

VINCENT SHEN

## INTRODUCTION: IN MEMORY OF AND IN DIALOGUE WITH ANTONIO CUA

This special issue of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* is dedicated to the memory of the late Professor Antonio S. Cua of the Catholic University of America, who passed away on March 27, 2007. Cua had been coeditor of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* for long years. He was also a member of the International Society for Chinese Philosophy, an eminent scholar in Chinese philosophy and comparative philosophy, the author of many important scholarly works, and the chief editor of the *Encyclopaedia of Chinese Philosophy*. In its original plan formed in 2006, this special issue was conceived as a discussion of his book *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy*, which was published in 2005, and Cua's contribution to the study of Xunzi's thought and Chinese philosophy. The current dialogue with Antonio Cua was intended in the original project and we expected also a reply from Cua at the end of this volume. Unfortunately, because of the vicissitudes and fragility of life, we failed to get it ready soon enough before Antonio Cua got too sick and I was able to collect all invited articles at a time only after Antonio Cua passed away. A live dialogue with him therefore becomes sadly but profoundly a memory of him. Indeed, philosophers never die. They only pass away. It is in this hope that all articles published in this special issue could still be taken as a spiritual dialogue with Antonio Cua.

Antonio Cua, an overseas Chinese from the Philippines, was an American philosopher who was well versed in both Western philosophy and Chinese philosophy. His main intellectual interest had been in Western moral philosophy, moral psychology, and Chinese philosophy, in particular Confucian ethics. In his early works such as *Reason and Virtue: A Study in the Ethics of Richard Price, Dimensions of Moral Creativity*,<sup>1</sup> he had already constructed a philosophical vision of human moral experience with an emphasis on moral creativity. Then his philosophical concern turned to Chinese philosophy, resulting in

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*The Unity of Knowledge and Action*,<sup>2</sup> a work on Wang Yangming, somehow written as if under an enlightenment; and *Ethical Argumentation*,<sup>3</sup> a serious study on Xunzi, seen by himself as the most satisfying because of its being the first attempt to develop a Confucian theory of ethical argumentation and moral epistemology. In the later part of his life, he devoted most of his time and study to Confucian ethics and Xunzi, resulting in his last two great works: *Moral Vision and Traditions: Essays in Chinese Ethics*<sup>4</sup> and *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy*.<sup>5</sup>

Among contemporary philosophers, Antonio Cua has best synthesized analytical philosophy and Chinese philosophy of ethics. This means that he has well communicated, negotiated, and dialogued between these two philosophical traditions. Deep in his heart, he was most concerned with the philosophical solution of conflict situations and how to turn from conflict to harmony. This is most significant today when the world is suffering from conflicts of various kinds among different cultural and ideological traditions, and is big of even more violent conflicts among different religious groups, linguistic communities, and civilizations. In this context, we should say that what Cua has done in his philosophical effort has indeed given us a model, an example of dialogue among different traditions.

More than other things, today's world needs dialogue among different cultural, philosophical, and religious traditions. This could be understood in terms of what I have proposed in recent years: *Mutual waitui* (extension toward others or strangification) as the method of dialogue among different traditions to be conducted with the mutual act of going outside of one's self-enclosure to many others, to make one's own scientific/cultural/religious/lifeworld understandable to each other by translating our languages into the language of or understandable to each other, by putting it into other's pragmatic context or by going through the detour of reality itself or the other's lifeworld.

