

卷首语 From the Editors' Desk

Orientalism and Reverse Orientalism in the Interactions between Christianity and Confucianism: With Special Reference to the Problem of “Immanence vis-à-vis Transcendence”

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Abstract: Through making references to some inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural studies of “Transcendence” as well as the usage of the relevant terms in contemporary Confucianism and Christianity, especially the concepts of “transcendence” and “immanence” (which is translated sometimes as *nèi zài* in Chinese), this study attempts to challenge some of the prevalent stereotypes of Christianity and Confucianism. With special references to the historical and contemporary Christian-Confucian discourses related to the concepts of immanence and transcendence, this study argues that certain features of “orientalism” can be found in the Christian interpretations of Confucianism, especially their tendency of downplaying the transcendence in Confucianism in order to highlight that Christianity is the fulfillment of Confucianism. In contrast to the Christian interpretations, the Confucian interpretations tend to highlight the “transcendence” in Confucianism and ignore the “immanence” in Christianity. Certain “reverse orientalism” can be found at the Confucian interpretations of Christianity, especially their attempts at arguing for the superiority of Confucianism through articulating the contrast between “external transcendence” (*wài zài chāo yuè*) and “internal transcendence” (*nèi zài chāo yuè*). This study further argues that no matter whether it is orientalism or reverse orientalism, these stereotypes of the contrast between Christianity and Confucianism misinterpret not only the other’s tradition, but also one’s own, and thus hinder the communication between the two traditions.

Key Words: Orientalism, Confucianism, Christianity, Transcendence, Immanence

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Introduction

In recent years “transcendence” has become an important issue for interdisciplinary dialogue in Western academia-involving not only Christian theology but also disciplines which are supposed to be relatively “secular,” including philosophy, literature, and cultural studies, which emphasizes particularly the importance of everyday.^[1] There are many publications on transcendence resulted from these interdisciplinary discussions.^[2] Some of them attempt to reflect critically on the modern Western notion(s) of transcendence and raise the question “do we need to transcend transcendence?” Whereas some scholars address the questions concerning re-imagining traditional transcendence, some others prefer “relocating transcendence on the plane of immanence.”^[3] It is noteworthy that when discussing the concept of “transcendence”, the relationship between “transcendence” and “immanence” is inevitably involved. For example, a recent typological study of transcendence proposes four types of transcendence and the concept of immanence is involved in at least two of them. These four types are “immanent transcendence,” “radical transcendence,” “radical immanence,” and “transcendent as alterity.”^[4]

It is noticeable that in addition to the critical reflections on the modern Western understanding (s) of transcendence, some scholars propose that intercultural dialogue with thinkers from other traditions can help to clarify some of the Western notions of transcendence. For example, André van der Braak proposes that according to the typology of transcendence mentioned above, the notion of “transcendence” articulated by Keiji Nishitani (1900 – 1990) of the Kyoto School belongs to the “transcendent as alterity” model and affirms transcendence in immanence without assuming the opposition between transcendence and immanence.^[5] Van der Braak also mentions briefly the interpretation of Confucianism offered by Roger Ames and David Hall about Confucianism. He summarizes their argument as follow:

They argue that one of the most striking features of Chinese intellectual culture is the absence of transcendence in the articulation of its spiritual, moral, and political sensibilities. For example; in their analysis of the Chinese term *tian* 天 (translated by Jesuit missionaries as Heaven, Providence, God, Nature), Hall and Ames conclude that “the dualism that requires appeal to transcendent deity in the Western tradition has no relevance at all to Chinese culture”. They also comment that the notion of *dao* 道, which is often interpreted as an indication for a transcendent absolute, should be interpreted as a nontranscendent field.^[6]

[1] Students of cultural studies may recall Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984). You Xilin and Paulos Huang, “The Contemporary Transformation of Educational Mechanism for Knowledge Innovation”, *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies* (www.SinoWesternStudies.com), 1-20.

[2] For example, Regina Schwartz, ed., *Transcendence: Philosophy Literature, and Theology—Approach the Beyond* (New York, London: Routledge, 2004).

[3] See: John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *Transcendence and Beyond: A Postmodern Inquiry* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[4] See: Wessel Stoker and W. L. van der Merwe, eds., *Culture and Transcendence: A Typology of Transcendence* (Leuven: Peeters, 2012).

[5] André van der Braak, “Nishitani’s Rethinking of Transcendence as Trans-Descendence,” in *Culture and Transcendence*, 207-17.

[6] *Ibid.*, 209.

For van der Braak, the interpretation offered by Hall and Ames implies that it is misleading to apply the concepts of “immanence” and “transcendence” to the Chinese world, and it is better to avoid these terms whenever possible.^[7] However, instead of dropping these terms altogether, he continues to use these terms in his exploration of Nishitani’s thought. This seems to indicate that, for van der Braak at least, these terms remain useful in intercultural communication, even though their applicability to the Chinese cultural world is doubtful.

In the perspective of intercultural communication, there are two questions to be taken up. First, against the advice given by Hall and Ames, the concepts of “immanence” and “transcendence” are actually among the key concepts in the dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity.^[8] An interesting question is this: Can the Christian-Confucian dialogue on immanence and transcendence enrich the discussion concerning transcendence in Western academia? A related question is this: Given the typology of transcendence mentioned above, can the “dualism in the Western tradition” mentioned by Hall and Ames represent the whole Western tradition? If not, is their comment on Western culture exhibits a sort of “reverse orientalism” which can be found also in the interpretation of “Western tradition” offered by the Kyoto School?^[9] In order to address these questions, it is quite necessary to review the Christian-Confucian dialogue concerning immanence and transcendence.

Transcendence in Christian-Confucian Comparison

The issue of transcendence and immanence plays an important role in Confucian-Christian dialogue. Some Confucians, e. g. Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), tend to interpret the difference between Christianity and Confucianism in terms of “external transcendence” (waizai chaoyue) and “immanent transcendence” or “internal transcendence” (neizai chaoyue).^[10] Arguing against Mou, some Christian scholars challenge the validity of this stereotype and try to show that Christianity, instead of merely understanding God as purely transcendent or externally transcendent, also emphasizes the

[7] Ibid.

[8] For a recent discussion, see: Pakon Chan, *Chaoyue yu neizai: yi ge jidutu dui Zhongguo zhexue de fansi* [Transcendence and immanence: a Christian’s reflection on Chinese philosophy] (Hong Kong: Open Field Publishing, 2013).

[9] For a critique of the reverse orientalism in the founders of Kyoto School see Bernard Faure, *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 52-88. For a critique of the reverse orientalism in Masao Abe, see Lai Pan-chiu (= Lai Pinchao), “Cunyou yu feiyou: Dilixi, yefo duihua yu Hanyu shenxue” [Being and non-being; Paul Tillich, Buddhist-Christian dialogue, and Sino-Christian theology], *Logos & Pneuma* 43 (July 2015): 29-50.

