

Dialectics: the Ontological Basis of Self-Formation and Social Existence

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"The power of community is based on the agreement that society is 'right' in its opposition to the tendency for the individual to use power in the form of 'brute force.' The preference of the community is rule of law to which all-except those who are not capable of entering community-have contributed by a sacrifice of their instincts, and which leaves no one-again with the same exception-at the mercy of brute force."

Freud 1962, p. 42

Introduction

At the initial stages of the Chinese and Western intellectual traditions (during what is referred to as the classical era) theorizing on social development reflected concern over how to structure society so that the necessary normative constraints imposed by culture would bring out the best in human nature. Indeed, there was even the anticipation that culture is worth the sacrifice (or makes-up for what was lost from humanity's original state in nature) as the socially contracted agreement could result in a simulation of the "Original Position", but in a way that elevates the human condition. (Rousseau, 1994, pp.53-56) That is to say that from its inception, social theory was concerned with how the shift from being completely immersed in nature to constructing habitus (the social conditions and normative demands of particular cultural groups) could reconcile the tension between what is inherently a person's ontological nature and what is imposed by the social contract. Or, in other words, how to reduce-if not eliminate-the gap between pursuing self-interests (in terms of acting in accordance with natural instincts) and a sense of individuality that is shaped by social forces/cultural norms.

The early classical theorists proposed that theoretical conceptions for structuring social systems were meant to align human nature with the natural order which was believed to be the key to an individual's self-realization and freedom (freedom both in terms of the experience individuals enjoy when a social system is structured so that its members organize their relationship with each other and with the environment in a way to maximize their chances of satisfaction and, in addition, provides each societal member the opportunity for self-determination). (Tan 2004, p. 19) In this respect the classical theory of self and social formation was a strategy for aligning reason with the ontological demands of existence. Thus, the classical theorists claimed that "To understand [social phenomena] it is necessary to give up thinking in terms of single, isolated substances and

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to start thinking in terms of relationships and functions. For, "What binds [individuals together into a] society is the fundamental disposition of their nature." (Elias 1991, pp. 19-20)

Human passions are natural and universal, however, if they are not constrained by social mores the individual's higher cognitive capacity (ego and superego) being be overruled by the impulses of the id (for the sake of satisfying passions by brute force). In this respect the classical theorists of social development, from both the East and the West, also tackled the problem of constraining individuals from using power in the form of "power over" to accomplish individual self-interests. This was done by devising a strategy by which cooperative behavior would produce outcomes that are more satisfactory for both the individual and the group. Thus, classical social theory provided insight into the connection between knowledge, power, the self, and "The Proverbial Other". (Confucius 2015, pp. 20 f., 24-29) This article argues that the classical theory of the development of society is a viable social psychological model for effectively enhancing the individual experience, for better integrating the individual with others, and for aiding individuals in their effort to be better-integrated with the natural order.

Furthermore, the classical social theory is an viable theoretical foundation for helping humanity to manage the current social challenges that result from civilization reaching a global scale. The classical social theories (both East and West) were devised to aid humanity's transition from the prior tribal-village stage of cultural formation to that of kingdoms and empires. Contemporary social theorists face a related challenge in their effort to respond to the dynamics connected with civilization expanding to the global level of social existence. Thus, the challenges humanity faces-as the technological age emerges-has prompted a resurgence of interest in the principles by which classical social theorists were able to prescribe patterns of social relations that could contribute to self-actualization, harmonious social relations, and a sense of being well-integrated within the natural order in spite of the fact of ever enlarging social bodies.