Indeed, it is with the spirit of dialogue, on various fronts of philosophical and historical concerns that the authors of this special issue have undertaken in composing their texts. This special issue starts with Chung-ying Cheng's article "Xunzi as a Systematic Philosopher: Toward an Organic Unity of Nature, Mind, and Reason." Chung-ying Cheng had very long years of friendship with Antonio Cua and he was also a collaborator of Cua. It suffices to mention the fact that Antonio Cua had served for thirty-four years as the coeditor of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, working together with Chung-ying Cheng. I could understand how deep the sorrow Chung-ying Cheng suffers in his heart caused by Antonio Cua's passing. It is through the detour of discussing Xunzi, the most favored philosopher of Cua, that Cheng is now in conversation with him. Cheng proposes right from the start

that Xunzi is a systematic thinker and needs systematic study, and that Cua provides a good example and a good key for studying Xunzi as a systematic philosopher. Cheng emphasizes the distinction and complementarity between Xunzi's concepts of human nature and human mind, man and heaven, language and reality, opening thereby to us a system constituted of the creative tension among components of ethics, psychology, cosmology, anthropology, and philosophy of language. In light of this immense system, one can understand how Antonio Cua was influenced by Xunzi in the formulation of his own ethical philosophy, such as his ideas of reasonable action and paradigmatic individuals.

Roger Ames's, a personal friend and interlocutor of Antonio Cua, article on "Using English to Speak Confucianism: Antonio S. Cua on the Confucian 'Self'"—the title itself is very inspiring. In this article, Professor Ames points out that a genuine understanding of Confucian self is profoundly related to the cosmological vision it involves. Ames would side with Cua who sustains the Confucian relational conception of person, and takes the reflexive vocabulary as an integral element in Confucian ethics that allows for an evaluation of one's own conduct. The point is that the use of the reflexive form of "self-" or "-self" can only be appealed to as a resolution to essentializing the self if we are able to begin from an awareness of our own uncritical presuppositions, and are able to thus set them aside. For Ames, it is only by locating the discussion of Confucian person within its own *qi* (氣) cosmology that we are able to appreciate the irrelevance of the hypothetical self as ground for human conduct.

In his article "Antonio Cua's Conceptual Analysis of Confucian Ethics," Vincent Shen shows that Cua's conceptual analysis approach has its root in the history of Chinese philosophy. Following this tradition and using contemporary analytical skills, Antonio Cua is most successful in his conceptual analysis of Confucian ethics and Xunzi's philosophy. In dialogue with Cua, Shen argues that the conceptual/argumentative approach should combine with the metaphorical/narrative approach in doing Chinese philosophy. Cua's contribution to Chinese philosophy consists in his combination of concepts and logical reasoning with virtues of moral agents, his combination of *li* as cultural grammar and *junzi* as paradigmatic individual, all these have shown us well his philosophical sensibility in not allowing ethical concepts to be purely logical and abstractly universal. Cua has well integrated ethical concepts and moral agents, *li* and *junzi*, though one may argue, according to Shen, for a more positive vision of human desires and *li*.

Professor Kim-chong Chong was also an intellectual friend of Antonio Cua, and he explores deeply Xunzi's theory of human nature

based on Professor Cua's work in arguing that Xunzi is a nonessentialist. His analytical approach in moral psychology also relates Antonio Cua's interpretation of Xunzi's theory of human nature to his interpretation of *li*. For Kim-chong Chong, Xunzi refers to the cumulative efforts of earlier sage-kings in establishing ritual principles, and, starting from the ritual principles and the ideals that he valued, Xunzi tries to deduce what Cua has referred to as their "rationale." Chong is also very much interested in what Cua refers to as *li*'s "ennobling function." He agrees with Cua that the rites transform emotions such as joy and sorrow through conceptions of what is (considered as) aesthetic and moral. For him, the possibility of "ennobling" the feelings and emotions tends to suggest that emotion can be transformed to the extent that it is no longer the "same."

