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ABSTRACT

Arguing that the traditionally central position of genuine liberal learning in the college curriculum has been seriously eroded, this paper recommends that Confucian principles be incorporated into general education and faculty development to reinstill the element of "learning to be human" into the freshman and sophomore years. Part 1 suggests that instrumentalism has become the untempered ethos of the community college, and urges community college faculty to re-educate and revitalize themselves through certain strands within the Confucian tradition. A profile of the students attending non-elite colleges is presented, decrying a lack of openness to self-transformation, growth, or change; and a tendency toward pragmatism, careerism, consumerism, and self-interest. This section also addresses the problem of a dominant pedagogy which actually reinforces educational goals centerd on money and status. Part 2 offers an overview of the process and major concepts of Confucianism, including jen (humanity or human-ness) and li (ritual action). The teachings of three students of Confucianism, Mencius (371-289 BC), Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529), and Liang Shu-Ming (1893-), are reviewed with particular emphasis on their development of non-elitist and existential lines within the philosophy. In addition, Professor Tu Wei-Ming's current interpretation of Confucianism is also explored. In part 3, appropriate components of a Confucian-based pedagogy are suggested, including affective, aesthetic, moral, religious, and intellectual dimensions. Finally, in part 4, a discussion of the application of these principles in a team-taught core interdisciplinary program at Burlington County College (New Jersey) is presented. Sixty-nine footnotes are provided. (EJV)

# Learning To Be Human:

# Confucian Resources for Rethinking General Education

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From the very poorest upwards -- beginning even with the man who could bring no better present than a bundle of dried flesh -- none has ever come to me without receiving instruction.

Confucius, Analects, 7:7[1]

Only one who bursts with eagerness do I instruct; only one who bubbles with excitement do I enlighten. If I hold up one corner and a person cannot come back with the other three, I do not continue the lesson.

Confucius, Analects, 7:8[2]

## I. Introduction

The distant goal of higher education is out of joint. The traditionally central position in the college curriculum of genuinely liberal learning, learning to be human[3], what Confucians call ta Hsueh[1] 大學 (great or adult learning) has been precariously eroded.

Although this is true to some degree throughout higher education, it is especially true in the growing non-elite sector. In fact, the erosion has occurred gradually over the same time period that higher education has been significantly democratized, roughly the two decades since the late 1960's when the community college movement has doubled the number of students who go to college. Most of these students are non-traditional, from the working class, minority and adult populations which did not previously send many students to college. But they have not gotten what they were promised: the "college" they can go to today is not "college" in the fuller sense of the elite colleges a quarter century ago. The vital tension at the heart of the college experience -- the classical tension between "learning for a position" on the one hand and "learning to be human" on the other -- has largely collapsed. Instrumentalism has become the untempered, uncounterbalanced ethos. It rules from the student's first meeting with the college counselor to the last pre-career course, and has co-opted the most visible vestige of the older notion of

college, the liberal arts general education core, along the way.

Although this trend in education can assuredly be connected to broader societal forces that are producing a pool of incoming students who are already bred on instrumenatlist and individualist ways of thinking -- the topic of lengthier studies such as Robert N. Bellah et al's Habits of the Heart[5] -- in this essay I will limit my discussion to what might still be done with these students once they arrive at college. That is, recognizing the constraints of the situation for us as educators in non-elite colleges, what can we do to reconstruct the pole that, traditionally, should be pulling students as much toward their humanness as the other pole does to their career concerns? My hypothesis is that teachers can intervene significantly to reinstill the element of learning to be human into the freshman and sophomore years, but that this process must begin with re-educating ourselves. For we have become part of the problem; our sense of the distant goal is in need of re-thinking in the same way that our students' is.[6]

To find resources for re-vitalizing faculty, I propose we turn to the most sustained, brilliant and open-ended conversation on the problem of becoming human among all the world's cultures: the Confucian tradition of East Asia. In particular, one strand within Confucianism[7], the strand extending from the 4th-century-B.C. philosopher Mencius to

the 16th-century Neo-confucianist Wang Yang-ming and the 20th-century reformer Liang Shu-ming[8], is especially relevant for non-elite education. These men paid special attention to the concerns of the common people. I will turn to their concepts, models, and experiences -- as well as to the penetrating current interpretations of Confucianism by Harvard philosopher Tu Wei-ming -- after first establishing more clearly the American educational problem that I mean to address.

## II. The Problem

Our Students

While it is to be expected that most students who attend non-elite colleges will lack the intellectual edge of their peers at Princeton or Rutgers, intellectual deficiency is often not the worst problem for the contemporary non-elite college, which is used to providing remediation. A deeper problem is the students' attitude toward learning. Having sadly wasted their minds during their high school years, too many even after making the decision to go to college lack the attitudinal qualities appropriate for someone whose human potential -- intellectually, morally, aesthetically and spiritually[9] -- is so strikingly underdeveloped.