This article argues that an historical analysis of the classical social theory of both the East and the West reveals that their founding principles were based on the conviction that there is a complementary connection between the natural order (the biological forces of nature), self-formation (humanity's biological and neurobiological make-up), and social formation (the natural tendency for biological systems to cooperate in an effort to create more complex systems of beneficial interaction which has resulted in a complexity that now has reached the global scale). The knowledge of how to establish such a complementary connection (along with insight into the social psychological basis of such a knowledge theory) is essential to helping humanity face some of its most pressing challenges at the mid-point of the second decade of the 21st century. This article highlights the fundamental insight that contributed to the founding principles of both Eastern and Western social theory and what those principles offer to humanity's effort to effectively manage its emergence into the technological age. Section two (the following section) of the article provides a comprehensive analysis of the ontology of self and social formation from a comparative perspective of classical social theory. Section three describes the ways in which the foundational classical theories were employed by social theorists as a part of the effort to effectively manage the problem of the tendency for power to be expressed in terms of authoritarian control (e.g. as civilization expanded to the stage of larger social, economic, and political systems). Section two argues that without effectively managing the use of power the best interest of individuals is stifled, the ability of social systems to bring out the best in humanity is hindered, and the human relationship with nature is offset. Section four (the conclusion) argues that the classical understanding of the ontology of self and social formation is a viable social basis for creating a 21st century global social system where individuals enjoy harmonious relationships with each other and with the environment.

The Classical Theory of Self and Social Formation

The true self is not the lump of flesh that makes-up one's particular form, the true self is the essence of one's nature. Basically the essential substance of one's biological make-up is none other than the Principle of Nature, and is never out of accord with propriety. This is your true self.

Chan 1963, pp. 80-81

Scholars refer to a concurrent East-West period of social development known as the Axial Age. During the Axial Age classical social theorists struggled to resolve the volatile tension between traditionalists who adhered to nostalgic Romanticism (that was evident in the Chinese Taoist tradition and with the ancient Greek authorities who condemned Socrates to execution) and the growing need to supplement the mytho-religious worldview with a metaphysical perspective on reality (a perspective on the nature of existence that would appeal to and unify larger more diverse social units-as was proposed by Confucius and Socrates). Their response was the creation of a viable theoretical strategy for effectively managing the newly emerging social, economic, and political challenges that the scholars and philosophers of the classical age were confronted with.

In both the East and the West the rise of classical social theory occurred during a turbulent era when more progressive systems of political economy and administration were needed: to resolve the conflict between the enlarging social units (especially the military conflicts over attempts to expand authoritarian control and/or territory); to manage larger populations of people who were from diverse tribal or clan backgrounds but encompassed by larger social, political, and economic systems; to manage the conflict of interests that occurred between the city-states; and/or to reduce the extent to which tribal-village groups, city-states, kingdoms, and empires would end up merely fighting for survival. (Bell 2006, p. 122) This period of history (known as the Warring States period in China, and in the West designated as a period of conflict(s) ranging from the Ionian Revolts, to the Persian and The Peloponnesian Wars, and ultimately the Decelean War) reflected a time of enormous flux when there was a wide range between the level of development of a culture and the openness it had to the expansion of civilization (including some violent resistance to what was regarded as hegemonic intrusion on their cultural traditions).

Thus, the classical social theorists arose in the midst of a "Long, painful, bloody (and still unfinished) transition from the governance of Mythic culture to that of Theoretic culture. In the cognitive domain, this translates into a changed relationship between two powerful ways of representing reality, and two uniquely human cognitive systems, each derived from both biology and culture." (Donald 2012, p. 47) For, as Merlin Donald points out, although biologically human nature is fundamentally what it is and has been, the emergence and the expansion of civilization required devising new media technologies that provided the means for structuring cognitive systems on a collective level. (Ibid., pp. 48 f.) The classical theorists ingeniously addressed the need to transcend the mythically specific form of knowledge (beliefs that are particular to and perhaps limited to a group of people at a particular time and place) by creating the "Theoretic culture [which] gives the possibility of universalized discourse, but not replacing any earlier cultural forms." (Bella/Jonas 2012, p. 3)

Both Confucius and Socrates developed models for elevating the individual by means of transcending the tendency to act merely on the basis of natural impulse and/or the demands of tribal conformity by devising strategies by which individuals could experience a more fulfilling sense of self and more enriched social lives. The enhanced human experience awakened in the individual a more lucid sense of self and a more satisfying social experience. Confucius claimed that the self could be cultivated (keji 克己) in a way that empowers individuals to realize their endeavor to experience happiness, well-being, satisfaction, and flourishing which he thought of as developing

a type of power (te 德) which enables one to realize a sense of self that is complementary with basic instincts but with basic drives fulfilled in a way prescribed by society to create beneficial social relations. (Tan 2004, p. 35)

