese civilization. Moreover, Lin neglects Mou's critique on the limitation of "the constitutive performance of reason," which is the foundation of democracy and science. Lastly, this paper also responds to Lin's critique of methodological essentialism from Mou's point of view.

Keywords: Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, Post Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, Mou Zongsan, An-Wu Lin, Methodological Essentialism

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I. Preface

In "A Side View of Post Contemporary Neo-Confucianism Practical Philosophy: Some Responses to the Issue of 'Outer Kingliness and Inner Sagehood'" (Lin, 2024), Professor An-Wu Lin offers a comprehensive review of his intellectual journey spanning several decades. He articulates his critiques of both "radical anti-traditionalists" and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism at various stages, with the aim of presenting his proposed "Post-Contemporary Neo-Confucianism Practical Philosophy." In this paper, Professor Lin contends that Contemporary Neo-Confucianism have fallen into the same trap of "methodological essentialism" as radical anti-traditionalists, and he criticizes their uncritical acceptance of democracy and science as developed by Western culture. Instead, he advocates for "methodological conventionalism." He examines the distinctions between the "causality of the liberal sciences" and the "causality of the humanities," scrutinizes issues arising from Western democratic systems that overemphasize elections, recall mechanisms, and checks and balances, and argues for a vision of democracy that encompasses "humanistic human rights, conscious freedom, and people-centered democracy." Professor Lin identifies the "bloodline axis, "Monarch, Father, and Sage," the resulting "misplaced Dao" from conflating these three elements is the root cause of traditional Chinese culture's failure to develop a democratic system. He critiques Mr. Mou Zongsan's theory of the "Self-Entrapment of Conscience," describing it as merely a "hermeneutical philosophical construct" that fails to represent "the historical order of occurrence" or "the practical order of learning." Drawing on the ontogenetic method inspired by Chuanshan studies, Professor Lin proposes the concept of "Outer Kingliness–Inner Sagehood" as an alternative to the Contemporary Neo-Confucianism doctrine of "beginning with Inner Sagehood to achieve Outer Kingliness."

My understanding of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism thinkers, particularly my interpretation of Mr. Mou Zongsan's theory of the "Self-Entrapment of Conscience," diverges from Professor Lin's perspective. Given my limited knowledge and the fact that Professor Lin's critiques of Self-Entrapment of Conscience primarily target Mr. Mou, I would like to pose three questions in response to Professor Lin's arguments: (1) Does Professor Lin's critique of Mr. Mou's theory of the "Self-Entrapment of Conscience," along with his explanation of why traditional Chinese culture did not develop democracy and science, truly address the crux of the issue? (2) As Professor Lin claims, is it accurate to say that Contemporary Neo-Confucianism fully embraces the democracy and science developed by Western culture? (3) Does Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, as Professor Lin argues, indeed adhere to "methodological essentialism"? Even if it does, does it necessarily fall into the predicament described by Professor Lin? I plan to explore these questions in dialogue with Professor Lin.

II. Critique of the Theory of " Self-Entrapment of Conscience "

Professor Lin interprets Mr. Mou's theory of the " Self-Entrapment of Conscience " as a process of "preserving the metaphysical to unveil the physical." Although both Xiong Shili and Mr. Mou have consistently emphasized that the original mind of conscience is a manifestation rather than a presumption, Professor Lin appears to assume that Mr. Mou presupposes morality as a "metaphysical reality" that serves as the foundation for the creation of all things. Consequently, Professor Lin regards this as merely Mr. Mou's philosophical construction rather than a historical fact. He states:

"If we lack a proper understanding of the ebbs and flows of history, we might mistakenly believe that our past was shrouded in darkness, leading us to think that our current task is to dispel this darkness to usher in the light. Conversely, we might erroneously believe that our past was illuminated by blinding light, necessitating that we shield and sublimate it to achieve true clarity. These perspectives must be grounded in a concrete, factual understanding of why we have turned inward and neglected external structures, which is closely related to two thousand years of patriarchal oppression, monarchical despotism, and male-centered dominance. These three elements form a 'vertical axis of bloodline,' compounded by the imperial examination system and stereotypical education, which rigidly shaped individuals. Consequently, this axis solidified into an unbreakable autocratic structure. Such a structure has rendered our morality excessively moral, our humanity excessively human, and our inner sagehood excessively inward. This excess ultimately leads to 'closure'" (Lin, 2024).