To put it bluntly, too many of our students lack humility, deference, respect: any openness to self-transformation, growth, change -- in Plato's metaphor, from darkness to light. Too many are baldly and

unquestioningly pragmatic, careerist, consumerist, success-seeking, with narrow conceptions of self-interest. (The Confucian traditon would say they have little sense of their jen, or human-ness[10].) Too many want, even as they hate, rote, mechanical learning; will drop courses that demand critical thinking and writing; are more comfortable in a world of objective tests, behavioral objectives, precise student-teacher contracts about grades. Too many are drawn to images, the superficial, in both themselves and their professors: the gimmick, the simple answer, the "little knowledge" that is proverbially "worse than none." Too many are "getting their studies over with" and consider their private lives to be their "real" lives.

While this is a profile of many students in the least elite colleges, it is also indicative of trends up through the spectrum of colleges and universities. Allan Bloom has noted that students at the top twenty to thirty colleges are more like the masses in their tastes and attitudes than they used to be.[11] Community college educators Martin Spear and Dennis McGrath have explored in a recent article the creeping "remedialization" of higher education, from the bottom up. I.e., because the conception of education held by the remedial student is increasingly also held by the non-remedial student, there is a tendency in higher education to respond by "renegotiating downward" the "norms of literate activity."[12] Moreover, recent surveys by the American Council on Education have found that college

freshmen nationally choose "being well-off financially" over "developing a meaningful philosophy of life" twice as often as their goal, almost the reverse of the results in 1970.[13]

We Educators

After such a bleak portrait of "too many" of our students, one might expect that community college faculty would be engaged in a constant tug-of-war with them about the very definitions of education. However, this seems rarely to be the case. Too many community college educators have become reshaped in their students' images: they have become "consumer-responsive," and the administrative bureaucracy has encouraged them in this. The result is that the dominant pedagogy of the community college actually reinforces many of the student attitudes described above. The faculty and counselors provide a kind of final confirmation and solidification of students' incoming pre-dispositions to take education as a certification process involving consumption of course units, information transfer, memorization skills, and objective-test performance, all toward one's own career ends. This is happening widely:

Researchers Richardson, Fisk and Okun have found that the community college approach tc English encourages a fragmented and limited language use that they call "bitting" instead of "texting."[14]

Spear and McGrath note that "the appearance of large numbers of underprepared students in the classrooms of

traditional academic disciplines has led traditional academics more and more to mimic the practices and vocabulary of remedial/developmental programs."[15]

George Cronk has found that at his and other community colleges most liberal arts faculty use "textbooks, not real books," "have little discussion, almost all lecture," "have given up bibliographies," "put too much emphasis on objective testing and too little emphasis on methodology and critical thinking."[16]

This writer has found that the community college pedagogy of narrowly conceived "behavioral objectives" -- a system borrowed from management in which one breaks down all learning into small discrete units, each with its own "intended outcome," "learning activity," and "rationale" -- while perhaps useful in science and business, has eroded the "learning to be human" pole in the humanities and social sciences while strengthening the instrumentalist pole, thereby fitting liberal arts all too comfortably into a universe of calculations and careers.

Ends

> Things have their roots and branches. Affairs have their end and beginning. To know what is first and what is last will lead near to what is taught in the Great Learning.
>
> -Confucius, Ta Hsueh, 3[17]

By the way we teach, by our pedagogy, what are we signalling to our students that we hold as the "end," the distant goal, of higher education?

I would argue that in the contemporary non-elite college the distant goal is, implicitly but unambiguously, exactly the one most painstakingly rejected by all the great religiophilosophies, from Plato and the Christian fathers to Confucius: money and status.

To the community college student, often reinforced by teachers and counselors, the "end" of learning is performance on the test. Beyond this there is increasingly, performance on a state test, e.g. New Jersey's proposed new "rising juniors" exam; there is the attainment of the desired career; and ultimately there is money and status, one's chosen "lifestyle" built around the products that symbolize success and happiness in every television advertisement and soap opera. The universal classical respose to such a conception of ends is that it leads to cultural collapse, a kind of human suicide. Confucius, like many great Western thinkers, invariably answers questions about how to get a good job with exhortations to do what is right, pursue the human way (the root), and "career" (the branch) will follow. But the root neglected and the branch thriving? he adds. This has never been the case![18] It is to Confucius' thought that we now turn.