Socrates was the Western social theorist who proposed an approach to self and social formation that (especially in its humanistic sense) corresponded to that of Confucius. That is to say that the West faced a similar challenge to that of the Warring States Period in the East, during what scholars refer to as the classical period of the Western heritage. In *Social Theory: Its Origins, History, and Contemporary Relevance*, Daniel W. Rossides argues that, similar to the way social theory developed in the East, classical Greek social theory was an effort to reconcile its traditional past (that was based on nature reverence) with its emerging reliance on higher order cognitive skills-what he calls "A merger of natural and social philosophy." (Rossides 1998, p. 22)

Socrates (along with the other classical Greek philosophers that followed in a tradition that he was a key figure in establishing) attempted to transform the Greek mytho-religious heritage by supplanting myth with moral reasoning (or proposing a social psychological basis for self-formation to supersede the emotive/instinctive sense of self that was prevalent at the initial stages of human cognition). (Jaynes 2000, pp. 8-13, 69-75; Donald 1991, p. 9) Prior to Socrates (during the Pre-Socratic period of the Western intellectual heritage) the mytho-religious worldview dominated humanity's way of perceiving, conceiving, and experiencing reality (similar to what was true in the East). Socrates, however, was not only concerned about a transition to metaphysical explanations of the human experience but, as well, the role that ethics and rationality play in social formation (the struggle to progress the Greek culture by elevating *logos* but in a way respectful of the role that mythos played in its heritage).

Robert Bellah points out that the propositions developed by the social theorists of the classical period represented an effort to merge pre classical notions of propriety with the normative demands of the new larger social structures. From the perspective of Socrates this involved a process of Dialectic inquiry which in classical Greece was referred to as *Theoria* (θεωρία). "Theoria is [an] 'investigation,' or 'inquiry,' [into] all things in the world, natural and cultural (what Socrates claimed to be the 'quintessential activity of the true philosopher')" (Bellah/Jonas 2012: pp. 454, 464; Plato 2003, pp. 177-179). In classical Greece *theoria* implied (self) reflection, contemplation, and dialectic inquiry into the nature of self and the interconnectedness between the self and the phenomenal world. Such deep reflection triggered a level of psychic activity that was referred to as *nous* (or the self-awareness that occurs when contemplating on the affinity between composite material elements and the life animating force which sparks sensation and consciousness). (Aristotle 2002, pp. 8-10)

Thus, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, *theoria* in classical Greek thought had connotations having to do with the awareness one gains after deep reflection on the connection between the Universal principle, the self, and intersubjectivity (the fact that the Universal is superimposed upon the particular which results in a commingling of self and reality meaning the one is not regarded as or felt to be juxtaposed to the other). (Gadamer 1998, pp. 15-17) In social terms such contemplation had a type of conciliatory impact accompanied by a sense of affinity between the self and others. Such an ontological explanation about the self in relationship with phenomena had the effect of reducing the sense of subject-object contention and the seemingly endless tendency for the powerful to attempt appropriating their interests and to control outcomes by overpowering others. (Ibid., p. 16)

Karl Jaspers-credited with being the one who popularized the term Axial Age-emphatically asserted that during this period humanity began to realize that a more reliable form of knowledge can supersede the specific traditional convictions of particular tribal-clans and that such knowledge was needed for solving the pressing problems that threatened social progress. Larger social units demanded expanding the notion of who fits into the necessarily enlarged sense of

relations. Thus, for Jaspers, the Axial Age represented the endeavor to achieve a unified and integrated view of the common elements underlying the diverse conceptions of meaning and value plus a shared conviction that such a mutual comprehension leads to the realization that there is a single meaningful pattern, in which all diversities have their appointed place. (Ibid., p. xiv) These solutions were generated as a result of the increase in human cognitive abilities which was accompanied by the growing belief that *logos/rationality* is more effective than *mythos* as a basis for an inclusive perspective on reliable knowledge. (Jaspers 1965, pp. 3, 19) Jaspers described the Axial Age as a period when self-actualizing individuals experienced a heightening of activity in the neo cortex (prior perceptions and actions were based on heightened mental activity in the reptilian complex and the limbic system of the brain thus earlier humans exhibited an emphasis on feeling-acting). (Ibid., p. 4)