Professor Lin argues that both radical anti-traditionalists, who view Chinese culture as entirely negative and believe it must be completely discarded to achieve modernization, and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, who assert that while traditional Confucianism has perfected inner sagehood, it has failed to develop democracy and science due to a lack of knowledge—exemplified by Mr. Mou's advocacy for the Self-Entrapment of Conscience to cultivate the cognitive subject—fail to fully grasp the complexities of Chinese history. Radical anti-traditionalism reflects a self-deprecating mindset that arises from the recognition of the flourishing development of Western civilization, leading to a complete rejection of traditional culture. Similarly, Mr. Mou's theory of self-sublation is merely "a philosophical construction under certain interpretations, not an actual historical fact" (Lin, 2024). For Professor Lin, the

primary reason traditional Confucianism emphasized inner sagehood while outer kingliness remained underdeveloped lies in the autocratic power structure shaped by three factors: patriarchal oppression, monarchical despotism, and male-centered dominance, which constrained intellectual thought. Initially, Confucianism required those in power to possess virtue. However, under the autocratic rule of emperors from the Qin and Han dynasties onward, rulers claimed virtue without embodying it, transforming the Confucian ideal of the "sage-king" into the reality of the "king as sage." Confucianism originally called for rulers to care for the people "as if nurturing infants." However, under imperial rule, this evolved into the "lord-father," demanding absolute obedience from subjects, leading to the notion that "if the lord wants the minister dead, the minister must die."

In my view, the differing explanations provided by Mr. Mou and Professor Lin regarding the reasons for the incomplete development of traditional Chinese culture's outer kingliness raise a critical question: To what extent are patterns of thought shaped by historical conditions? From my perspective, Mr. Mou does not dismiss the influence of historical and cultural contexts on thought. For instance, when discussing the "manifestations of the extension of rationality," Mr. Mou acknowledges that tangible conditions, such as the emergence of "classes," influenced political developments in Western history. Mr. Mou states, "They achieved the 'manifestations of the extension of rationality' through the identification of 'class' itself and the limitations and struggles between classes" (Mou, 1995, p. 145). For Mr. Mou, the absence of a concept like "class" in Chinese history can be viewed as a significant factor contributing to the inadequate political manifestation of rationality within Chinese culture. However, Mr. Mou also emphasizes that the "conceptual mind" is the "essential condition" of Western cultural life. Similarly, one could argue that in Confucianism's "manifestations of the application of rationality," the lack of a "conceptual mind" serves as the "essential condition" for the insufficient development of outer kingliness. At the same time, other historical factors are merely "real conditions." Regarding the "manifestations of the application of rationality," Mr. Mou explains:

"All manifestations of application pertain to 'subordination to the integrative function' and 'absorbing objects into the mind.' Both concepts aim to eliminate opposition by either incorporating the object into one's subject or projecting oneself into the object, thereby achieving absolute interpenetration. Internal absorption brings all things into the mind, while external projection fully integrates the mind with objects. Essentially, they are one and the same. If one were to forcibly distinguish between subject and object and describe their relationship, it would be characterized as a 'subordination relationship' (Sub-

Ordination). The 'transformation' of the sage's character reflects this dynamic; the relationship between the sage-ruler or virtuous minister and the people resembles that of parents to their children, where children are not adversaries to their parents. Similarly, the contemplation of the Dao-heart embodies this principle. Thus, the manifestation of application is established through the 'structure of subordination'" (Mou, 1995, p. 52).

Mr. Mou Zongsan further elaborates that the "manifestation of the application of rationality" involves "deriving function from essence," which refers to the interconnection with "events" in concrete life. The term "rationality" in this context specifically pertains to practical reason. We can assert that the "manifestation of the application of rationality" is related to the illuminating function of innate knowledge and conscience. This illuminating function is expressed through specific objects and events, and in its manifestation, it presents itself as unified with these objects; in this context, there is no distinction between subject and object or mind and matter. Objects exist within the nurturing framework of the innate mind, and the innate mind manifests itself through concrete objects. There is no actual separation between mind and matter; the distinctions between mind and matter, as well as subject and object, are merely convenient and fragmentary expressions. In truth, they represent a unified, continuously flowing great function—a ceaseless activity of harmonious movement. Of course, if one must delineate subject and object for convenience, then, since objects are illuminated by the mind, they are subordinate to it. Hence, Mr. Mou describes this as a "subordination relationship." In traditional Chinese governance, under the guidance of sage rulers and virtuous ministers, the application of rationality yields a harmonious outcome. The people live peacefully and happily under the benevolent rule of their leaders, much like children growing up under the protection of their parents. As Mencius stated, "act as if you were watching over an infant." In this context, the people, akin to children, are not adversaries contending for rights against their rulers or parents; rather, they exist in a relationship of subordination. Within this framework, Confucianism primarily inquires whether those in power possess the requisite virtue and fulfill their responsibilities to care for the populace, enabling individuals to realize their true nature and pursue their lives. There are no formal political concepts of government, sovereignty, rights, obligations, freedom, or equality. However, this does not imply that Confucian political thought is inherently at odds with democratic systems founded on these formal political concepts. On the contrary, Mencius's assertion that Shun's possession of the world was "granted by Heaven and by the people," rather than being a private transfer from Yao, implicitly reflects a Confucian endorsement of democratic principles. Mr. Mou elaborates:

"...The sovereign can present a man to Heaven, but he cannot make Heaven give that man the throne." This statement introduces the concept of "recommendation," akin to the modern notion of electoral nomination. "Heaven grants it" can be interpreted as "the people granting it." The idea of "the people granting it" and "Heaven granting it" are essentially equivalent to stating that it is through a general election that one receives enthusiastic popular support. This enthusiastic support is natural, not forced, controlled, or hypocritical. From this naturalness arises the assertion that "Heaven grants it." The process of gaining the world's favor through "recommendation" and "general election," and ascending to the position of the Son of Heaven, embodies the concept of a "public world" and the idea of "virtue." In this context, there is no human rights movement, nor is there a constitution drafted; rather, it relies entirely on the most concrete and practical actions and the alignment of the people's hearts, reflecting heavenly principles. Once these heavenly principles are recognized and affirmed, they become an unshakeable belief—a truth that cannot be contravened in one's conscience. This represents the highest "law" in the practical political realm." (Mou, 1995, p. 115).