## II. Confucian Resources

### CONFUCIUS

Confucianism is best understood as not a doctrine but a process, a continuing conversation and practice, whose highest aim is the realization of what it is to be human. Confucius himself (551-479 B.C.), an itinerant teacher and occasionally minor official from the state of Lu, was not himself the originator of "Confucianism"; it is therefore more accurately referred to as the "Ju (Scholars, Classicists) School." Confucius was a "transmitter and not a maker."[19] What he transmitted was the learning and history of the golden age at the beginning of the Chou dynasty (c. 1000 B.C.) and before, when the emperors and ministers who held political power were also enlightened in ethicoreligious matters, i.e. understood how humans could become completers of the cosmic design. Confucius inquired into everything, learned without satiety, loved the ancients[20], relished in traditional ceremonies (natural, not ostentatious ones),[21] and tried to "reanimate the old to discover the new."[22] He was not wealthy, and advised against pursuing profit; he forgot to eat when enthusiastic about his inquires[23]; and he taught others tirelessly.[24] He would teach rich or poor, but no one who was not "bursting with eagerness" to learn to be human.[25] Of his two favorite students, Yen Hui was poor, yet steadfast in his moral purpose, and indominatably cheerful; he died young. Tseng

Tien was an enthusiastic learner, but carefree, in love with life, exuding a radiance and goodness.

In his teaching, Confucius emphasized several concepts and models concerning becoming human that have become central to discussions first in China and then in all East Asia, and have proved inexhaustible for literally 100 generations. His words were often fruitfully ambiguous, in a way that, I would argue, mirrors the ambiguity of human life. He was suggestive rather than prescriptive. He often tried to steer students between two poles to find the subtle and precarious "human way."

My approach will be to review some of his central thoughts, emphasizing those ideas that have a special applicability to our topic: rethinking ends in non-elite education. In so doing I will be arguing for the Mencius - Wang Yang-ming line of interpretation of Confucius's thoughts.

First among Confucius's concepts is jen 仁, humanity or human-ness, mentioned above. Jen is the central virtue in humans; it is what makes us human. 仁 is composed of the character for person 人 next to the character for two. (It can also be seen as a representation of "the full measure of a person": i.e., from head to toe). The "two" is crucial, for it is symbolic here of the Confucian conviction that humans are irreducibly social. We cannot become human all by ourselves. Therefore, the enterprise of learning to be human for Confucius is a communal enterprise, involving

how to relate to others in ways that manifest shu 恕, reciprocity or reciprocal obligation. The "root" of jen is hsiao 孝 filial piety, how children should relate to parents.[26] The capacity for jen is inherent in all of us; it is part of our nature, what Heaven has endowed. But it does not automatically grow: it needs to be nurtured by chiao 教, instruction. 人, also pronounced jen, is by itself already a normative term. It refers to the human person not merely biologically, but in his/her capacity for becoming 仁, or eventually even a sheng 聖, sage or "hearer" (the top left of the character is an ear). On the other hand, min 民, the people, designates human beings as masses; min are traditionally considered leadable toward virtue but not capable of authoring their own growth.[27]

The distinction between 人 and 民, we might pause to note, could be crucial for how we teach at the non-elite college. Are our students 人 or 民? Is the difference one of socio-economic class, intellectual aptitude, or something else? Ames and Hall give us a clue in their recent painstaking search of the Confucian literature on this question: for Confucius, "being a person is something one does, not something one is," they conclude.[28]

Second among Confucius's central comcepts is li 禮, ritual action or ceremony. The most valuble recent treatment of li is Fingarette's Confucius: the Secular as Sacred, in which he argues that li is the ethicocosmic pattern of human conduct by which one becomes jen.

Involving actions as ordinary as a nod to a passerby and as deep as the rites when a parent dies, li is the Great Dance of life, the accumulated treasure of intelligent conventions, the human way to live. Confucius taught li as in creative tension with ho 和, natural ease, which signifies the genuine, the flowing, the spirit as opposed to letter of an action. To have both outward form and natural ease is the highest excellence (like a piano player who at last makes the qualitative leap from simply accurate technique to true musicality). This distinction is one illustration of the considerable attention in Confucianism to the compliance of inner and outer, the real coin and the false coin. The inner, hinted at by ho here, is developed more profoundly in the concept of ch'eng 誠, utmost sincerity or authenticity, in the classic called Chung Yung (Doctrine of the Mean). The outer, signified by li, is an indication that Confucianism is not merely an ethics, as some have held, but even more an "aesthetics" of life, as Ames and Hall have most recently proposed.32 Confucius grasped that there is something beautiful in humans treating each other in appropriate rituals, signifying dignity as well as tenderness.