Both Socrates and Confucius developed a strategy for emancipating the individual from pre-rational impulses (i.e. a particular tribal-clan's demand for conformity-both in conception and action) by elevating the individual to a level of freedom to act and/or conceive in a way complementary with traditional notions of piety and in a way that created harmonious interactions within society. However, what was unique about the notion of self and social formation for both Confucius and Socrates is that their schemes were clearly based on a Dialectic foundation. For Confucius the source of his Dialectic perspective was the ontological insights drawn from his investigation into and commentary on the I Ching and Socrates (drawing from the convictions of his Greek heritage) asserted that reliable

knowledge is insight resulting from deep contemplation (including intuiting) that involved "Gnômosunê (detecting the causal factors that are not immediately apparent), episteme (ἐπιστήμη or discernment), logic (λόγος – a dialogic approach to inquiry), and Nous (νοῦς – nous has to do with deliberation, persuasion, logic, and argumentation)." (Miller 2015, p. 8)

Confucius believed that individuals possess an innate predisposition that inclines desire/action toward the endeavor to experience a heightened aesthetic sense of reality (Jingjie 境界 or yijing 意境). He called this *innate knowledge* (upon which he based his explanation of what he believed to be humanity's inherent neuropsychological make-up) which inclines desire and action toward creating outcomes that are pleasing, satisfying, life enhancing, beautiful, and fulfilling. Confucius regarded this as prompted by humanity's natural attunement with the principles of nature which is manifest as an inherent neurological predisposition toward the aesthetic appreciation of reality (a natural inclination that is sparked by and/or sparks the ability to experience aesthetic illumination – ji-jing-zhi-zhao-xin 寂靜之照心). (Wang 1963, p. 124; Bo 2009, p. 557) The experience of this primal urge was indeed prompted by nature but certainly heightened as a result of the feeling of collective security and the role that human ingenuity (the social contract) plays in creating prolonged periods of more fulfilling, enriching, and enlivening outcomes that are all considered to be mutually satisfactory.

Confucius believed that harmonious social relations could be created by basing the structure of society on the principle of the natural order (The Taoist notion of a complementary interaction between yin/female and yang/male which naturally creates attraction). He believed that the interaction naturally gives birth to progeny which strengthens the feeling of affinity. Subsequently he proposed that heritage would naturally be regarded with respect by the offspring (and accepted as authority) and that there would be a natural desire for the lineage (the culture) to flourish. (I Ching 1963, pp. 535 f.) Thus, Confucius' anticipated that ethical idealism-based on an ancient Chinese model of filial piety (e.g. strong kinship bonds which require conformity to cultural norms)-could only work in larger more diverse social settings by means of cultivating the individual's inherent desire to experience a sense of self in harmonious interaction with one's society and natural surroundings. Without cultivation (especially when communal bonds

are weakened in larger and more diverse social settings), individuals would be inclined to place priority on endeavoring to increase gain and pleasure by means of manipulative control over the resources of nature and society (pursuing one's own self-interest and especially the endeavor to elevate one's status, or one's clan status) in an attempt to increase one's power.

In fact, in both the East and the West, social theorists realized that without cultivation social relations will deteriorate to the point of each feeling a Hobbesian threat from the other members of society and each viewing the other with suspicion and distrust because all others will be regarded as a potential adversary. (Mannheim 1954, p. 54) Hence, safeguarding the interests of the individual and ensuring the stability of society necessitated creating an integrated sense of self by means of "The construction of a concept (worldview) that aligns a conception of the ontological nature of existence, with the nature of things as understood (conceived) by interacting groups or social-political systems, and with what has meaning (value) for the individual stakeholders." (Miller 2014, p. 7)

Karl Mannheim referred to this approach to social theory as a rational attempt to construct a concept of the world as a structural (harmonious) unity as opposed to a plurality of disparate units as it appeared to be in the prior historical period that seemed to produce chaos. It was predicated on the belief that noological knowledge is an important aspect of effective social planning (the term noological derives from the Greek words νοῦς, *nous*, or mind and λόγος, *logos*) (Mannheim 1954, p. 59). That is to say that, classical social theorists established the ontological and epistemological foundation for the type of "Knowledge [that] enables a person to have harmonious and more beneficial relationships with others and with the natural order. [Such] knowledge is the basis of individual integrity, the shaping of social relations, and the structuring of political authority." (Ibid., p. 12).