[10] See: Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun* [On Summum Bonum] (Taipei: Student’s Press, 1985).

immanence of God.^[11] Mou's stereotype is also challenged by another representative of contemporary new Confucianism Liu Shu-hsien (= Liu Shuxian, 1934–2016). Liu points out that Christian theology does not necessarily understand God as externally transcendent because some trends of Christian theology, such as process theology, emphasize also the immanence of God and these theological endeavours, without doubt, are conducive to close the gap between Christianity and Confucianism.^[12] In a similar vein, Mou's comrade Tang Chun-I (= Tang Junyi, 1909–1978), admits that the panentheism advocated by Alfred North Whitehead (1909–1978) and Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) is very close to his own understanding of the relationship between Heaven/God and the world and can ease the tension between human freedom and the divine grace.^[13] John Berthrong, a representative of Boston Confucianism, also endeavours to make process theology a bridge between Christianity and Confucianism and proposes to use Hartshorne's idea of dual transcendence to address the question of transcendence and immanence.^[14]

It is true that some schools of philosophical/theological thought such as process theology can be inspirational to the dialogue of Christianity and Confucianism.^[15] However, Mou's discussion concerning internal and external transcendence relates to his argument that Christianity, which is a "detached teaching" (lijiao), is inferior to Confucianism, which is a "perfect teaching" (yuanjiao). As a response, one has to review the Christian tradition as a whole instead of focusing only on a particular school of Christian theology, especially when the school is so philosophical that whether it

[11] For example, Lo Ping-cheung (= Luo Bingxiang), "Lun Shangdi de chaoyue: jian lun xin Rujia dui Jidu zongjiao de piping" [On divine transcendence: with a reply to new Confucians], *Jidu zongjiao yanjiu* [Study of Christianity], ed. Zhuo Xiping and Xu Zhiwei (Beijing: Social Science Documents Press, 2000), 2: 37-52; Benedict Hung-biu Kwok, "The Christian Understanding of God as Transcendence and Immanence: A Response to Liu Shu-hsien's Understanding of the Pure Transcendence of God," *Ching Feng* 42 (1999) 1-2, 35-57; Xu Zhiwei, "Jidujiao zhi Sanwei Yiti jiaoyi; neizai yu chaoyue" [The Christian doctrine of Trinity: immanence and transcendence] in *Chongtu yu hubu: Jidujiao zhexue zai Zhongguo* [Conflict and Complement; Christian Philosophy in China], ed. Xu Zhiwei and Zhao Dunhua (Beijing: Social Science Documents Press, 2000), 50-86; Lo Ping-cheung, "Shangdi de chaoyue yu linzai" [Divine transcendence and divine immanence; a comparison of God-human relationship with heaven-human relationship] in *Duihua II: Ru, Shi, Dao, yu Jidujiao* [Dialogue II: Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Christianity], ed. He Guanhu and Edwin Hui (Beijing: Social Science Documents Press, 2001), 243-77. For a response of the above discussion, see Liu Shu-hsien, "Chaoyue yu neizai wenti zhi zai xingsi" [A rethinking of the question of "transcendence and immanence"] in *Dangdai Ruxue yu Xifang wenhua: zongjiao pian* [Modern Confucianism and Western culture: a religious perspective], ed. Liu Shu-hsien and Lin Yueh-hui (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2005), 12-42.

[12] Liu Shu-hsien, "Guanyu chaoyue yu neizai wenti de xingsi" [A reflection on the question of transcendence and immanence], *Dang Dai* [Contemporary Era] 96 (April 1993): 146-49 (147); Liu, "Dangdai xin Rujia keyi xiang Jidujiao xuexi shenmo?" [What can contemporary new Confucians learn from Christianity?], *Zhexue yu wenhua* [Philosophy and culture] 15 (August 1988): 513-17 (517). For Liu's introduction to process theology, see Liu Shu-hsien, "You Meiguo tese de dangdai Meiguo zongjiao zhexue" [Contemporary philosophy of religion in the United States with American characteristics] in *Dang Dai* 23 (March 1988): 48-58; Liu, "Dangdai Meiguo zongjiao zhexue" [Contemporary philosophy of religion in the United States], *Dang Dai* 49 (May 1990): 84-97. For the 20th century (especially American) discussion on the transcendence of God, see Edward Farley, *The Transcendence of God: A Study in Contemporary Philosophical Theology* (London: Epworth, 1962).

[13] Tang Jun-yi, *Shengming cunzai, yu xinling jingjie* [Life, existence, and the horizon of mind-heart] (Taipei: Student Book, 1986), 2: 19, 226.

[14] John Berthrong, *All Under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1994), 133-64. For Hartshorne's idea of dual transcendence, see Charles Hartshorne, *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984), 44-49.

[15] Lai Pan-chiu, "Kebu Jidulun ji shengtai shenxue yu Dangdai huaren chujing" [Cobb's Christology and ecological theology and contemporary Chinese context] in *Kebu, Pannengbo, Houhuoshi yu Dangdai huaren chujing* [Cobb, Pannenberg, Hauerwas and Contemporary Chinese Context], ed. Andres S. K. Tang (= Deng Shaoguang) (Hong Kong: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1999), 1-50 (37-47).

can represent the mainstream of Christian theology is doubtful.^[16] Furthermore, Mou's critique of Christianity is based on his reading of the ethics of Immanuel Kant (1724—1804) that the existence of God is a necessary presupposition for human morality. Mou's critique concerns not only the Christian doctrine of God, especially the divine transcendence, but also the Christian doctrine of human beings, including human morality and salvation.

In response to Mou, Lai Pan-chiu argues that Christian theology affirms not only the immanence of the transcendent but also the transcendence of the immanent, namely both the immanence of God and the transcendence of the human being. Rather than deny the difference between Christianity and Confucianism, it aims to point out that one cannot simply identify Confucianism with immanent transcendence and Christianity with external transcendence. There can be plenty of rooms for dialogues between Confucianism and Christianity on the issues related to immanence and transcendence.^[17] He further published some articles concerning how the Christian doctrine of human beings is to be related to the dialogue with Confucianism.^[18]

Through a sketch of the Christian theological tradition, this study attempts to show that the Christian God is both transcendent and immanent. Such an idea of God is rooted in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and affirmed by the majority of Christian traditions. In other words, the idea of God as purely or externally transcendent is by no means an adequate presentation of the Christian faith. If one ranks Christianity as a kind of "detached" religion solely based on the understanding that its transcendence is purely external, this evaluation is problematic because it is based on a dubious criterion and an inadequate understanding of Christianity.^[19] This inadequate interpretation of Christianity may reflect a sort of "reverse orientalism" in the Confucian response to Christianity.

[16] Hartshorne believes that comparing with classical theism, his neo-classical theism is more faithful to the God described in the Bible. According to the Bible, God is the God of love and action, sympathetically participating in the world, hearing and responding the prayer of the human being; in neo-classical theism, the relationship between God and the world is internal and mutual dependent instead of external and dispensable. See: Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity: A Social Concept of God* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1948).

[17] Lai Pan-chiu, "Chaoyuezhe de neizaixing yu neizaizhe de chaoyuexing: ping Mou Zongsan dui Ru Ye zhi fenpan" [Immanence of the Transcendent and the Transcendence of the Immanent; On Mou Zongsan's Differentiation of Christianity and Confucianism], in *Dangdai Ruxue yu Xifang wenhua: zongjiao pian* [Modern Confucianism and Western culture: a religious perspective], ed. Liu Shu-hsien and Lin Yueh-hui (Taipei: Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 2005), 43-89. Some parts of this paper are derived from this long chapter. The author would like to thank Dr. Li Bingquan, Renmin University, for his assistance in the translation.

[18] Lai Pan-chiu, "Barth's Doctrines of Sin and Humanity in Buddhist Perspective," *Studies in Interreligious Studies* 16, no. 1 (2006): 41-58; Lai, "Christian Transformation of Greek Humanism and its Implications for Christian-Confucian Dialogue," *Korea Journal of Systematic Theology* 22 (December 2008), 245-69; Lai, "Shaping Humanity with Word and Spirit: Perspectives East, West and Neither-East-Nor-West," in *Word and Spirit: Renewing Christology and Pneumatology in a Globalizing World*, ed. Anselm K. Min and Christoph Schwöbel (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 131-49.

[19] Liu Qiliang, "Yuan li zhi bian—Ru Ye zhi bijiao yu zhong xi wenhua jingshen de zai renshi" [The difference between the coherent and the separate; a comparison between Confucianism and Christianity and a rethinking of the cultural spirit of the East and the West], *Zhexue Zaizhi* [A journal of philosophy] 23 (February 1998): 94-109.