Finally, there are three very famous opening stanzas in the Lun Yu 論語 (Analects, or Conversations), Ta Hsueh (Great Learning) and Chung Yung that the reader should be familiar with before we move on to later interpretations and applications. First, the Lun Yu opens

> [Confucius] said, To learn with constant perserverance and application: is it not a pleasure? To have friends coming from distant places: is it not delightful? To remain unsoured even though one's merit goes unrecognized: isn't it the mark of a superior person?[33]

The third line synthesizes the opening two and introduces a central tension in the next 2500 years of Confucian tradition: recognition, in the form of a high mark on the exams and an official post, is in one sense indispensable to give a person an arena in which to practice one's learning; yet it is precisely such recognition that cannot become one's end, for such an end undermines the learning itself. Second, the Ta Hsueh opens

> What the Great Learning teaches is to manifest shining virtue, to renovate the people, and to rest in the highest Good.[34]

The great questions became, What makes some people's virtue shine, others' oppressive? What policies can "renovate" the people? How do we know "the highest Good"? Again, the lines have led to a 2500 year conversation. Third, the Chung Yung opens

> What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow human nature is called the Way. Cultivating the Way is

> called teaching. ... There is nothing more visible than what is hidden and nothing more manifest than what is subtle.[35]

Again, 100 generations of commentary have followed on "Heaven," "nature," "the Way," and the "hidden."

MENCIUS

Mencius (371-289 B.C.?), a student of Confucius's grandson's student, edged Confucian teachings in a non-elitist direction. He stressed that all humans have hearts-and-minds (the two words are the same in Chinese) that are intrinsically good, unable to bear the suffering of others. Therefore uncovering what is already there becomes the main work toward sagehood. Book learning, though not dispensable, is less important for Mencius than self-effort toward regaining own's "child-like" heart.[37] The problem is usually that one's "great self" (humane, vast) becomes submerged in one's "small self" (narrow, calculating). To reverse the development, one needs to go step-by-step in opening oneself to an "ever-expanding circle of human relatedness" (in Tu Wei-ming's phrase), i.e. to family, friends, community, country, "all under heaven."[39] What usually holds people back isn't so much pu neng(inability) as pu wei (unwillingness). The student has to be willing to become a "total person in transformation."[40]

Further indications of Mencius' anti-elitism were his suspicion of bookish village "goody goodies"[41] and his

famous doctrine that the best way to find the elusive "will of Heaven" is to look in the "will of the people."[42]

WANG YANG-MING

Wang Yang-ming (1472-1529) recovered and developed further the non-elitist implications and existential meaning of the Mencian line of Confucianism after an 1800 year lapse. Three centuries earlier, the founder of orthodox Neo-Confucianism Chu Hsi had restored the "learning of the sages" to prominence after a period of heavy Buddhist influence. Yet Chu's apprcach stressed book learning, which Chu's successors built into a universal Confucian civil service examination system. The Confucian orthodox establishment came to favor the gentry who could spend many years in study. Wang Yang-ming early in life became an opponent of "studying for the examination" (even though he passed!). He found that it violated the essence of Confucius's and Mencius's teaching. Though he did not advocate dispensing with books altogether (no Confucian, by definition, ever could; the great books are always assumed as part of the context), he advocated first-hand experience of what the classics were talking about -- Heaven's voice, shining virtue, human-ness -- as more essential than book learning. And he advocated great reforms in the examinations, to reflect genuine learning and practical application, not rote memory and formalism. Under Wang's influence, Tu Wei-ming writes, "the Confucian way could no

longer be considered to be a privileged avenue of the literatus."[44]

Yang-ming, born Wang Shou-jen, came to his views through a fascinating early adult life. Attracted for a time to Buddhism and Taoism, he was struck during a meditative session in Yang-ming (Sun-like Brightness) Grotto by the unnaturalness of severing bonds to parents and grandparents. Reaffirming the "irreducibility of human-relatedness"[45], he returned to civilization and took an official post, but with a determination not to lose his jen in the midst of the rampant corruption in the Ming dynasty imperial court. One day, Wang filed an official memo ("memorial") to the emperor suggesting that an evil eunuch be dismissed from his high position. This got Wang forty lashes and banishment to a remote southwestern region inhabited by venemous snakes and uncultured, hostile minority people (the Miao and Lolo tribes). Here, in the town of Lung-ch'ang, he faced the ultimate dilemma implied by the opening lines of the Analects: in Tu's words, "What should a Confucian do if he had been deprived of the environment that is usually thought to be essential to Confucian practices?"[46]

After weeks of hardship and near despair, Wang, who had been shunned by the local people, was awakened by a Voice in the middle of the night that told him, in effect, that one could achieve sagehood anywhere. Soon after this famous "sudden enlightenment," Wang became "better acquainted with