Social Order: Power, Knowledge, and Self-Cultivation

What Creation (T'ien or Nature) imparts to individuals is called human nature. To follow one's nature is called the Way (Tao). Cultivating the Way results in self-knowledge.

Chan 1963, p. 98

The birth of culture can be described as prompted by a force that impels individuals (and/or social groups) to feel and/or experience a sense of affinity with the natural order and the types of relationships it engenders. As Emile Durkheim asserted, the recognition of kinship with the life animating force was a basis of self and social identity. (Durkheim 1995, pp. 85 f., 100, 133-135, 208) Confucianism emerged by building on that ancient sense of connection with nature to devise a strategy for integrating the primal aspect of human cognition with the higher levels of mental ability that evolved. Confucius proposed that the integration of natural impulse with higher level mental abilities results in a person being Holistically well-integrated because the person aligns basic instincts and will with the Tao which contributes to creating harmonious relationships. (Confucius 2007, p. 1) Classical social theorists realized that without Holistically developing one's full potential one's natural inclination would dominate over consideration of rationality and ethical piety. That is to say that without self-knowledge others would be regarded as objects available to satisfy one's interests and there would be considerable competition over (what are believed to be) scarce natural resources resulting in alienation from the true self, others, and nature. The ancient view of self and social formation was further developed by classical social theorists into the metaphysical claim that by cultivating one's biological nature to be in accord with the natural order (i.e. the primordial principles underlying nature), a sense of complementarity results where

the one is perceived and/or experienced as reflecting the other (this is true because the natural order is composed of material substances that correspond to one's neurobiological make-up). The life force (i.e. the life generating and sustaining force) is an essential substance of nature which is also the primary substance of one's biological make-up. (Miller 2011, p. 134) According to the classical theory of self-formation, to cultivate the life generating force within one's inner being is the same as fully developing one's true nature (i.e. fully developing one's physical and psychic abilities/potential).

According to Confucian social theory there is an inherent deeper level of the self (liangzhi 良知) that if awakened can mediate the variance between the natural self, the ego sense of individuality (that emerges with cognition and culture), and the demands placed on the individual by cultural norms. (Cua 2003, p. 774) In this respect the classical notion of Dialectics (inquiry into the true nature of things) is the basis of clarity on the true self and being well-integrated with other aspects of existence. According to Antonio S. Cua (an eminent scholar in Chinese philosophy) liangzhi is indispensable to inquiry into what is epistemologically considered to be reliable knowledge (knowledge for gaining one's desired outcome) and for developing a character that reflects ren (a heightened ability to experience harmonious interactions). (Ibid.) In this way classical social theorists devised a way to reconcile the dichotomy between the self and others by means of cultivating one's true self (meaning that by being sincere, a person would act naturally thus in a way that is in harmony with the natural order (wu-wei 無為) and in a way that creates beneficial interactions). (Slingerland 2003, p. 289)

The viability of classical social theory was put to the test when the notion of community as polis-bound by rationality and ethical piety-gave way to empires that expanded into regional imperial systems (demanding that polis be superseded by the notion of Cosmopolis). The regional systems attempted to assert authoritative power over increasingly larger geographical regions and populations. The political authorities representing these regional systems were pressed to develop the means for maintaining their power against those with contending claims. According to Leo Strauss, this created conditions in which "Social life [was] characterized by conflicts between [those] asserting opposing claims." (Strauss 1959, p. 80) Violent conflict can occur when there is a clash between those who have the conviction that they have the right/power to rule or exercise control over a certain geographical region and population.

According to Karen Turner, expert on the history of legal systems, in both classical China and Greco-Roman society no other area of statecraft generated as much concern (during the rise of universal rulership) than maintaining order and deterring deviance. (Turner 2009) In fact "Traditional bureaucratic empires dealt with the common predicament of balancing the desires of rulers and elites-committed to traditional ascriptive modes of power-with the ambitions of new [public officials] dependent on bureaucratic positions and values." (Ibid., p. 53) In other words during the classical period theorists struggled to temper rule by charismatic power and status with processes for establishing the collective agreement of the body politic (i.e. new strategies for political formation).