In his article "Appeals to History in Early Chinese Philosophy and Rhetoric," Professor Paul Goldin is in dialogue, from a historian's viewpoint, with Antonio Cua about the use of the past as constitutive component of Xunzi's ethical argumentation. For Goldin, Cua demonstrates, by revealing the potential pedagogical, rhetorical, elucidative, and evaluative functions of history, that Xunzi's use of the past is neither fallacious nor supernumerary, but essential to his argumentation. However, Goldin would suggest that today's concern with the historicity or objectivity of historical data does not appear to have been shared by members of Xunzi's world. He would question Xunzi's supposed commitment to "evidence" in its empirical meaning. He proceeds to a long analysis of the historiography shown in the *Records of the Historian* and Sima Qian's methods of historical investigation. Goldin shows that the appeals to history would not have been held to a standard of factual accuracy before Sima Qian, suggesting that, even for Sima Qian, the first historian in China to engage in a sustained consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of different sources, facts did not bear exactly the same significance as for us today.

Professor Karyn Lai, inspired also by Antonio Cua, had been exchanging views with him through e-mails, though she had not yet had the chance to meet him. She had invited Antonio Cua to the 14th International Conference of Chinese Philosophy; unfortunately, Cua was unable to attend due to health problems. I still remember that, at that time, Cua had kindly asked me to bring a volume of his *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy* to Karyn Lai as a gift. In her article, Lai deals with the problem of learning, one of the most important aspects of Xunzi and that of Antonio Cua. Right from the beginning, she points to the important distinction between two primary aspects of learning, *xue* and *si*. While *xue* describes the gathering and collation of past and current practices

and beliefs, *si* is reflective, promoting a person to stand back, as it were, from received information. Lai demonstrates that early Confucian philosophy understands *xue* and *si* as integrated parts of the cultivation process. For her, Cua has well articulated how ritual form and moral character are integrated in Confucian thought, and that *li*, ritual forms, are required for self-expression and further development of an individual. Karyn Lai is also interested in history and tradition and their role in Confucian cultivation of self. For her, in the process of learning and education, the past, or history and traditions serve as examples to illustrate a point; in the provision of knowledge about customs, norms, and traditions; to alert individuals to the diversity of situations and the possibilities for action and response; as material to reflect on in one's development of critical skills; and finally, as paradigmatic models that exemplify particular virtues.

Mingran Tan is a young scholar whom Antonio Cua made acquaintance of in the later stage of his life. Based on Antonio Cua's works on Xunzi, Tan's article further clarifies the role of mind in Xunzi's moral theory and insists that mind has innate moral capacity, besides its usually affirmed cognitive capacity. For Tan, Xunzi distinguishes mind from nature: Mind refers to human cognitive and moral capacities, while nature refers to instinctual impulses and desires. By making this distinction, Xunzi is capable of discussing the invention of rituals and its transformational function of human beings without being troubled by his doctrine that human nature is bad. With regard to the relation of mind and rituals, Mingran Tan would say that mind issues the content and form of rituals, but rituals work back on mind to make it clear in moral activity. Rituals tell mind what to follow in ordinary situations, while mind refreshes rituals through its creative application and interpretation. In this way, Xunzi keeps rituals and Confucianism alive, although for Tan, Xunzi seems to be too optimistic on the regulative power of mind.

This special issue is to be published in March 2008 for the first anniversary of Antonio Cua's passing. We hope that all the attempts to dialogue with Antonio Cua published in this volume will show a spirit of doing Chinese philosophy that is always a dialogue with the tradition(s). Antonio Cua immortalized his life as a philosopher in his written works by expressing and crystallizing his thoughts in his texts which are inspiring to us. We hope all readers enjoy reading this special issue and feel, as their authors do, the encounter of heart and spirit with Antonio Cua through the exchange of views and dialogues in this tribute dedicated to him.

## ENDNOTES

1. Antonio S. Cua, *Reason and Virtue: A Study in the Ethics of Richard Price* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1966; rev. ed., 1998).
2. Antonio S. Cua, *The Unity of Knowledge and Action: A Study in Wang Yang-ming's Moral Psychology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1982).
3. Antonio S. Cua, *Ethical Argumentation: A Study in Hsun Tzu's Moral Epistemology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985).
4. Antonio S. Cua, *Moral Vision and Tradition: Essays in Chinese Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998).
5. Antonio S. Cua, *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005).