[the minority people] and they, day by day, showed an increasing attachment toward him. They considered his hovel to be distressing and damp and set to felling trees to build him a number of buildings, such as Lung-Kang Academy, a reception hall, a study, a pavilion, and a den."[47] He named each an auspicious name: the reception hall became Pin-yang, Receiving the Sun; the study, Ho-lou, What Rudeness?, from the following passage in the Analects:

> The Master was wishing to go and live among the nine wild tribes of the East. Someone said, "they are rude. How can you do such a thing?" The Master said, "If a gentleman dwelt among them, what rudeness would there be?"[48]

An official from the district education commission soon visited these new non-elite institutions and commented, "The teaching of the sages is being revived today."[49]

Taking advantage of his distance from the bureaucratic, career-driven academic scene back home, Wang's thrust was to build a more genuine Confucian fellowship integrated with the common people's lives. He regularly confronted those students whose "sole aim was 'success' via the examination system."[50] Wang's pedagogy was based on four points: li-chih 立志, ch'in-hsueh 勤學, kai-kuo 改過, and tse-shan 責善. Li-chih means fix the determination, resolve: students had to decide they wanted to realize their humanity before Wang would teach them. Ch'in hsueh means

diligent study. For Wang, this included not only the transmission of knowledge but also transformation of personality; he considered "knowing and acting" inseparable. Kai-kuo means reforming one's errors, and carries (in Tu's words) "a similar psychological weight to repentance."[51] Tse-shan means inciting to the Good, and refers to the Aristotlean kind of friendship that developed among students and teachers in Wang's academy, in which "the subtle art of exhortation" was practiced, an art requiring "not only sincerity but gentleness."[52]

Wang Yang-ming did not confine his teaching to a classroom setting. His pedagogical concepts of chiang hsi 講習 learning and practicing, and hsiang yueh 鄉約, village covenant, involved personal guidance, teaching by example, and reshaping local socio-economic institutions. "He conducted his tutoring at banquets, during picnics, in the fields, and even on a walk by moonlight," Tu reports.[53]

LIANG SHU-MING

In the greatly changed historical context of the revolutionary twentieth century, Liang Shu-ming (1893- ) attempted to renew some of Wang Yang-ming's concepts, especially the idea of reanimating Confucianism through alternative institutions in a rural setting. Convinced that the early discovery in Chinese civilization of human-ness and harmony were rooted in the direct grasp of the Principle of the universe itself through "natural reason" (li-hsing[54]), Liang abandoned a professorship at Beijing

University to found a rural "li-hsing civilization" in Confucius's home province of Shantung. Western modernism, Liang argued, offered technological benefits, but fostered calculativeness, selfishness and conflict; it needed to be subsumed to jen. He sought "a re-creation of philosophical discourse [chiang-hsueh] like that of the Sung and Ming [dynasties] using the [way of] life [and relationship] of Confucius and Yen [Hui, Confucius's favorite disciple]" as a model,[55] but he wanted to do this fully integrated with peasant life, away from the urban "sinks" of acquisitiveness and corruption. The major institution would be the hsiang-nung-hsueh-hsiao 鄉農學校, a peasant-intellectual school that would serve the combined functions of learning center, village administrative center, and tea house. The concept further developed Wang Yang-ming's hsiang yueh, or village covenant. The curriculum was built around moral study, music and ritual as the root, but also included literacy, agriculture, public health, cooperative organizational structure, civics, and world affairs.[56]

Later, Liang discovered that Mao Tse-tung was attempting strikingly similar reconstruction in the Northwest. The "conservative" Liang would attempt to prevail on his friend the "communist" Mao for the next four decades to give a more Confucian cast to PRC reforms!

TU WEI-MING

The reader can perhaps already sense some of Tu's importance due to the number of times we have turned to his interpretations of Confucius, Mencius, and Wang. Tu also has developed insights of his own, particularly through asking the ancient tradition very contemporary questions. For one thing, it is from Tu that I have borrowed the expression "learning to be human," a phrase that helps to make the Mencian project understandable to Americans. Tu has broken down this phrase, in Chinese hsueh tso jen 學作人, into three components, expressed in modern language: becoming "aesthetically refined, morally excellent, and spiritually profound."[57]

However, what perhaps best shows Tu at work "reanimating the old to discover the new" is his relating Confucian learning to the contemporary American preoccupation with "self." Robert N. Bellah a few years ago asked Tu to clarify, "What is the Confucian self?" Tu's entire book Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation is an answer, the kernal of which is this: Confucian learning is "for the sake of oneself," but that self "is neither subjectivistic nor individualistic."[58] The Confucian self is a "dynamic center of relationships," a "path to human community," and a "dynamic process of spiritual development."[59]

## III. Appropriating Confucian Categories

What can we appropriate from Confucian concepts, principles, and models to re-vitalize our pedagogy in non-elite colleges?