The outcome was that power holders "Came to see that there were real limits to how much physical force can be used to compel others; thus, in addition to wielding brute force, members of the elite were expected to demonstrate legitimate power (de 德) within the political arena." (Nylan 2008, p. 102) Authoritarian elites realized that power could not be maintained without all claims to authority being reconciled; that there must be a system for managing counterclaims that are both internal and external to the social unit (e.g. the nobles, the wealthy, the intellectuals, the multitude, the poor, and those from other territories). (Strauss 1959, pp. 85-91)

Thus, a breakthrough occurred (facilitated the expansion of civilization) when that stage of historical development was reached when interlocutors began to communicate with one another to shape out of the previous conflicting contentions, outcomes that resulted in alliances and that

would increase security by establishing an integrative, normative basis for reconciling the conflicting conceptions of authority and power. (Mannheim 1954, p. 7) Mannheim asserted that at the point in history when city-states and empires expanded into regional imperial systems there were attempts to manage the conflicting authority claims by generating knowledge of how to extend power and influence by integrating fringe groups into an alliance in order to establish an even larger sphere of security and prosperity. (Ibid., pp. 7-10) Mannheim goes into considerable detail in an effort to explain that the power to develop and progress civilization could not be based on mere force alone. At a certain point larger social structures relied on a unifying force to reconcile conflicting claims thus they established a more effective basis for managing threats that were internal and external. The solution was the initiation of the Cosmopolitan concept that defined community in terms that transcended territory, ethnicity, and exclusive claims to legitimate authority. Cosmopolitanism was regarded as knowledge that is articulated in a way that reflects legitimate authority, knowledge reflecting what people believe to be ideas that are consistent with their understanding of the nature of existence, and knowledge that ensures personal and social security (in relation to the surrounding forces the people were confronted with). "In other words power results from generating knowledge that will provide individuals with the most beneficial outcomes to their effort to effectively deal with the forces of reality." (Miller 2014, p. 7)

As civilization advanced to the level of encompassing larger geographical regions, a unifying force was established that facilitated the effort to counterbalance the authority of a despot with the rudimentary stages of a rule of law. (Miller 2010; Xiangming 2002) This meant that although personal virtue, fortitude, and charisma continued to be recognized as traits that deserve respect (i.e. character traits that in classical Greece were referred to as *agathos* and in China as *te*) legitimacy increasingly became institutionalized (as in both the East and the West scholars and philosophers became more influential as did the philosophical notion of personal and social virtue). "With these new types of elites, above all the political and cultural ones, the intellectuals became the major partners in the formative ruling coalitions as well as in the movements of protests. Thus, the elite became active in re-construing the world and the institutional creativity that developed in these societies." (Eisenstadt 1986, p. 5)

At this point power was believed to be enhanced by perfecting one's character through learning the principles of and ontological basis of self and social formation (what Carl Jung regarded as a process that would connect a person with his or her inner power or true self). As stated by Wei-Ming Tu "To know oneself is simultaneously to perfect oneself [for] self-knowledge is nothing other than the manifestation of one's real nature." (Tu 1985, p. 20) Hence, at this stage of social development the authority of those considered to be a sage or shaman (an eccentric on the fringe of society) passed to a person cultivated in the art of self and social formation (with such a person gaining the title of priest and/or a member of the advisory ministry of a society).

Power (the ability to wield influence over increasingly larger populations) began to be based not only on authoritative force but on developing and displaying a certain type of character (*xiushen* 修) or, as Confucius asserted, a character that reflects *nobility of character* (*chüntzu*) as opposed to nobility based on status. Self-development was promoted by classical social theorists because they were convinced that it would result in the ability to display a certain type of knowledge (which is regarded as charismatic power in terms of relational capabilities thus would engender respect) and because the success of a social enterprise was believed to be based on this classical notion of legitimacy. At this stage of the expansion of civilization there was evidence of a Cosmopolitan notion of social reality based on Dialectics (relational and dialogic). Thus, self-formation was regarded as both reflective and dialogic, in other words, self-knowledge was believed to be the outcome of reflection on how an appropriate relationship with the forces of the natural order creates beneficial and harmonious relations.