Mou's Interpretation of Christianity

Mou's interpretation of Christianity is to a certain extent a response to Christianity's negative estimation of Confucianism that Confucianism, which is merely a matter of social ethics, does not have the transcendent dimension and needs to be supplemented by Christianity.^[20] In response, Mou not only endeavours to argue that Confucianism has its transcendent dimension, but also goes further to point out that such transcendence is a kind of immanent transcendence superior to the external transcendence advocated by Christianity.^[21] For Mou, the Christian idea of God, which is purely and externally transcendent without immanence is inferior to the "Infinite Mind-Heart" (Wuxian Zhixin), which combines transcendence with immanence and represents the perfect teaching advocated by Confucianism. Mou writes, "on the one hand, the Infinite Mind-Heart is absolutely universal, beyond everybody and everything, out of the reach of any empirical experience, and thus it is transcendent; on the other, it is the substance of everybody and everything and thus immanent."^[22] For Mou, Christianity is a detached religion because "it denies the possibility of human beings' attaining the supreme wisdom through their own practice and thus separates the infinity from the life of the human being."^[23] The distinction between the perfect teaching and the detached religion, for him, lies in whether the teaching or the religion affirms the Infinite Mind-Heart of human beings or not, that is to say, whether the finite human being is capable of becoming infinite. Christianity is a detached religion, not so much because it has no such idea as infinite wisdom but because it externalizes this Infinite Mind-Heart as a personal God, who is an objective existence. Thus, according to Mou, there is a dualistic opposition between the infinite and the finite in Christianity,^[24] for it cannot simultaneously affirm the externalized the Infinite Mind-Heart (the personal God) and the internalized moral subject. For Christianity, the affirmation of the Infinite Mind-Heart of the human being is equivalent to saying that the human being can become infinite in and through the Infinite Mind-Heart, and thus God is merely a dispensable illusion.^[25] In short, the reason for Christianity's being ranked a detached religion lies in its teaching that there is an absolute detachment or unbridgeable gap between finite human being and God the infinite reality.

Mou's understanding of Christianity goes deeper than an abstract concept of God and he mentions the related Christian doctrines of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. Mou considers the Father, the Son, and the Spirit as "three stages of God," namely, God in itself, for itself, and in-and-for itself.^[26] He believes that the second stage (the stage of Son) of God's revelation stands for the

[20] Mou Zongsan, "Renwen zhuyi yu zongjiao" [Humanism and religion] in *Shengming de xuewen* [The learning of life] (Taipei: San Min Book, 1970), 74.

[21] Some scholars of Chinese philosophy also challenge Mou's theory of "transcendent immanence" on analytical ground. See: Fung Yiu-ming, "Chaoyue neizai" de misi: cong fenxi zhexue guandian kan dangdai xin Ruxue [The myth of "transcendent immanence": a perspective of analytic philosophy on contemporary new Confucianism] (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2003).

[22] Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan Lun*, 340.

[23] Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* [Phenomenon and thing-itself] (Taipei: Student Book, 1975), 453.

[24] *Ibid.*, 452.

[25] *Ibid.*, 452-53.

[26] Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi* [The characters of Chinese philosophy] (Taipei: Student Book, 1994), 67-69.

principle of subjectivity, which is truly united with the principle of objectivity in the third stage.^[27] Nevertheless, he also believes that the process from the Father (in itself) to the Son (for itself) and then to the Holy Spirit (in-and-for itself) is a kind of returning or internalizing movement.^[28] For him, at the stage of Son, the Incarnation was a manifestation of the infinite through the finite, the manifestation of God in the life of Jesus or God becoming fresh, rather than Jesus as a human being becoming infinite through the fulfilment of his Infinite Mind-Heart. Mou admits that "[t]he significance of the Crucifixion of Jesus consists in its being a fully embodiment of what God means, the manifestation of the universal love by means of sacrifice."^[29] But for Mou, the life of Jesus remains merely a stage of God the Father manifesting himself, and only God is the true object of the manifestation per se. Therefore, the Incarnation is after all merely part of the work of God and thus a matter of God rather than a matter of the human being.^[30] God Himself is always the centre of this manifestation or revelation throughout the whole process of the three stages, which is in itself organized by the principle of objectivity.^[31] Therefore, for Mou, although the stage of Son embodies the principle of subjectivity, since this life is essentially "a matter of God," the subjectivity expressed by Jesus remains different from the Confucian principle of subjectivity, which includes the virtues of ren (benevolence), zhi (wisdom), and cheng (sincerity) to be derived from one's own life. In other words, Confucianism concerns a naturally downward completion and Christianity an extra-ordinarily upward return. For these reasons, Christianity is an imperfect or detached religion.^[32]

Mou's understanding of the doctrine of Trinity, as Mou himself admits, is mainly derived from the interpretation articulated by G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831).^[33] However, according to Keith Ka-fu Chan (= Chen Jiafu), Mou adopts merely the Hegelian Trinitarian terminology, such as the concepts "in itself," "for itself," and "in-and-for itself," but Mou's understanding on Trinity is substantially different from the Hegelian relational and temporal understanding of God, which assumes that the divine and the world (including particularly the human being) are related to each other particularly in the last stage of synthesis. This idea, which is not adopted by Mou, was further developed by Paul Tillich (1886–1965), who interprets the life of God as a Trinitarian dialectical process. According to Tillich, the infinite and the finite, God and human beings, the divine and the world can participate in one another without separation in a Trinitarian dialectical process. In other words, God and the world are by no means in a dualistic opposition. According to this interpretation, Christianity is not necessarily a detached religion as Mou tried to prove.^[34]

Admittedly, whether Mou accurately understood Hegel's interpretation of the Trinity is a rather secondary issue. A more important issue is whether Mou's interpretation of the Trinity adequately reflects the Christian understanding of the Trinity. For Mou, an even more important question is

[27] Ibid. ,67-68.

[28] Ibid. ,62,65,68.

[29] Ibid. ,61,63.

[30] Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, 451-52.

[31] Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, 66.

[32] Ibid. ,65.

[33] Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu* [A self-account at the age of fifty] (Taipei: E Tang Press, 1989), 118.

[34] Keith Ka-fu Chan, "Yuan li zhi jian: lun Mou Zongsan yu Tian Like de Shangdiguan" [Between the coherent and the separate: on Mou Zongsan and Tillich's theism], *Logos and Pneuma* 16 (Spring 2002): 229-48.

whether Christianity embraces the possibility of the finite human being becoming infinite. For Mou, the most important reason why Christianity is a detached religion lies in its failure to establish real human subjectivity.^[35] As Zheng Jiadong points out, Mou's concept of "immanent transcendence" can be finally reduced to a question about whether the finite human being is capable of becoming infinite.^[36] To take Mou's critique seriously and respond to it thoroughly, it is necessary to investigate the Christian anthropology, namely, the question of the transcendence of the human being. But as we are going to see, this question may refer back to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Transcendence and Immanence in Christianity

In the Christian tradition, both the transcendence and the immanence of the divine have always been affirmed. In fact, this is a stance inherited from the ancient Israelite tradition recorded in the Old Testament, in which God is both transcendent and immanent and the relationship between God and the world is neither identical nor totally separate, neither monistic nor dualistic.^[37] Christianity, on the one hand, retains the emphasis on the transcendence of God in the Old Testament, as well as the belief that God the Creator is the sole origin of all things and by nature different from all creatures; on the other hand, in the New Testament, it emphasizes the Incarnation of the Holy Son and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world. As a result, there is a three-fold description of the relationship between God and the world aptly summarized in the New Testament: "One God and Father of all, who is above all (epi panton), and through all (dia panton), and in all (en pasin)" (Ephesians 4: 6), which clearly shows that the relationship between God and the world is both transcendent and immanent.