### LEARNING TO BE HUMAN

I believe we need to re-establish something close to the Confucian notion of "learning to be human" as the essence of liberal arts general education. This would involve not eliminating "career learning," but re-establishing the tension, as Confucians have perennielly discussed, between "career learning" and "human learning." To begin with, the words in institutional mission statements and liberal arts divisional statements, which often miss this tension, need to be rectified; then, even more important, the actions of faculty need to be changed accordingly. This will take a sustained, deep-reaching program of faculty development built around nutritive, traditional texts. Confucian ones such as Tu's Confucian Thought and Fingarette's Confucius could be part of the fare.

With Mencius, Wang, Liang, and Tu, we need to affirm that non-elite students, too, can be jen 人, not merely min 民. We need to affirm that learning whose end is authentic, benevolent, socially conscious persons is appropriate not only at the Princetons but also at the hundreds of American versions of Lung-ch'ang. Like Wang, non-elite college

faculty need not be "soured" that they have been deprived of an environment in which to practice true ta hsueh -- just challenged, as Wang was, to make a difference between civilization and its opposite.

We need to provide our students with a learning they can do "without satiety," a learning rooted in tradition that involves them as "total persons in transformation." Our classrooms need to come alive with chiang hsi, conversations and applications.

Because of the institutional constraints we all face, we may want to begin this educational transformation in small pilot groups team-taught by like-minded humanist faculty. Crucial to the success of these groups will be faculty development in which a genuine re-negotiation of pedagogical norms takes place. A model for this at Burlington County College (N.J.) will follow this section.

WHO NOT TO TEACH

If students ought not to be eliminated from learning to be human by their socio-econmic class, and also not by low scores on tests of intellect (e.g., SATs), is there any basis on which to eliminate anybody?

Yes. I would suggest that Wang Yang-ming's criteria of li-chih, or resolve, be adopted. Those students who, after an initial introduction to what ta hsueh is all about, show signs of "fixing their determination" on becoming human should be retained; those who are fast asleep to or

contemptuous of all of this should be let go. As Wang put it, "Absence of chih is why so many students idle away time and energy."[60]

Practically, this would mean that "open admissions" and remediation efforts should continue. However, remedial programs would need to be re-designed to prepare the students with chih for later ta hsueh. This might suggest instead of formalistic "skills" or trivial "personal experience essays," submersion in traditional pre-college reading, the kind appropriate for ages 12 to 18, that can become the basis of later reflection.[61]

COMPONENTS OF A CONFUCIAN-INSPIRED PEDAGOGY

1. The Affective Component

Spear and McGrath have proposed three components of a liberal arts core pedagogy, which they use in their interdisciplinary pre-transfer programs at the Community College of Philadelphia: the affective, the cognitive (or intellectual), and the repetoire.[62] Although these are hardly Confucian categories, I propose to use them here as an ordering device to see where Confucian resources might fit in.

The affective, or "feelings," component would, from the Confucian point of view, be the most important of the three. I propose breaking down the affective into the same three dimensions into which Tu Wei-ming breaks down learning to be human: aesthetic, moral, and religious.

a. Aesthetic dimensions

The central Confucian term to appropriate for aesthetic dimensions of learning I would suggest is li, ceremony or propriety, in creative tension with ho, natural ease. Ceremony befitting the educational purpose needs to be restored to the non-elite classroom; but it should be introduced with attention to making it natural, not artificial.

The beauty can begin in simple things such as the setting. Ideally, of course, this might be a bookshelf-lined seminar room with a large, oval oak table and windows looking out on a glen. More realistically, if the physical setting can be transformed in small ways to make it more conducive to "the human," the attempt itself can be sufficient. A plant, a landscape painting -- or an inscription like Wang Yang-ming's "Receiving the Sun" or "What Rudeness?" -- can, with imagination, begin to transfigure a cinder block and neon environment into a place that the learning community feels is auspicious for Great Learning. Classes out of doors occasionally or "great trips" together can accomplish the same thing. Dress and, even more, countenance and body language are also important as signs of mutual respect. And the outward ritual of class procedures should be made part of the learning: how participants address each other, reciprocity and (where appropriate) deference, even musicality as a distant goal --

this is all part of the re-enactment of the ancient ceremony of students and teachers that we are carrying on.