From the perspectives of Eastern and Western classical social theory self-cultivation is the key

to harmonious interactions and to being well-integrated within the fabric of existence. According to Confucius, aligning one's body, mind, and heart with Tao enhances one's ability to experience one's highest good or most desired outcome (最想得到的東西或人). This was also thought of in terms of classical Chinese social theory as engaging others and other things in a way that one disturbs them less and is disturbed by them less. A character that has been cultivated to the point of being able to be guided by one's inner force (chi) allows one to act authentically, naturally (e.g. Wu Wei), and sincerely, to fulfill his or her heart's desire(s) but in a way that earned the person respect and admiration. (Slingerland 2003, p. 43)

As an outcome, classical social psychology called for the lower aspects of mental activity (in Freudian terms the id) being integrated with the ego (which inclines the self toward independence) and with the highest level of awareness (self-actualization to use Maslow's term) (Maslow 1969, pp. 106 f., 209-233) ultimately resulting in interdependence (expanding consciousness to the level of realizing the true self as outlined in terms of Jungian psychology or a merger of the lower nature, ego, and the superego in terms of Freudian psychology). Prior to this stage of cognitive development there was a weak cognitive sense of self because the mental focus was on the level of awareness afforded by the instinctive section of the brain.

The results of putting the classical theory into practice was that *The Other* began to be regarded as a fellow citizen that deserves respect and equal rights (e.g. homoioi or isoioi in classical Greek thought) and power was thought of as determined by a dialogic process to discern how individual pursuits and collective action (what the Greeks called *isonomia*) can be integrated to create the best outcome for both. As civilization progressed (to the Greco-Roman era of Western history and the Golden Age of China), on the one hand, it became apparent that power (both personal and political) is determined by generating and displaying a certain type of knowledge/character. However, on the other hand, there was the persistence of competing or unreconciled notions of power (e.g. distributive power as in A has power over B and/or the notion that individuals and/or groups compete in an inevitable struggle for power) which was in contradistinction to the collective perspective of power where power is allotted by the general consent of the public as part of an endeavor to attain goals for which the entire community is committed. (Parsons 1957, p. 140)

Simply put there remains the persistent problem of contending notions of power – authoritative control as opposed to power in terms of the ability of the collective to employ a Cosmopolitan/dialogic processes to co-create social reality. In other words there is still a contrast between power thought of as the ability to exercise economic and military power over as opposed to power as knowledge that enables the collective to more effectively manage their internal challenges (and the challenges the collective is confronted with from the environment) in a way that produces beneficial and satisfactory results for all stakeholders.

Conclusion

There is clearly a gap in [contemporary conceptualizations] of self and society and the contradictions between social demands and individuals needs which are a permanent feature of our lives.

Elias 1991, p. 9

This article proposes that classical social theory (from both the East and West) is a viable perspective for a comprehensive analysis of the ontological basis of self, the development of culture, and the progression of civilization. In this respect a revival of classical social theory (its ontological assertions about Dialectics plus self and social formation) could serve as a basis for the East-West scientific endeavor to establish a technological age social scientific perspective on global social

existence. That is to say that the with social existence now expanding to a global level there is acknowledgement of a need to devise technological age social theory. Such a theory would address the concern over how interactions between the self and others plus with the environment can be complementary (as civilization advances to the global level). This article argues that such an endeavor could benefit by drawing from the lessons learned from the classical social framework for devising a notion of "Individuals and societies that do not posit any kind of radical separation and inherent opposition. An adequate understanding of individuals brings in the irreducibly social dimension of being human and show[s] how this is connected with, rather than merely opposed to, individuality." (Tan 2004, p. 17)

According to Philosophy of Science specialist Professor Mark Risjord, the ability to effectively manage social phenomena (on any level-in theory as well as practice) requires knowledge of how the social world works. (Risjord 2014, p. 7) Risjord points out that the foundation of such knowledge is rooted in classical philosophy but has evolved into various branches of the social sciences during the modern era. Risjord proposes that a comprehensive analysis of global social phenomena requires exploring the motivation behind human behavior, the role of perception in human behavior, and the significance of value theory (from a theoretical perspective that is inclusive of the insights of classical social theory as well as contemporary social science theory). (Ibid., pp. 5-9) This is true for human interactions on all levels and in all spheres. In other words, the dynamics of the relationship between societies and civilizations can be described in ways similar to what occurs between individual social agents. This is the reason why the Dialectic approach to self and social formation proves to be effective-because it "Presupposes some kind of theory about human nature [and] some basic anthropological theory." (Wight 1991, p. 25)