In the ideal political system of Confucianism, Emperor Yao's abdication in favor of Shun was entirely motivated by his selfless public spirit. He did not view the world as a personal possession to be passed down solely to his descendants; rather, he prioritized the welfare of the people. Yao did not intend for Heaven to bestow the world directly upon Shun, as if it were Yao's personal property granted by Heaven. Instead, Yao recommended Shun to Heaven, leaving the final decision to Heaven, which was ultimately based on the people's allegiance to Shun. Mr. Mou posits that Yao's recommendation of Shun to Heaven parallels modern electoral nominations. Shun's years of service under Yao and his contributions to the welfare of the people earned him their support, leading Heaven to accept Yao's recommendation and allowing Shun to ascend the throne. This concept is akin to contemporary democratic systems, where governments are elected and validated by the people. However, due to the absence of developed political concepts such as authority and sovereignty in the application of reason, it became problematic when Mencius continued to justify the legitimacy of hereditary rulers using the notion of "Heaven's Mandate." Mr. Mou states:

Thus, "If Heaven grants it to the son, then it is granted," initially (according to Mencius regarding the cases of Yu, Yi, and Qi) was a public matter. However, when it extended to hereditary succession, it could no longer be uniformly explained under the concept of "recommendation and Heaven's mandate." A subtle shift occurred that should be

acknowledged and addressed separately. Mencius did not confront this shift directly; instead, he included long-term hereditary succession within the framework of "recommendation and Heaven's mandate," stating, "In the case of a private individual obtaining the throne, he must possess virtue equal to that of Shun or Yu; when the kingdom is possessed by natural succession, the sovereign who is displaced by Heaven must be like Jie or Zhou." The dethronement by Heaven (the rejection by Heaven) necessitates revolution; it must be overthrown by force. Initially, "inheriting the world" did not occur through "recommendation and Heaven's mandate," but rather through self-appointment without the consent of Heaven or the people. Thus, its downfall was not achieved through the peaceful means of "Heaven's acceptance or rejection," but through revolution. There is no inherent revolution in the recommendation process or in Heaven's decision. However, the shift to "inheriting the world" inevitably contains revolutionary elements. This is the source of disorder and the root of self-interest (Mou, 1995, pp. 133-134).

Originally, Yu intended to follow the examples set by Yao and Shun by recommending Yi to Heaven. However, the people preferred to honor Yu's son, Qi, as the ruler, which reflected their endorsement. Subsequent rulers of the Xia dynasty after Qi, however, failed to gain the people's support, yet Mencius continued to justify their legitimacy through the concept of "Heaven's Mandate." Ideally, "Heaven's Mandate" should be rooted in "the will of the people"; relying solely on "Heaven's Mandate," its legitimacy. Mencius's unwavering adherence to this justification for the rulers' legitimacy demonstrates the inadequacy of "the constitutive performance of reason." In this context, invoking "Heaven's Mandate" conveniently became an excuse for successive rulers to maintain their power, effectively treating the world as their private inheritance. Given the lack of legitimate governance, when tyrants like Jie and Zhou emerged, the suffering populace was compelled to overthrow the previous dynasty through revolution—a method starkly different from the peaceful transitions seen in abdications. Mr. Mou argues that the failure of Mencius and traditional Confucianism to recognize this distinction is primarily due to a reasoning approach that perceives the self and others as a unified entity rather than as independent individuals. This interconnected perspective of self and others hindered the development of political concepts that are foundational to democratic systems, such as authority, sovereignty, rights, and duties, which depend on the "constitutive performance of reason." Mr. Mou states:

Conversely, constitutive performance fundamentally revolves around relational opposition, establishing a "coordinative order" (Co-Ordination) through relational dynamics. Consequently, constitutive performance is characterized by this "coordinative order." Within the framework of constitutive performance, "reason" loses its significance as practical reason or moral virtue inherent in personal character. Instead, it transforms into a non-moral interpretation of "intellectual reason" or "theoretical reason," thereby aligning with the level of understanding (although constitutive performance itself does not belong to this level). Democratic politics and science emerge precisely from this constitutive performance of reason at the level of understanding (Mou, 1995, p. 52).