In the Greco-Roman context, Christianity appropriated the transcendent monotheism in Greek philosophy, especially Platonism, instead of the polytheistic religion in Greek-Roman culture. But at the same time, Christianity also tried to avoid thinking God merely as a transcendent God separating from the world.^[38] This can be shown in the early Christian resistance to Gnosticism, which stressed the absolute transcendence of the Numinous.^[39] The Gnostic emphasis on the absolute transcendence of God incurs an extreme dualism between God and the material world. It is assumed that the material world is intrinsically evil and alien from the divine, or even separated from God and out of the scope of redemption. The creation of this physical universe was done by some sorts of semi-divine being, such as demiurge, rather than the absolutely transcendent God. Some Gnostics even denied the

[35] Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, 66.

[36] Zheng Jia-dong, "Chaoyue yu 'neizai chaoyue'—Mou Zongsan yu Kang De zhi jian" [Transcendence and "immanent transcendence;" between Mou Zongsan and Kant], in *Zhongguo wenhua de jiantao yu qianzhan* [The retrospection and the prospect of Chinese culture], ed. Liu Shu-hsien (New Jersey: Global Publishing, 2001), 373, 388-89.

[37] Martin Henry, *On Not Understanding God* (Dublin: Columbia, 1997), 88-93, 306; also, Thomas Marsh, *The Triune God: A Biblical, Historical and Theological Study* (Dublin: Columbia, 1994), 20-24.

[38] For the development of the Christian doctrine of God and its relationship with the Graeco-Roman culture, see Robert Grant, *Gods and the One God: Christian Theology in the Graeco-Roman World* (London: SPCK, 1986).

[39] PHEME PERKINS, "Deceiving the Deity: Self-Transcendence and the Numinous in Gnosticism," in *Transcendence and the Sacred*, ed. by Alan M. Olson and Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame, IN; London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 138-58 (152).

physical body of Jesus Christ and thus the doctrine of the Incantation—God becoming flesh.^[40] In short, Gnosticism tended to assume and affirm the absolute separation between God and the world and thus undermined or even denied the divine immanence in the world. Irenaeus (130-200), the most famous anti-Gnostic Church father, founds his critique of Gnosticism upon a different understanding of the transcendence of God. For the Gnostics, the transcendence of God is a matter of distance, for God and the world stand in one and the same continuum and are only separated by different levels of being. On the contrary, Irenaeus insists the absolute difference between God and his creation, which means that God, though omnipresent to every creature, does not belong to the same continuum with the world.^[41] According to Irenaeus' Trinitarian theology, instead of leaving the world including human being alone, God the Father takes the initiative to shape humanity with his two hands, name God the Son and God the Spirit, who are immanent in the world in order to complete the work of salvation which includes the fulfilment of the human nature.^[42]

The ancient Church Fathers laid great emphasis on the "transcendence" of God, but "transcendence" here mainly referred to the purity and the superiority of God rather than the Epicurean renouncement of the world. The Church Fathers, on the one hand, adopted Platonic-Aristotelian thesis in stressing the transcendence of God and, on the other hand, also made use of some Stoic ideas to explicate the omnipresence and the pervasiveness of God.^[43] Tertullian (160-225), for example, tried to clarify the transcendence of God, especially God's being eternal, unborn, uncreated, without beginning and end, invisible, incomprehensible, heterogeneous with the creature; on the other hand, he also used the Stoic idea of Spirit to illustrate the omnipresent of God. Tertullian was not troubled by the contradiction between the Stoic idea of God with a material body and the Platonic transcendent immaterial God; the only thing concerned him was whether these discourses were suitable to interpret the biblical revelation and the Christian tradition.^[44]

It is thus legitimate to summarize that "the Judeo-Christian tradition has always attempted to maintain, however uneasily and in a variety of ways, the sense of God as both transcendent being and immanent activity."^[45] This is because both the immanence and the transcendence of God are indispensable with the Christian faith and practice. As is well known, the belief in the transcendence of God plays a vital role in Christian faith and ethics as well as in Western culture.^[46] Nevertheless, religious behaviours such as prayer and confession in Christianity also presuppose the affinity of God with the human being, just as what St. Augustine says; God is nearer than I am to myself (interior intimo meo).^[47]

[40] Many contemporary scholars believe that despite its great influence over Christianity, Gnosticism was not a heresy internal to Christianity as many early Christians thought. It was a pluralistic religious movement whose origin preceded Christianity rather than a religious sect with unified organization and/or doctrine(s). See Kurt Rudolf, *Gnosis; The Nature & History of Gnosticism*, trans. R. M. Wilson (San Francisco: Harper, 1987); Giovanni Filorano, *A History of Gnosticism*, trans. Anthony Alcock (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

[41] Denis Minns, *Irenaeus* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994), 32-34.

[42] Lai, "Shaping Humanity," 131-49.

[43] See further: G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought*, 2nd ed. (London: SPCK, 1952), 25-54 (31-34).

[44] Richard A. Norris, *God and World in Early Christian Theology: A Study in Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian & Origen* (London: A & C. Black, 1966), 91-93.

[45] Arthur Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science; The Re-Shaping of Belief* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 205.

[46] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture* (London: Faber & Faber, 1961).

[47] Augustine, *Confessions* 3. 6. It may be interpreted as: God is more inward than my most inward part.

For mediaeval theologians, there is no difficulty of understanding the non-contradictory co-existence of “transcendence” and “immanence”, for they are all under the influence of the discourses on the “simplicity” of God in classical theology, which means that there are no distinctions in God and no descriptive predicates could apply to God literally.^[48] In classic Latin theology, the being of God is considered omniscientia, omnipotentia, omnisapientia, omnisufficientia, and moreover, ubiquitas and omnipraesentia, which assume the divine immanence in the world. The Lutheran theology emerged since the Reformation(s) affirmed that, even in the humiliating status (status humilationis) of becoming a human being, the humanity of Christ remains secretly or partially omnipresent (omnipraesentia intima sive partialis).^[49] An idea closely related to omnipresence is “immensitas,” which literally means “without measure.” Omnipresence, implying at once the dimensions of universality and inwardness, is immeasurable, behind which is the presupposition that God, as the infinite omnipresent Spirit, cannot be measured by matter or space. In this sense, transcendence and immanence are by no means opposite.^[50] If omnipresence is conceived as a kind of transcendence (not limited to any particular place), transcendence and immanence, instead of being opposite, could be mutually complementary.^[51]

In Christian theology, the term “transcendence” can be traced back to two main origins. On the one hand, the concept draws its sense from the Old Testament teaching that the being of God is different from the existence of humankind; on the other hand, it is also derived from the Platonic “Good” that is “beyond” being and knowledge. As for its use in theological discourses, transcendence could refer to different forms: the ontological transcendence, namely, the otherness of God, the holiness of God in the moral sense, and God’s transcendence over the knowledge, thought, and language of the human being.^[52] In all these senses, transcendence does not contradict immanence, unless one understands the ontological sense of transcendence in spatial term, which means “separate” or “detached.” Nevertheless, in the development of Christian theology, the opposition between the transcendence and immanence of God, which presupposes a spatial understanding of God’s transcendence, did not appear until the Age of Enlightenment. Such kind of spatial understanding of transcendence was deeply influenced by the rapid growth of natural sciences. Modern natural sciences, especially the Newtonian physics, presupposed a worldview of mechanical determinism, which assumed that the natural phenomena could be explained in terms of natural sciences. Therefore, God became an unnecessary assumption for the explanation of the physical universe and should be excluded from human knowledge of the natural world. The appearance of Deism again reinforced such a message that after creation God had withdrawn from the world and let

[48] Gerard J. Hughes, *The Nature of God* (London: Routledge, 1995), 34-64.