This concluding section of the article argues that social theory (established during the classical period) is a viable basis for explicating the nature of social existence and analyzing aspects of the ontological basis for social existence that continue to be true as civilization advances to the global level. This section summarizes the valuable contribution that the classical notions of Dialectics, self, society, power, and knowledge offer to the Cosmopolitan model of personal and social ethics and, in addition, highlights the aspects of classical theory that emphasize the role of knowledge and power in social relations (the contemporary attempt to establish Constructivist processes for achieving mutually beneficial and satisfactory outcomes). Thus, an important aim of the concluding section of the article (indeed a theme consistent throughout the article) is establishing an effective model for resolving the historical dichotomy between the natural right to self-determination (i.e. the personal right to pursue what is believed to increase one's well-being, prosperity, and happiness) and the need to establish beneficial relations with others and with the environment.

The basic concepts of classical social theory continued to evolve to become relevant to the challenges of Modernity (e. g. the understanding of classical social theory that was developed and expressed by – amongst others – Durkheim, Mills, Weber, and Parsons in the West, and Zhu Xi, Wang Ying-ming, Xiong Shili, Wing-tsit Chan, in the East). Although Modernity (in both the East and West) was premised on the vision of the emancipation of individuals (resulting from Enlightened social, economic, and political systems) the problem of reconciling self-interests with what is in the best interests of People and the need to discern how civilization could progress in a way that is sustainable persisted right up until today. However, in the modern era the problem became exaggerated as science and technology provided new means by which individuals could become alienated from themselves, others, and the environment. Thus, knowledge during Modernity became "Natural knowledge congealed in technologies and transformed into the steering of social processes in a manner not unlike that in which natural science becomes the power of technical control." (Habermas 1968, p. 47)

Contemporary social theorists realized that the complementarity aspect of Dialectics is essen-

tial for reforming the materialistic, reductionist, and domineering forces that have plagued social development in both the East and the West. Contemporary social theorists assert that society must be the outcome of a productive process determined by communicative deliberation between the various members of society. For, as Habermas points out, the quality of social life is dependent upon how individuals use Cosmopolitan processes to appropriate what knowledge and power can produce. (Ibid., p. 57) The concept of power that was espoused by classical sociology was based on knowledge of how to accomplish self-interests in a way that enhances the self, the relationship one has with others, and enhances the relationship individuals have with the natural order (e.g. similar to the notion of knowledge and power promoted by recent advances in social psychologists who propose that there is a dialogic basis of self and the experience of reality). (Delanty 2000, p. 1)

That is to say, that the Dialectic approach to self and social formation promotes an awakening to the realization that complementarity is the basis of humanity's ontological predisposition or neurological value preference (e.g. mutuality, natural law, equal rights, and/or natural rights). Thus, contemporary Eastern and Western social theorists are increasingly realizing that there is a basis in classical social psychology for reducing the distance between Eastern and Western views on the relationship between naturalism and natural law. The reduction of the East-West differences stems from a careful analysis of classical social theory which reveals that the basic laws of nature (what Enlightenment Liberalism and Cosmopolitanism refer to as natural rights) are akin to the basic biological and neurobiological principles that make-up individual human nature. "The unity at which it aims is clearly the unity that is obtained by breaking down discrimination and affirming the 'identity of contradictories,' and that encourages a reversion to origins, to the state of nature." (Babbitt 1919, p. 395)

This article argues that a Dialectic perspective on self and social formation clearly provides a means of transcending the conflictual notion of encounters by establishing a prescription for perceiving and experiencing encounters as complementary. That is to say that the classical approach to social psychology is believed to be viable today because it is based on the conviction that there is a fundamental principle at work in existence that prompts biological organisms to enter into complex systems of cooperation and beneficial encounters. Thus, neurological value preferences impel cognitive realization that increasing the range and scope of beneficial interactions and systems is a primary function of the life generating force (or a primary aspect of the life-enhancing feature of existence that is also basic to humanity's inherent value preference). (Miller 2011, pp. 139-142)

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