Under the constitutive performance of reason, I do not identify with other beings or objects; rather, I externalize and objectify them, transforming them into subjects of scientific inquiry based on intellectual or theoretical reasoning. Similarly, within this framework, I do not perceive others as extensions of myself but recognize everyone as independent individuals, thereby creating what Mr. Mou refers to as a "coordinative order" among people. In this relationship, one must employ theoretical reasoning to contemplate the nature of authority or sovereignty and whether it should belong collectively to all citizens of the state rather than to a single family or lineage. According to Mr. Mou's analysis, authority "belongs to a collective of a nation" as "a comprehensive 'formal actuality,' a 'static actuality' corresponding to the entire collective. It is neither a dynamic, concrete entity nor an attribute of an individual. Because it is not concrete, it cannot be possessed; and because it is not a personal attribute, it cannot be subordinated to an individual" (Mou, 1995, p. 19). Corresponding to the concept of authority, a political order maintains its essence. Mr. Mou argues that only democratic politics can sustain such an order because democracy recognizes sovereignty as belonging to the people and opposes the privatization of authority by any single family or lineage, thereby preserving the inherent nature of authority as a "constant actuality." Furthermore, in a democratic system, authority and governance are distinct; the government derives its power through elections, which means that its governing authority is granted by the people who collectively hold sovereignty. Thus, governance is based on authority, lending it objective significance, and authority remains unchanged regardless of who exercises governance.

It is evident that, although traditional Confucianism—particularly as articulated by Mencius—embraced the concept of "a common world," which asserts that the legitimacy of authority must be endorsed by the people, it did not clearly delineate the characteristics that authority should possess within this framework or the systems necessary to ensure the

preservation of these characteristics. Instead, it primarily imposed moral constraints on rulers to limit their power. According to Mr. Mou, these issues stem from a reliance on the applicative performance of reason, rather than its constitutive performance. Only through the constitutive performance of reason can a "coordinative order" emerge, recognizing each individual as an autonomous entity and utilizing theoretical reason to affirm authority as a stable reality. This, in turn, facilitates the establishment of democratic institutions that protect the constancy of authority, thereby actualizing the concept of "a common world." On the other hand, since democratic politics relies on the constitutive performance of reason, which requires theoretical reasoning, and given that the essence of theoretical reasoning fundamentally opposes the applicative performance of reason, or practical reasoning, Mr. Mou argues that practical reasoning must sublimate itself into theoretical reasoning to satisfy the necessary conditions for establishing democratic politics. This process temporarily separates political knowledge from morality, granting it independent significance. Such a transformation is both necessary and natural for practical reasoning. While issues of knowledge hinder practical reasoning's calls for democratic politics, the formation of democratic politics presents a deficiency for practical reasoning. To address this, practical reasoning must redirect its focus toward political knowledge, thereby enabling it to meet the demands of realizing democratic politics.

We can further examine Professor Lin's critique of Mr. Mou's theory of 'Self-Entrapment of Conscience.' Professor Lin argues that this theory is merely a philosophical construct under a specific interpretation, rather than an actual historical fact. He suggests that the primary reason traditional Confucianism failed to develop in the context of external kingship lies in the limitations imposed on thought by autocratic and centralized structures. However, during the time of Mencius, the autocratic imperial system that emerged after the Qin and Han dynasties had not yet formed, making centralized autocracy seemingly unrelated to Mencius' thought. Professor Lin might contend that precisely because such a system did not exist in Mencius' time, he was able to develop the concept of "a common world." Nevertheless, Mr. Mou does not believe that Mencius' concept of "a common world" is insufficient because Mencius did not further develop a corresponding democratic system based on this idea. According to Mr. Mou, this lack of development results from the applicative performance of reason, which is deficient in its constitutive performance. Through Mencius' explanation of the legitimacy of hereditary rulers and Mr. Mou's critique of Mencius, we can discern the inadequacies of the applicative performance of reason. Mr. Mou distinguishes that the absence of constitutive performance within the framework of applicative reason is the "essential cause" for traditional Confucianism's failure to fully evolve in the context of external kingship, while the presence of autocratic constraints is merely a "circumstantial cause." Similarly, Professor Lin's notion of the "misplacement of the Dao" (Lin, 2024) can be understood in this context. The traditional

Confucian ideal of the "sage-king" — which envisions rulers as virtuous individuals who are morally obligated to care for their subjects as if they were their own children — is a product of the practical application of reason. Over time, this expectation led rulers to claim virtue without genuinely embodying it, thereby transforming the ideal of the "sage-king" into the reality of the "king-sage." Initially expected to nurture the populace as if they were infants, these rulers evolved into paternal figures who demanded absolute obedience, further illustrating the shortcomings of the practical application of reason. This represents the "essential cause," while the rise of autocratic rule serves merely a "circumstantial cause." From Mr. Mou's theory, we can observe that historical conditions do not entirely dictate modes of thought; rather, historical development is often influenced by prevailing modes of thought.