Do I have some kind of modern "Confucian academy" in mind that could serve as an example of educational li in action? No rustic one like Yang-ming's comes to mind; but if we can stray for a moment to a more elite model, I have been impressed at how Punahou School in Honolulu, more influenced now by East Asian culture than by its original Congregationalism, has a wonderfully Confucian aesthetc quality. Here, in the words of teacher/administrator Sigfried Ramler, "a certain transformation comes over the student upon passing inside these walls. There is an aura about this place that affects students and faculty, and even seems to extend to the flowers and trees. Inside these walls we all act somehow differently, with more respect. It is passed on year after year ... is larger than any one of us ...."[63]

Punahou is one of the few schools that has retained the sensuousness, the eros, of learning -- something that Plato portrays unforgettably in the Phaedrus and Bloom longs for in Closing of the American Mind. Ramler has found it most in the attitude of one sector of the student population, the Chinese girls: "They articulate things in terms of a general intellect and curiosity; they are vitally interested," he has observed.

Though a mid-Pacific academy may seem remote from most non-elite college settings, I believe this model may be

useful in helping to clarify the distant goal. The example of Confucius's disciple Tseng T'ien is relevant here, too: Four of Confucius's students had been asked to express their goals. Three described in detail their high political ambitions. "T'ien, what about you?" the Master asked. "In late spring," he replied, "I should like, together with five or six adults and six or seven boys, to go bathing in the River Yi and enjoy the breeze on the Rain Altar, then go home singing." The Master heaved a deep sigh and said, "I am with T'ien."[64]

b. Moral dimensions

In an age of increasingly problematic moral relativism, the most important Confucian moral resource might be the tradition's unproblematic pre-assumption of a natural, objective morality. Confucius and Mencius never doubt that there is such a thing as a "highest Good" for humans, rooted in the natural affection and obligation between parents and children, and expressing itself broadly in all human relations. The encounter with Confucianism reawakens us to the possibility of a Pattern (li 理) in an age in which we have assumed that we have nothing more definite to teach in the moral sphere than "personal value clarification."

Wang Yang-ming's tse-shan model suggests that our learning communities might themselves become moral communities. As we study the "irreducibility of human relatedness," the structure or Pattern of obligations between children and parents, students and teachers, friends

and friends, the living and the dead or not-yet-born, whether this be in "ethics class," "sociology class," or an interdisciplinary seminar, we should not hold this learning at arm's distance, but apply it to our own learning community. This might mean that, as the semester progresses, we begin to come to class more out of a sense of obligation to the group, rather than merely "for grades"; or that we begin to use tse-shan, "mutual exhortation," with each other, which, as Wang points out, requires "not only sincerity but also gentleness."[65] Such a vision of moral community transforms the culture of learning, challenging the utilitarian individualist pre-assumptions that now dominate our non-elite colleges.

c. Religious dimensions

Tu Wei-ming suggests that learning to be human include not only learning to be "aesthetically refined" and "morally excellent," but also "religiously profound." How can this possibly become a part of public education?

I believe that the Confucian mirror can be a great help to us in addressing the dilemma of the great spiritual vacuum that has been left in our public institutions by the separation (vital though it may be) of church and state. This is because Confucians like Tu use the term "religious" in a very non-sectarian (even between theist and atheist) sense. To become "religiously profound" involves the ultimate extension and deepening of aesthetic and moral sensitivities, represented symbolically by one's li (sense

of propriety, ceremony) and jen (humanity) becoming ch'eng , sincere, authentic, receptive to T'ien (Heaven). As Tu once puts it, "the nourished and cultivated mind, like the attuned ear, can perceive even the most incipient manifestations of God."[66]

Tu's use here of the Western term God is unusual; usually the suggestive but not clearly theistic term Heaven is used by Tu and other Confucians, to suggest the sensitivity to "intangibles" that humans need to develop if they are to realize fully their human potential. Educator Barbara Mowat alludes to something similar in her essay "Seeing the Unseen."[67] She laments the late twentieth century intellectual world's "anti-supernatural, anti-numinous" assumptions, our failure to transmit to our children a sensitivity for an unseen reality behind the empirical world. Without specifically advocating belief in God or any religious doctrine, Mowat and the Confucians urge us to remain respectful to the spiritual dimension, or lose an essential dimension of our humanness.

2. The Intellectual and Repetoire Components

All three of the preceeding -- aesthetic, moral and religious -- drew attention to dimensions of learning that are often not emphasized systematically by non-elite educators, in our rush to address intellect and repetoire. I have suggested that all three can be loosely combined under the contemporary heading "affective," but perhaps with

a more powerful reading of that term than is usual: something like, "how close learning is to students' being."