[49] Lutheran theology believes that the body of Jesus Christ is truly present in the Sacrament, and this belief assumes the presupposition that the finite is capable of the infinite (Finitum capax infiniti) rather than the Calvinistic presupposition that the finite is incapable of the infinite (Finitum non capax infiniti).

[50] For the interpretation of these Latin terms, see Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985).

[51] Probably for this reason, Scholasticism does not further divide “transcendence” into “transcendent” and “transcendental.” See Zheng Jia-dong, “Chaoyue yu ‘neizai chaoyue’”, 374.

[52] John McIntyre, “Transcendence,” in *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, ed. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM, 1983), 576-77.

the world run its own course without any divine intervention, no matter whether it is called providence and salvation. Thus, one can further assume that God is no longer present in the natural world and becomes a spatially detached God. However, rather than conceiving God's transcendence spatially, those great pre-modern theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas (1225—1274), Martin Luther (1483—1546), and John Calvin (1509—1564), understand God's transcendence as His absolute otherness, that is, the Triune God as a mystery beyond human categories. For them, transcendence and immanence are not a pair of contradictory concepts; on the contrary, precisely because of his radical transcendence God can be thoroughly omnipresent. ^[53]

Transcendence and Immanence in Modern Theology

Many modern theologians have tried to deal with the question of the transcendence and immanence of God via different methods; the question can even be a thread with which one can link up different schools of modern theology. ^[54] Referring to the typology of transcendence mentioned above, one may find examples from modern Christian theologians to illustrate these four models, namely "immanent transcendence," "radical transcendence," "radical immanence," and "transcendent as alterity." ^[55] While "radical immanence" and "radical transcendence" may tend to assume the opposition or even contradiction between immanence and transcendence, both "immanent transcendence" and the "transcendent as alterity" are open to the compatibility between transcendence and immanence. In fact, there are many modern Christian theologians advocating the compatibility between divine transcendence and divine immanence.

John Henry Newman (1801—1890), a Catholic Cardinal and university educator of the nineteenth century, suggests that God is an invisible, intelligent Being behind the visible world, working on and through it, at once separate from the world and present everywhere at every moment, infinite yet personal, above all things but also under everything. ^[56] Not only material matters but all things intellectual, moral, political, and social are also from God, because human beings, with their motives, works, and languages, are from God. ^[57] So to speak, "all that is good, all that is true, all that is beautiful, all that is beneficent, be it great or small, be it perfect or fragmentary, natural as well supernatural, moral as well as material, comes from Him." ^[58] Owing to the divine providence and influence over the world, we cannot truly and fully contemplate the world without taking God into account. ^[59] According to Newman's dialectical discourse, God is not purely transcendent over the world but immanent in the world as well. In addition to his emphasis on the immanence of the transcendent God, Newman also highlights the transcendence of the human being.

^[53] William C. Placher, *The Domestication of Transcendence: How Modern Thinking about God Went Wrong* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 6, 9, 10, 128, 146, 215.

^[54] Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1992).

^[55] Wessel Stoker, "Culture and Transcendence: A Typology," in *Culture and Transcendence*, 5-26.

^[56] John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. Frank M. Turner (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 52-53

^[57] *Ibid.*, 54.

^[58] *Ibid.*, 55.

^[59] *Ibid.*, 45.

With a comprehensive understanding of the word “nature,” which encompasses also the human being and society, Newman assents to certain kind of “natural theology,” which, for him, should not merely focus on physical phenomena but should cover human conscience as its subject matter as well.^[60] He believes that human conscience is the basis of natural religion. It makes the human being know that God as the law-giver of the world is a benevolent ruler who wills our happiness.^[61] Newman suggests, “if, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are shamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear... If the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world, the object to which [the conscientious person’s] perception is directed must be supernatural and Divine.”^[62] In other words, the conscience that is immanent within the human being is directed towards a transcendent God as its origin. A similar vision of transcendence can be found in Karl Rahner (1904-1984), who is arguably the most influential Catholic theologian of the twentieth century. His vision of transcendence is summarized in terms of “the ordinary transformed” rather than “radical transcendence” or “pure immanence.”^[63]

In the Anglican tradition, William Temple (1881 — 1944), who was the Archbishop of Canterbury, makes the relationship between transcendence and immanence the focus of his Gifford lectures which were delivered in 1933-34 and then published as *Nature, Man and God*.^[64] The book consists of two parts: The first part is titled “The Transcendence of the Immanent,” and the second part “The Immanence of the Transcendent.” Temple makes use of the term “the Transcendence of the Immanent” to signify the freedom of the human mind in pursuit of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Temple says, “What we have called the freedom of mind, with the kind of determination that results from it, implies also self-transcendence, and therefore a self that transcends.”^[65] As for “the Immanence of the Transcendent,” it signifies the transcendence of God over the world. According to Temple, “What a true doctrine of divine transcendence will assert is not a reservoir of normally unutilized energy, but a volitional as contrasted with a mechanical direction of the energy utilized.”^[66] Temple also points out, “If a personal God is to be described as immanent in the world, this must mean that the action and reaction of all parts of the world are determined at every moment by the wisdom of God.”^[67] For some scholars, both “the Transcendence of the Immanent” and “the Immanence of the Transcendent” are seemingly paradoxical propositions,^[68] but Temple claims that

[60] Ibid. ,51-57.

[61] Terrence Merrigan, “The Anthropology of Conversion: Newman and the Contemporary Theology of Religion,” in *Newman and Conversion*, ed. Ian Ker (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 126-29.

[62] John Henry Newman, *A Grammar of Assent*, ed. C. F. Harrold (New York: David McKay, 1947 [1870]) 83-84.

[63] R. R. Reno, *The Ordinary Transformed: Karl Rahner and the Christian Vision of Transcendence* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995).

[64] William Temple, *Nature, Man and God* (London: Macmillan, 1934).

[65] Ibid. ,262.

[66] Ibid. ,284.

[67] Ibid. ,290.

[68] Transcendence is opposite to immanence, when it is defined spatially as “separate” or “detached,” but not so if transcendence is defined, for example, in terms of alterity. Even if “transcendent” is in opposition to “immanent,” it remains possible to apply these two terms to the same divine Reality. See: Lai Pan-chiu, “Buddhist-Christian Complementarity in the Perspective of Quantum Physics,” *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue* 12, no. 2 (2002), 148-64.

"Immanence and Transcendence are not sharply contrasted terms. It is the Transcendent who is immanent, and it is the Immanent who transcends."^[69]

From a Lutheran background, Paul Tillich is arguably the most cited modern Christian theologian in Confucian-Christian dialogues.^[70] His concept of ultimate concern is often used to explain the religious dimension or character of Confucianism.^[71] In the first volume of his *Systematic Theology*, Tillich has recourse to the concept of God as "being-itself" to deal with God's transcendence and immanence. For him, to say God as "being-itself" does not mean that God is a being, not even the "highest being" or the "most perfect" being, but the ground of being.^[72] On the one hand, as the ground or the power of being, God makes the existence of beings possible in that everything finite participates in being-itself and in its infinite, which means that God is immanent in all finite beings.^[73] On the other hand, God is transcendent, because God, as being-itself, is absolutely different from finite beings and, as the power of being, transcends every being and the totality of beings.^[74] Besides, Tillich also points out that God is beyond the reach of human experience and language, and even the concept of "existence" itself so that it is improper to argue whether God exists or not.^[75] Such transcendence is further explicated by what Tillich calls the self-transcendent of God.^[76] These aspects of Tillich's theology show that his understanding of God is both transcendent and immanent.^[77] God and the world are neither dualistically separated nor uniformly identical.^[78] Furthermore, in the typological study of transcendence mentioned before, Tillich is named as a representative of "immanent transcendence."^[79] Given these aspects of Tillich's theology outlined above, it is also possible to classify his theology under the "transcendent as alterity" model.