IV. Is Contemporary Neo-Confucianism a Complete Embrace of Western Democracy and Science?

Professor Lin argues that while contemporary Neo-Confucians oppose the extreme anti-traditionalist view, which posits that traditional Chinese culture hinders the development of science and democracy, they assert that traditional Chinese culture can indeed promote science and democracy if it undergoes transformation. However, they largely accept the scientific and democratic advancements of Western culture, offering only occasional critiques (Lin, 2024). He further emphasizes that democracy cannot be reduced solely to elections, recalls, and checks and balances; without virtue as a guiding principle, these mechanisms devolve into mere power struggles (Lin, 2024). Consequently, Professor Lin critiques the debate between extreme anti-traditionalists and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism regarding whether Chinese culture obstructs modernization as ultimately meaningless. He advocates that "one should not discard ethics to discuss human rights, nor self-awareness to discuss freedom, and not overlook the people-oriented principle when discussing democracy," urging the realization of "human rights grounded in ethics, freedom rooted in self-awareness, and democracy founded on a people-oriented approach (Lin, 2024).

However, do Contemporary Neo-Confucianism fully embrace the scientific and democratic advancements of Western culture? In the case of Mr. Mou, while he recognizes the scientific and democratic achievements of the West through the "constitutive performance of reason," he does not accept them uncritically. His analysis of the "deficiencies of external performance that Mr. Mou's critique of modern science and democracy is far more profound than what Professor Lin characterizes as occasional and still rooted in modernist thinking. Instead, Mr. Mou provides a fundamental reflection on Western science and democracy.

"Reason initially manifests itself objectively through external extension, and its objective realization is found in the establishment of formal concepts. Once the network of formal concepts is constructed, reason retreats into silence, losing its self-awareness. It becomes unable to perceive its own position, leading individuals to question its true essence and where it resides. Consequently, this network of formal concepts is merely regarded as a specific form of governance for a particular era—a hollow framework that is complete yet detached. As reason retreats into silence, it becomes vacant and drifts away, severing its connection to the root of reason. This detachment leads to stagnation, as it settles and sinks. (Mou, 1995, pp. 157-158).

In other words, the constitutive performance of reason excels at establishing formal structures, such as scientific theories, democratic institutions, and formal conceptual definitions in political science. However, once these formal structures are established, it becomes easy to overlook their roots in reason, leading to a superficial engagement with these frameworks. Mr. Mou argues that while such operations, which sever their connection to foundational reason, may not pose significant issues in the natural sciences, they can have severe negative consequences when applied to political and social domains. When the roots of reason are severed, individuals may perceive these formal structures as merely contingent political forms that emerged in human history—dispensable and replaceable. When serious issues, such as economic crises, arise within these formal structures, it becomes easy for people to advocate for their complete dismantling. Even those who strive to uphold these structures often know only how to operate within them, believing that only what is produced or validated by these frameworks holds value. Consequently, they criticize "reason" as a metaphysical concept and dismiss "universal human nature" as an abstract and vacuous label. On an individual level, while these formal structures define formal freedom and equality of rights, they do not address how individuals should navigate their lives. As a result, personal freedom and rights are often protected, but they are frequently employed merely to pursue personal interests or indulge desires. This leads to the negative consequences of individualism observed today, underscoring the limitations of the constitutive performance of reason and the challenges posed by Western democracy and the scientific paradigms built upon it (Mou, 1995, p. 158). Mr. Mou argues that to resolve these issues, we must recognize that the formal structures underlying science and democracy have a rational basis. In politics, theoretical reason aids in establishing democratic institutions and defining political concepts; however, political practice must be grounded in practical or moral reasoning.

"But we must understand that this separation, which delineates the independent significance and domain of politics, enables political matters to be discussed solely in

terms of 'jurisprudence in political science.' Within this independent domain, it does not engage metaphysical moral reasoning; rather, it allows various concepts within democratic governance to be distinctly defined. This clear definition serves merely for the convenience of terminology and does not necessarily carry extensive implications. It is sufficient to articulate matters as equal and parallel facts within the broader context of democratic politics. However, true clarity and certainty inevitably involve moral reasoning, linking freedom with moral considerations and human self-awareness" (Mou, 1995, p. 60).

Mr. Mou posits that delineating political science as an independent discipline and temporarily separating it from morality primarily fulfills the intellectual prerequisites for establishing democratic politics. This includes defining essential concepts such as rights, duties, freedom, equality, and other necessary democratic knowledge. However, since political activity inherently involves human actions and values, it cannot be governed solely by knowledge or theoretical reasoning; moral reasoning must also play a role. For Mr. Mou, freedom is intrinsically linked to moral reasoning and human self-awareness—an undeniable practical truth. Furthermore, discussing freedom and rights through the lens of moral reasoning and human self-awareness is not merely a metaphysical debate, nor does it lead to a form of moralism that fosters totalitarianism. Mr. Mou further argues that the highest principles of political practice can be affirmed through rational application, which includes moral principles such as "prosperity before education" and "strict with oneself and broad-minded towards others." He states:

"In political measures, individual needs must be accommodated, prioritizing survival—each person, as a 'living individual existence,' must be preserved. It is unbearable for the benevolent to witness individuals in destitution or displacement. Beyond mere survival, the fullness of life encompasses material well-being and the realization of a life imbued with value worthy of 'humane existence.' Thus, it is stated: 'Let careful attention be paid to education in schools, particularly in instilling filial and fraternal duties; then, grey-haired men will not be seen on the roads, carrying burdens on their backs or heads.' This teaching encompasses the principles of filial piety, loyalty, faith, propriety, righteousness, integrity, and shame. It aligns with Mencius's tenet: 'Between father and son, there should be affection; between sovereign and minister, righteousness; between husband and wife, attention to their respective roles; between old and young,

a proper order; and between friends, fidelity.' The duties pertain to the relationships between sovereign and minister, father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger sibling, as well as those inherent in friendships. These represent fundamental and universal human virtues, not external concepts imposed upon the people, but intrinsic truths rooted in human nature and sentiment—hence, they are referred to as 'universal paths.' The teachings merely convey these principles" (Mou, 1995, p. 126).

Mr. Mou's ideas closely align with Mencius's principle of "people-centered" thought. He argues that governance and moral education must prioritize the principle of "first wealth, then education." This is because when individuals face poverty and displacement, their suffering is unbearable for those with compassion; thus, the immediate priority is to ensure that the populace is well-fed and materially secure before any form of moral education can be effective. Furthermore, political and moral education should focus on fostering human relationships without imposing the expectation that everyone become a sage. Moral practice is a personal matter, and rulers should hold themselves to the highest moral standards while respecting the independence of each citizen as an "individual existence." People should be treated as ends in themselves, not as means to enforce conformity to rigid doctrines, as such enforcement would be unethical. Rulers should first cultivate their own virtues and influence the populace through their moral example, enabling individuals to recognize their inherent qualities. This approach embodies the Confucian ideal of "governing the world with virtue" and the principle of being "strict with oneself and lenient with others." The emphasis on maintaining human relationships in political education aims to uphold individuals' dignity as human beings, teaching universal moral principles without infringing upon personal freedom. Furthermore, it is not the rulers' role to intervene in personal matters, nor should there be expectations for the populace to attain sagehood. This distinction clearly delineates the boundary between politics and morality. It is evident that Professor Lin's assertion that Contemporary Neo-Confucianism fully embrace Western democracy and science does not apply, at least in the case of Mr. Mou. Mr. Mou provides substantial critiques and reflections on the limitations of reason's constitutive performance, as well as the resulting implications for Western democracy and science. Conversely, Professor Lin's advocacy for "human rights with human relations, freedom with self-awareness, and democracy with the people at the center" is already reflected in Mr. Mou's thoughts. For Mr. Mou, both the operational and constitutive performances of reason hold irreplaceable value and necessary distinction; both must be fully manifested and harmonized to achieve the completeness of reason.

Furthermore, based on the previous analysis, it is important to re-examine Professor Lin's interpretation of "Outer Kingliness and Inner Sagehood." Professor Lin argues that, contrary to Mr. Mou's suggestion that the process begins with the Inner Sagehood to develop new Outer Kingliness, the actual approach involves adjusting the content of Inner Sagehood studies during the learning process of the new Outer Kingliness. The critical transformation lies in the shift from "Junzi (Gentleman) Confucianism" to "Citizen Confucianism," which reorients moral philosophy from emphasizing "self-cultivation of mind and nature" to prioritizing "social justice." In this context, is formed by "citizens" through contractual relationships, and "justice" is realized through a "public discourse domain." Professor Lin states:

"In modern societies, contractual social bonds take precedence over kinship-based natural connections. The original 'Way of Benevolence,' which emerged from kinship ties, must now evolve into 'social justice.' Authentic engagement in the public sphere, facilitated by interactive dialogue, fosters consensus and alignment with societal principles. It is within this framework of social justice that genuine 'self-cultivation of mind and nature' and true inner sagehood can be attained (Lin, 2021).

However, the progression from inner sagehood to outer kingliness embodies the Confucian political perspective. Confucius asserts, "To govern means to rectify. If you lead on the people with correctness, who will dare not to be correct?" to Mencius's proclamation that "The ancient kings possessed this commiserating mind, and they, as a matter of course, had likewise a commiserating government," and the Great Learning states, "From the Son of Heaven down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides," the Confucian belief that innate conscience is always present, manifesting regardless of the realization of outer kingliness. It can be expressed in both autocratic and democratic societies, guiding us through various social contexts. If one were to argue that "only in such a society can true self-cultivation and genuine inner sagehood exist," does this imply that figures like Confucius and Mencius, who did not live in what Professor Lin describes as a civil society, lacked self-cultivation? Were they not sages? The saying, "Filial piety and fraternal submission! - are they not the root of all benevolent actions?"—does this principle cease to exist outside of a civil society? If so, then the claim proposed by Professor Lin that "there are humane rights and freedom with self-awareness" raises the question: does 'self-awareness' pertain solely to political self-awareness as citizens? Furthermore, can there be no humaneness without human rights?