Similarly, Karl Barth (1886 – 1968), who was regarded as the most influential Reformed

[69] Temple, *Nature, Man and God*, 298. With this dialectical understanding of the relationship between transcendence and immanence, Temple once considered to add a subtitle "A Study of Dialectical Realism" to this book. See: Temple, "Preface," in *Nature, Man and God*, ix.

[70] Liu Shu-hsien mentioned Tillich in many of his articles. See: Liu Shu-hsien, "A Critique of Tillich's Doctrine of God and Christology from an Oriental Perspective," in *Religious Issues and Inter-religious Dialogues*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu & Gerhard E. Spiegler (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1987), 511-32.

[71] See: Lai Pan-chiu, "Tillich's Concept of Ultimate Concern and Buddhist-Christian Dialogue," in *Paul Tillich and Asian Religions*, ed. Keith Ka-fu Chan and William Yau-nang Ng (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2017), 47-67 (48-51).

[72] Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (London: SCM, 1978), 1:235.

[73] *Ibid.*, 1:237.

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*, 1:204-5.

[76] *Ibid.*, 2:7.

[77] According to Tillich, his discussion in the Vol. 1 of *Systematic Theology* is mainly about God the Holy Father, without engaging in the discussion about Son and the Holy Spirit, so that it cannot stand for his understanding of God as a whole. See: Lai Pan-chiu, *Towards a Trinitarian Theology of Religions: A Study of Paul Tillich's Thought* (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994), 147-49.

[78] Tillich also interprets the Kingdom of God as both transcendent and immanent—transcendent in the sense of universally present and beyond empirical experience, while immanent in the sense of being the internal telos of all things. See: Lai Pan-chiu, "A Contextual Reflection on Tillich's Interpretation of Hope," *Ching Feng* 39, no. 4 (1996): 287-306.

[79] Werner Schüssler, "God as 'Depth of Being': On the Relation between Immanence and Transcendence in the Thinking of Paul Tillich," in *Culture and Transcendence*, 31-44.

theologian of the twentieth century, is often associated with the “radical transcendence” model.^[80] However, considering his Christology and the resultant understanding of human being, as we are going see, it is quite possible to discern a vision of “the transcendence of the Immanent”, borrowing Temple’s expression, in Barth’s theology. Barth’s Christological understanding of the human nature and sin can be a perfect teaching which combines the characteristics of the perfect teaching advocated by the Tiantai and the Huayan schools of Buddhism. Whereas Mou’s doctrinal classification, which ranks Confucianism higher than Christianity, is based on the theory of perfect teaching advocated by the Tiantai school of Buddhism alone and in opposition to that of the Huayan school, Barth’s “perfect teaching” is arguably even better or more coherent because it combines the characteristics of the perfect teaching of both Tiantai and Huayan.^[81]

Among the prominent Christian theologians of the second half of the twentieth century, John Macquarrie (1919—2007) is probably the most insistent on the compatibility between transcendence and immanence. He proposes a “dialectical theism” to correct the defects of the traditional theism that usually talks about God in a very one-sided way, e. g. emphasizing too much God’s transcendence at the expense of His immanence.^[82] Macquarrie says, “‘dialectic’ is to be understood in the strong sense of the clash of opposites; for instance, God is not half transcendent and half immanent, but wholly transcendent and wholly immanent.”^[83] Macquarrie believes that what he calls dialectical theism has a long history from Plotinus down to Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, John Scotus Erigena, Nicholas of Cusa, Leibniz, Hegel, Whitehead, and Heidegger. Macquarrie uses a series of dialectical oppositions within God to illustrate this dialectical theism: being and nothing, the one and the many, knowable and incomprehensible, transcendence and immanence, passible and impassible, and eternal and temporal.^[84]

The spatialized understanding of transcendence in terms of separation or detachment emerging after the Enlightenment was to some extent due to the rise of natural sciences and the popularity of the mechanical determinism. With the latest development of natural sciences, the worldview becomes more and more problematic. In the second half of the twentieth century, the growth of dialogue between theology and natural sciences brought forth some new understandings of the transcendence and immanence of God. For example, Arthur Peacocke (1924—2006) suggests that God is the “transcendent-Creator-who-is-immanent,” and to say that God is immanent in the world is equivalent to say that the world is immanent in God. As the transcendent Creator, God keeps on creating and revealing himself in nature, most explicitly in “the transcendence in immanence of the personal.”^[85] In such an understanding, the human being is transcendent immanence and God is immanent transcendence. It is noticeable that Peacocke’s view is basically in line with Temple’s understanding of immanence and transcendence, though as a scientist-turned theologian, Peacocke is more capable to

[80] Conelis van der Kooi, “Struck by an Arrow from beyond an Impassable River: Transcendence in Karl Barth’s ‘The Epistle to the Romans,’” in *Culture and Transcendence*, 65-75.

[81] Lai Pan-chiu, “Barth’s Doctrines of Sin and Humanity in Buddhist Perspective,” *Studies in Interreligious Studies* 16, no. 1 (2006): 41-58.

[82] John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity* (London: SCM, 1984), 14.

[83] *Ibid.*, 15.

[84] *Ibid.*, 171-84.

[85] Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science*, 211-14.

demonstrate how this understanding of immanence and transcendence is compatible with the recent scientific developments.^[86] However, his final move towards a "naturalistic faith" might make his position closer to the "radical immanence" model mentioned above.^[87]

Immanence and Transcendence of the Trinity

The above examination shows that the Christian theological tradition lays great stress on the immanence of the transcendent God. Such affirmation, as we will see, is not merely the opinions of some theologians but also deeply rooted in the doctrine of the Trinity.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the core belief and the essential characteristic of Christianity. Both Islam and Judaism are monotheistic and belong to the Abrahamic religious tradition, but they do not accept a Triune God. As Barth suggests, the doctrine of the Trinity distinguishes the Christian doctrine of God from all other kinds of theism.^[88] Moreover, the doctrine also serves for Christianity as a major criterion to distinguish orthodoxy from heterodoxy. Most of the ancient creeds generally adopted by most Christian churches are related to the doctrine of Trinity, directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly. More importantly, the doctrine of the Trinity is not simply a result of the contemplation of theologians but has its root in the experience of believers.^[89] It is not only an important doctrine but also the basis of Christian worship and practice.^[90]

Putting the aforementioned sentence from Ephesians into the framework of the Trinity, one will find that its three-fold description about the relation of God to the world may roughly correspond to the characteristics of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: God the Father is above or "transcends" all, whereas the Son and the Spirit are immanent in different ways—the incarnated Son lived through/ among all and was seen by many people; and the invisible Holy Spirit indwells in all things.^[91] Therefore, in order to affirm the transcendence and the immanence of God, one needs not resort to Macquarrie's and Hartshorne's philosophical theology for help but can do so simply through interpreting the doctrine of the Trinity. As Adrian Hough puts it:

[86] See further: Arthur Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming—Natural, Divine, and Human*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993).

[87] See further: Arthur Peacocke, *All That Is: A Naturalistic Faith for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Philip Clayton (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007).

[88] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. 1, bk. 1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 301.

[89] See: James P. Mackey, *The Christian Experience of God as Trinity* (London: SCM, 1983). Although Mackey queries the formulation of the ancient Creeds, he avers that they were related to the experience of believers. In addition, he believes that the intention of modern humanism is to affirm the value of human beings rather than to deny God, and that transcendence could be properly understood as an essential attribute of the human being (17-18). Furthermore, a Christian response to such kind of humanism should ground itself on the belief in Trinitarian God (20-29).