III. Is 'Methodological Essentialism' a Predicament?

Professor Lin argues that both radical anti-traditionalism and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, seemingly opposing camps with contrasting views on the value of traditional Chinese culture, are fundamentally rooted in "methodological essentialism," which can easily lead to partiality, dogmatism, and authoritarianism. To counter these tendencies, he advocates for "methodological conventionalism," which views language and words merely as a system of positioning rather than as representations of existence itself. This positioning system is a convention that must be continually examined and adjusted to better reflect reality and achieve consensus. Even established consensual positioning systems must be subject to ongoing scrutiny and should not be regarded as definitive. Regarding the issues of radical anti-traditionalism and Contemporary Neo-Confucianism's adherence to "methodological essentialism," Professor Lin explains:

"They both adopt methodological essentialism—one asserts that the essence of traditional Chinese culture does not impede modernization, while the other contends that it fundamentally obstructs it. It is essential to recognize that viewing issues through the lens of essentialism often results in a one-sided perspective. In comparison, radical anti-traditionalism demonstrates an even greater degree of bias, as it possesses more momentum; the greater the momentum, the more likely it is to devolve into partiality, authoritarianism, and even totalitarianism. The most commendable aspect of Neo-Confucianism, as a form of new traditionalism, is its ability to counterbalance such radical anti-traditionalism. However, methodologically, the two represent opposing ends of the same spectrum" (Lin, 2024).

If "methodological essentialism" suggests adhering to a single method for addressing all existential and universal issues, then Professor Lin's critique appears to align more closely with radical anti-traditionalism. Critics of this perspective generally assert that only scientific methods can yield correct answers to all existential and universal questions, a stance often referred to as "scientific monism." In contrast, Contemporary Neo-Confucianism largely contend that many ethical and moral dilemmas cannot be resolved through scientific methods alone. For example, Mr. Mou Zongsan's two-tiered ontology posits that, in addition to scientific truths, other forms of truth exist that are neither accessible to nor negated by scientific methods; scientific truths are merely conventional truths. According to Mr. Mou, it is through the manifestation and introspective realization of one's innate moral conscience in daily life that one truly experiences the essence of human existence and unity with all beings and the universe.

Since moral questions invariably involve epistemological issues, the innate moral conscience must also sublimate itself, giving rise to the cognitive subject, which objectifies the universe for understanding—a necessity inherent within the moral conscience itself. Reason: Improved clarity, vocabulary, and technical accuracy while maintaining the original meaning. Whether considering moral conscience or the cognitive subject, both possess constants, even as scientific truths—often regarded as conventional truths—exhibit their own inherent nature. This may be what Professor Lin refers to as "essence." However, the Confucian understanding of moral conscience or human nature is not merely an abstract metaphysical construct, nor is it defined solely by definitions of what it means to be human; rather, it is realized through moral practice. Confucianism asserts that this realization is accessible to all individuals. Mr. Mou, having deeply engaged with Kant's philosophy and modern Western logic, analyzes the self-manifestation of pure reason and the true meanings of time, space, categories, and understanding as foundational principles governing nature. He aligns Kantian philosophy with Confucian distinctions between moral and empirical knowledge, as well as the Buddhist concept of mind opening two gates, the cognitive subject within a robust theoretical framework. In Professor Lin's view, the author contends that Mr. Mou's comprehension of moral and cognitive subjects can withstand scrutiny when examined in the context of existence itself. In contrast, does Professor Lin's esteemed concept of "methodological conventionalism" ultimately devolve into relativism? When faced with the imminent danger of a child falling into a well—a situation that instinctively elicits a compassionate response inherent in human nature and represents universal moral principles—can these reactions be reduced to mere products of specific social agreements? If everything were merely conventional, what would become of the natural moral order? Without such a universal moral framework, all ethical norms would be nothing more than constructs of societal agreements; how would this differ from relativism? If this is the case, where does the constancy lie in Professor Lin's acclaimed "Three Meanings of Change" —simplicity, variability, and invariability? Regarding "scientific monism," Mr. Mou presents the following critique:

"Under the guise of scientific methods, reason is dismissed as metaphysical, universal human nature is regarded as an abstract and empty term, and references to 'essence' are labeled as essentialism. This perspective reduces everything to phenomenalism and nominalism, focusing solely on observable facts. Such a mindset severs the rational foundations of what is upheld, neglecting the fact that these ideas stem from the rational and ideal struggles of previous generations for 'transcendent equality.' It suggests that earlier thinkers were ensnared in metaphysical delusion, while contemporary scientists

alone are deemed enlightened. This viewpoint reflects the prevailing attitude among modern intellectuals in the free world, whom I collectively refer to as those lacking substance, principle, or strength" (Mou, 1995, p. 158).