[90] David S. Cunningham, *These Three are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

[91] This does not mean that the three-fold relationship described in Ephesians is identical with the three persons of Father, Son, and Spirit, nor does it say that only the Father is above all, nor does it mean that the Holy Spirit is merely immanent in all. The distinction among the three divine persons is based mainly from the viewpoint of the economic activity of the Trinity. Compared with other two persons, the incarnated Son is more appropriate to signify the character of "through all;" similarly, the Holy Spirit is more proper to indicate the character of "in all" than other two persons; as the Creator of all, the Father, from which the Son and the Holy Spirit is derived, is relatively more fitting to the description of "above all."

Christianity does not need to use new philosophical ideas to affirm the immanent presence of God or his affirmation of creation. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity protects both the immanence and the transcendence of God, through the transcendent Father, the incarnated Son, and the Holy Spirit who indwells the created order. God is thus both other than the created order, takes the created order to Himself, and can indwell both humanity and the rest of the creation, without any need to move beyond the basic Christian doctrine. Christian worship has traditionally been worship God the Holy Trinity and this should therefore be our starting point. ^[92]

The Trinitarian approach to God as both transcendent and immanent is specifically significant for the present study because it can show that this transcendent yet immanent understanding of God is rooted in the hardcore of the Christian tradition and stands for the mainstream of Christianity rather than merely personal opinions of some theologians. In other words, Christianity as a whole does not understand God as purely transcendent without immanence.

As Peacocke indicates, there are two important models in the history of Christian theology to hold together God's transcendence and immanence: the concept of "logos" and the model of "God as Spirit." ^[93] The former is related to the discourse of the incarnated Son, and the latter is elaborated in Christian pneumatology. Regarding the Incarnation, the Chalcedon Definition, which is generally accepted by the Christendom as the classical expression of Christology, the orthodox Christian faith in Jesus Christ is stated as follows:

Following, therefore, the holy fathers, we all unanimously teach that men should acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a rational soul and body, consubstantial (homoousios) with the Father in Godhead and the same consubstantial with us in manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten of the Father before the ages as regards his Godhead, and the same, in the "last days," for us and for our salvation, begotten of Mary the virgin, the Mother of God (theotokos), as regards his manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, made known in two natures (en duo phusesin); without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being in no way removed by the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coming together into one person (prosopon) and subsistence (hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, only-begotten, God, Word (logos), Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ himself have taught us about him and the Creed of the Fathers has handed down to us. ^[94]

The Chalcedon Definition, on the one hand, affirms the full divinity of Jesus Christ in saying

[92] Adrian Hough, *God is not "Green;" A Re-Examination of Eco-Theology* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997), 13-14.

[93] Peacocke, *Creation and the World of Science*, 205-6.

[94] Eric Mascall, *Whatever Happened to Human Mind?* (London: SPCK, 1980), 28.

“begotten of the Father before the ages,” which is already confirmed in the Nicene Creed; on the other, it specifically deals with another feature of Jesus Christ, namely, his human nature, including its relation to his divine nature. Besides its emphasis on the divinity of Jesus Christ, the Chalcedon Definition also insists that Jesus Christ is truly and perfectly a human being. According to Eric Mascall (1905-1993), the Chalcedon Definition assumes an idea of human being whose humanity is open to divinity, and thus there is no ultimate incompatibility between humanity and divinity.^[95] In other words, the humanity revealed in Jesus Christ is open towards and could be united with divinity. Furthermore, according to the Chalcedon Definition, the relationship between the divine and human natures is characterized as “distinction without separation” and truly united in Jesus Christ. Therefore, Jesus Christ could be the perfect embodiment of the unity between humanity and divinity.^[96] This understanding of the relationship between humanity and divinity is affirmed in the doctrine of deification (theosis), and echoes the idea of “unity between Heaven and humanity” (tian ren he yi) advocated by Confucianism.^[97] This idea of the unity between humanity and divinity was further confirmed and elaborated in the subsequent theological development. After it was adopted in 451 CE, two more councils were held in Constantinople in 533 CE and 680 CE to uphold the Chalcedon Definition and to affirm that the crucified Jesus Christ as one of the three divine persons of the Trinity had two wills (one divine and one human, which safeguards the full humanity of Jesus Christ) but one energy (energeia).^[98] Maximus the Confessor (d. 662), who played an important role in the confirmation of the monoenergism and the denial of the monothelism, adopted pseudo-Dionysus’ idea of “one divine-human [theandric] activity” to argue that the natural energy of Jesus’ flesh is inseparable from his divine energy.^[99] Furthermore, Maximus used the Greek word “perichoresis,” which can be translated as co-inherence, interpenetration, or mutual permeation, to describe the relationship between the humanity and the divinity of Jesus Christ.^[100] This model of distinction without separation was further extended to the understanding the harmonious relationship between the human and divine loves in Jesus Christ.^[101]

Based on the Chalcedon Definition, including its affirmation of Jesus Christ’s the full humanity with the remark that “like us in all things except sin”, Barth proposes that true humanity is based on Jesus Christ’s humanity rather than the humanity manifested in the everyday life of the ordinary people. This is to say instead of dualistically opposing each other, humanity and divinity are united in

[95] Ibid. ,35-36.

[96] Lai Pan-chiu, “A Mahayana Reading of Chalcedon Christology: A Chinese Response to John Keenan,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 24 (2004): 209-28.

[97] Lai Pan-chiu, “Chinese Explorations of Orthodox Theology: A Critical Review,” *International Journal of Sino-Western Studies* 14 (June 2018): 27-41; an expanded version published with permission in *International Journal for the Study of Christian Church* 18, no. 4 (2018): 315-31. See also Alexander Chow, *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment: Heaven and Humanity in Unity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[98] See for details Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 258-322.

[99] Andrew Louth, *Maximus the Confessor* (London: Routledge, 1996), 12-13, 54-55.

[100] Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995), 23-36.

[101] Lai Pan-chiu, “Shenai, renai yu zita bu’er, yige Hanyu Jidu zongjiao de guandian” [Divine love, human love, and non-duality of self and other; a Sino-Christian perspective], *Logos & Pneuma* 49 (July 2018): 197-222.

Jesus Christ.^[102] Furthermore, if human nature is defined by the humanity of Jesus Christ, sin is not an essential part of human nature and the manifestation of humanity is in its unity with divinity and overcoming of sin.^[103] Furthermore, considering Barth's affirmation of the participation of Christians in Christ, his theology exhibits certain affinities with the Orthodox doctrine of deification, which emphasizes the Christians' sharing the divine life and thus the unity of humanity and divinity in ordinary Christians.^[104] These features of Barth's theology, especially his Christology, makes one wonder whether it is entirely fair to classify his theology under the "radical transcendence" model. Considering his emphasis on the otherness of God in the famous slogan "Let God be God," it is possible to classify Barth's theology as "transcendence as alterity."^[105] However, considering his emphasis on the unity between divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ, his theology also exhibits certain features which should belong to the "immanent transcendence" model.

According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is both transcendent and immanent, for it goes without limit wherever it pleases (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit is by nature inexpressible yet intimate.^[106] For Tillich, the Spiritual Presence has two important characters, namely, the universal and the extra-ordinary.^[107] The Holy Spirit is present not merely in individual and communal life but in all lives in the cosmos, for spirit is a dimension of life and this dimension of life reveals particularly in human beings so that one cannot know the Holy Spirit without knowing what the human spirit is.^[108] Tillich is well known for his "method of correlation," but he also admits that given the distinction between human existence and essence, the method applies to human existence only, and the essential relation between the human spirit and the Holy Spirit should better be understood in terms of mutual immanence rather than correlation.^[109] The mutual immanence does not mean that the human spirit can compel the divine Spirit to enter itself, but only that the divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit.^[110] Tillich says:

If the divine Spirit breaks into the human spirit, this does not mean that it rests there, but that it drives the human spirit out of itself. The "in" of the divine Spirit is an "out" for the human spirit. The spirit, a dimension of finite life, is driven into a successful self-transcendence; it is grasped by something ultimate and unconditional. It is still the human spirit; it remains what it is, but at the same time, it goes out of itself under the impact of the divine Spirit. "Ecstasy" is the classical term for this state if being grasped by the Spiritual

[102] Keith Ka-fu Chan, "Karl Barth's Christological Anthropology and Christian-Confucian Dialogue," *Ching Feng*, 42, no. 1-2 (1999): 1-33.