In this context, Mr. Mou Zongsan, drawing on Hegel's insights, argues that the concept of "transcendent equality, reflected in the Western Christian notion of "equality before God, the foundation for Western democratic systems. This transcendent equality "inevitably entails the breaking of class constraints and the pursuit of equal rights in actual existence" (Mou Zongsan, 1995, p. 151). Mr. Mou contends that scientific monists, who reject the exploration of reason, universal human nature, and essence, effectively sever the roots of rationality. Following Mr. Mou's line of reasoning, I also contend that merely discussing "what essence is" is not inherently flawed. Instead, the validity of such discussions depends on their ability to withstand theoretical scrutiny and practical application. Similarly, one cannot dismiss Mr. Mou's recognition of the fundamental distinction between moral and cognitive subjects, each possessing its own constancy, nor can one overlook his acknowledgment of Western achievements in science and democracy by merely labeling it as "methodological essentialism" and declaring it inherently incorrect. Instead, critical evaluation should focus on the rationale behind Mr. Mou's two-tiered ontology—specifically, whether it can be theoretically validated and practically implemented. If Mr. Mou's two-tiered ontology is well-founded, then why should it be considered inherently flawed simply because it asserts the constancy of moral and cognitive subjects? As to whether methodological essentialism inevitably leads to dictatorship and despotism, this largely depends on whether its proponents wield their authority to dismiss all criticism and alternative approaches. If a theory that asserts an "essence" of the cosmos and the universe is rooted in objective reality, and its advocates are open to responding to and adequately addressing all critiques, then it should not be labeled authoritarian solely for recognizing the existence of an "essence." However, it appears that Professor Lin's mention of "methodological essentialism" refers to something more specific. He states:

Although Contemporary Neo-Confucianism offers a robust critique of radical anti-traditionalists, their assertions that Chinese political tradition "has governance but no politics," that ancient China "had technology but no science," and that China prioritizes "morality" over but are, in fact, misleading. If governance exists, then politics must also exist; however, this form of politics differs from Western modern politics. Similarly, if technology exists, so too does science; yet this science is not equivalent to Western modern science. China inherently possesses both morality and knowledge, just as the

West does; however, the development of morality and the acquisition of knowledge differ significantly between the two cultures. Western monarchical despotism of the past was no less severe than that of ancient China, and in some respects, it even surpassed it. However, there are notable differences; Western democracy is not an inherent quality but rather a system that developed through historical progression. Similarly, the Chinese cultural tradition can also develop and evolve through learning. I believe that breaking away from the methodological essentialism commonly used to understand cultures and replacing it with methodological conventionalism is the key to rectifying the "misplacement of the Way" and restoring proper order. (Lin, 2024)

From this perspective, Professor Lin's concept of "methodological essentialism" critiques those who ascribe a specific "essence" to cultures. One target of Professor Lin's critique is Mr. Mou Zongsan's assertion that traditional Chinese culture represents "the manifestation of the application of reason," while Western culture embodies "the manifestation of the structure of reason. However, even though both Eastern and Western cultures propose theories regarding the legitimacy of political power, do these theories correspond with Mr. Mou's notion of political Dao—"the substantive existence that aligns politically with the form of power, a constant and substantive existence that is genuinely shared by a group"? If Western culture initially lacked democracy, could its rational structure later facilitate the emergence of a democratic system that aligns with political Dao? Similarly, despite Mencius' concept of "public governance under heaven," why did it not culminate in a democratic system that corresponds with political Dao? Even though Western cultures have developed moral frameworks, have they successfully implemented practical self-cultivation theories that enable individuals to attain a state of unity between self and others, self and the world, and heaven and humanity? If the "misplacement of the Way" that Professor Lin refers to is indeed a result of the insufficient application of reason, does this support Mr. Mou's perspective on the differences between traditional Chinese and Western cultures? If Professor Lin acknowledges that "the development of morality and the acquisition of knowledge in China and the West differ significantly, are these differences merely attributable to "real-world conditions, as Mr. Mou suggests, or do they arise from "essential causes"? If there are indeed "essential causes" underlying these cultural differences, then even if Contemporary Neo-Confucianism aligns with Professor Lin's "methodological essentialism," it may not present a problem.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the analysis above, I have addressed Professor An-Wu Lin's criticisms of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism by using Mr. Mou Zongsan's theory of two layers of existence as an illustrative example. In response to Professor Lin's assertion that Mr. Mou's concept of the "Self-Entrapment of Conscience" is merely a philosophical construct under certain interpretations and not a genuine historical fact, I contend that Professor Lin has not fully grasped the distinction Mr. Mou makes between "essential conditions" and "real-world conditions." He has overlooked the fact that Western culture has successfully developed democracy and science, while traditional Chinese culture has not, which underscores the significance of an "essential condition." In response to Professor Lin's criticism that Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, similar to radical anti-traditionalism, fully embraces Western democracy and science, I have referenced Mr. Mou's critique of the shortcomings in the rational structure of Western culture, as well as its science and democracy, to argue that Professor Lin's criticism is open to debate. In response to Professor Lin's assertion that Contemporary Neo-Confucianism exemplifies "methodological essentialism," I question the premise that methodological essentialism is inherently flawed. Given the constraints of this article and my own academic expertise, this paper primarily engages with Professor Lin's inquiries through the lens of Mr. Mou's perspectives. It does not, however, delve into the ideas of other prominent figures in Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, such as Xiong Shili, Tang Junyi, and Xu Fuguan, nor does it comprehensively address all of Professor Lin's concerns. I hope that future research will further explore the ideas of these predecessors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Contemporary Neo-Confucianism.

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