[103] Lai Pan-chiu, "Barth's Doctrines of Sin and Humanity in Buddhist Perspective," *Studies in Interreligious Studies* 16, no. 1 (2006): 41-58.

[104] Adam Nider, *Participation in Christ: An Entry into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009); Zhang Shaobo, "Jidu zhong de heyi, zaisi Ba Te Jidulun" [Union in Christ: Rethinking Barth's Christology], *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 41 (Spring 2019): 50-69.

[105] Stoker mentions this possibility. See: Stoker, "Culture and Transcendence," 8.

[106] Francois-Xavier Durrwell, *Holy Spirit of God: An Essay in Biblical Theology*, trans. Benedict Davies (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1986), 1-7.

[107] Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3:115.

[108] *Ibid.*, 3:22.

[109] *Ibid.*, 3:114.

[110] *Ibid.*, 3:112.

Presence. It describes the human situation under the Spiritual Presence exactly. ^[111]

This is what Tillich calls extra-ordinary. According to Tillich, the ecstasy caused by the Spiritual Presence is the self-transcendence of human life rather than a destruction of human subjectivity. In other words, what the Spiritual Presence brings about is "the self-transcendence of life under the dimension of spirit." ^[112] The relationship between the human spirit and the divine Spirit is mutual penetration, or rather, participation without identity. ^[113] In other words, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit also exhibits the model of immanent transcendence, though not in the same way as that of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

Concluding Remarks

Using the typology of transcendence mentioned above, one may ask the question concerning which model Confucianism belongs to. It is noteworthy that in some Western scholars' interpretations, perhaps Confucianism can be classified as "radical immanence" because these interpretations tend to deny any "transcendent" in Confucianism or reduce anything seeming to be "transcendent" in Confucianism or Chinese thought to something non-transcendent. In order to highlight the contrast between Chinese and Western thought, these interpretations may tend to assume that "transcendent" must mean "radical transcendence" and thus "transcendent" contradicts squarely "immanent." Based on the sketch of Mou's exposition, Confucianism definitely rejects "radical transcendence" which, according to Mou, should be applied to Christianity. Given Confucian affirmation of transcendence, Confucianism may have reservations on the model of "radical immanence." Considering that Mou tends to emphasize the continuity or similarity rather than the difference or discontinuity between the Infinite Mind-Heart immanent in human being and the transcendent Infinite Mind-Heart, Confucianism may have reservations on "transcendent as alterity" as well. Through this method of elimination, it is quite reasonable to suggest that "immanent transcendence" may be closer than the others.

How about Christianity? Based on the analysis of Christianity, especially the Trinitarian character of Christian faith, outlined above, the Christian God is both transcendent and immanent; and it would be a serious misunderstanding if one takes the Christian God as purely external transcendent. The complexity of the relationship between God and the world exhibited in the doctrine of the Trinity makes it impossible to identify Christianity with only one of the four models. It is rather obvious that the Christian affirmation of the divine Transcendence in God the Father tends to support "radical transcendence" or "transcendent as alterity" and rule out "radical immanence." The Christian affirmation of the Incarnation of the Holy Son and the universal presence of the Holy Spirit exhibit features belonging to the model of "immanent transcendence."

Given the complexity of the Christian case, if one attempts to compare Christianity with

^[111] Ibid. ,3:111-12.

^[112] Ibid. ,3:96.

^[113] For Tillich, there is a crucial difference between "identity" and "participation," and this is also an important topic of the Christian-Buddhist dialogue. See Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 66-75.

Confucianism, one may find the contrast made by Mou rather misleading because the contrast neglects the Christian affirmation of the immanence of the Transcendent or the presence of the sacred in the profane or the everyday. Mou's misinterpretation of Christianity, probably due to his lack of understanding of Christianity, makes no clear distinction between Christian theology and Western philosophy. In fact, this is not an isolated or exceptional case. Even Western scholars, such as Herbert Fingarette (1921-2018), might make similar simplistic contrast between Confucianism and the Western tradition. In his rather popular introduction of Confucianism titled *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (1972), he makes a sharp contrast between the Confucian emphasis on "the secular as sacred" and the "Western" religious tendency of separating the Sacred from the Secular.^[114] In other words, these may reflect a rather common cultural phenomenon, which may be affected by non-academic factors. For example, Mou's interpretation of Christianity and ranking Confucianism above Christianity might have been motivated by his nationalistic sentiment. In fact, viewed from the perspective of "Orientalism" in the intercultural encounter, if it is quite understandable that knowingly or not some Westerners might practice some sorts of orientalism, it is also understandable that some scholars from the "oriental" world might do something similar in reverse — "reverse Orientalism." If one finds examples of "reverse Orientalism" in the Kyoto School's interpretation of Buddhism, it is also quite understandable that Confucians in the Chinese speaking world might also practice "reverse Orientalism" in a Chinese way.

No matter whether the prevalent Confucian interpretation of Christianity can be described as "reverse Orientalism," based on the examination of Christianity outlined above, one can see that the contrast between Christianity and Confucianism is not as absolute as previously thought. If one has to characterize Confucianism as "secular as sacred," one may perhaps characterize Christianity as "sacred as secular," for Christianity tends to address the issue from the perspective of God. According to the Christian doctrine of creation, especially the classical doctrine of creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), it is due to the initiative of God the Creator, a "secular" realm was brought into existence, and it is God's initiative to make efforts to reconcile the world to Godself (2 Cor. 5:18). Though Christianity affirms the Ignatian motto "find God in all things," it may highlight that the possibility of this spirituality is based on the belief concerning the divine immanence. This remains different from the Confucian approach of "secular as sacred," which tends to start with the secular or the everyday and attempt to find ultimate meaning in the secular. As both of them affirm some sorts of immanent transcendence, this crude contrast is, after all, a difference of emphasis, and there should be rooms for further dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism on the issue concerning immanence and transcendence or the relationship between the Sacred and the everyday. This dialogue may enrich the contemporary Western discussion concerning transcendence.

[114] Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972).

中文题目：

基督宗教与儒家互动的东方主义与逆向东方主义：以内在与超越的问题为重点

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摘要：透过参考对“超越”的一些跨学科或跨文化的研究、与及当代儒家及基督宗教对“超越”与“内在”等词的运用，本文尝试挑战一些现行对基督宗教与儒家的刻板定型。本文重点考察对于基督宗教与儒家的相关概念的论述，并指出在一些基督宗教对儒家的诠释中，呈现出一些东方主义的色彩、尤其在它们的轻视儒家的超越性以突出基督宗教作为儒家的成全。与此相反的是，一些来自儒家的诠释，倾向于突出儒家的超越性，并忽视基督宗教的内在性；尤其在透过构建“外在超越”与“内在超越”的对比以论证儒家的优越性，展示出一种“逆向东方主义”。本文将指出，无论是东方主义还是逆向东方主义，这些对比基督宗教与儒家的刻板定型，不仅误释他人的传统，也误释自身的传统，更会阻碍两个传统间的沟通。

关键词：东方主义；儒家；基督宗教；超越；内在