But of course the affective alone is not sufficient. What about the intellectual and repetoire components? These are not mentioned by Tu in his breakdown of learning to be human. Are there Confucian resources to draw on here?

Intellect, in the sense of analytical, skeptical, discursive thinking, is not part of the Confucian definition of Ta Hsueh. In fact, Liang Shu-ming criticized Western intellect as good only for selfish calculation, recommending instead a more organic, inferential faculty he called li-hsing (reason).

Two points need to be made here. First, some non-elite students who are weak in Western intellect might not be weak in Liang's organic reason. This suggests exploration of "different learning styles," to use current jargon. But this must await another article.

Second, however, I would argue that we should teach students a way of handling texts that is in part uniquely Western. Non-elite students in modern society, in order to understand the challenge to the traditional since 1600, need to be trained in the ability not only to understand a text as part of an ongoing conversation about the human (the Confucian and traditional Western way), but also in the skills of pulling apart a text, analyzing it, critiquing it, dissecting it, reducing it, looking around, under and through it: in other words, treating it irreverently, the

Hobbesian, Humean, Nietzschean, Weberian, Goffmanian way that may leave us feeling not very nourished, but probably less naive, and certainly intellectually challenged. In integrating this dimension into "learning to be human," however, I would caution that it need be balanced by a concerted effort at "re-animating the old to arrive at the new"; analysts and debunkers alone will lead to barrenness. For example, I would suggest that a successful pedagogy might pair a professor (or two) who stresses nourishment from texts with a skeptic who stresses intellectually dissecting them. The latter activity, by the way, is probably the least possible for many non-elite students, who lack the intellectual prowess; therefore, we may have to be satisfied here with small beginnings.

The intellectual and affective components are inseparable from a certain kind of repetoire. This repetoire needs, most of all, to bring out "the Great Conversation." What best brings out the Great Conversation is encountering the voices that have participated in it: original sources, and seminal secondary sources. Textbooks, which tend to pre-digest and to leave little for the reader to do but memorize information, should be avoided. This is good Confucian advice as well as traditional Western. It leads to a repetoire of Homer, Pre-Socratics, Plato, the Bible, Augustine, Dante, Shakespeare, Galileo, Hobbes, Rousseau, Jefferson, Wordsworth, Douglass, Dickinson, Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, du Bois, de Beauvoir,

Bellah, etc. (may we add a taste of Confucius or Tu?). Of course, any number of substitutions are possible, but the point is that only works that are this great help us to become all of the following: aesthetically refined, morally excellent, religiously profound, and intellectually challenged, as well as transmitters of tradition.

I need to mention two problems, however: one, reading level; the other, openness to the non-Western and third-world. First, if students cannot handle the college-level "learning to be human" readings even in small doses, with plenty of support, then they should be prepped on the readings appropriate for ages twelve to eighteen when, in Bellah's words, "they might be reading rapidly, uncritically, widely, happily, and thoughtlessly." He suggests literary forms, beginning with the Prodigal Son, the Minotaur, and Lamb's Tales of Shakespeare, that are appropriate to any age. "Nothing is more lonely than to go through life unaccompanied by the sense that others have had similar experiences and have left a record of them," he adds.[68] In this way, even "remedial" work can prepare students for the "learning to be human" that lies ahead, much as Chinese children over the centuries who learned simpler classics by heart were laying the groundwork for later reflection. Second, we must break, at least symbolically, from the "Western civilization" mindset that ignores how civilization is passing on into a more global phase. Hopefully this paper itself is a testimony to that:

it recommends that "first-world" Westerners learn from "third-world" Easterners!

## IV. Afterword: On Practice

The reader might be curious as to whether "learning to be human" has ever been tested in practice. The answer is yes, although the full theoretical dimensions developed in this paper were not yet fully in place.

In 1986, the author, with the collaboration of William Hatcher (English), Mary Hatcher (English) and Prof. Michael Intintoli (anthropology), founded LIFT, Liberal Interdisciplinary Foundations for Transfer, a team-taught core program for a small group of Burlington County College (N.J.) freshmen. Later we invited professors of Western civilization, modern philosophy, and comparative religion to join us. A Confucian vocabulary was not employed in the shaping of the learning LIFT was to embody, yet the design was clearly similar to what was described above in terms of affective, intellectual, and repetoire components. The original designers shared the goal of making LIFT a "moral and intellectual community" and the priority of altering students' "culture of learning." The students who enrolled for our pilot group represented a rather typical cross-section of community college freshmen with one qualification: we tried to select students who had at least the seeds of a different attitude toward learning. Perhaps we could describe this as a glimmer of li-chih.

At the end of the year, an evaluation was conducted.[69] Most striking among its findings was that the affective component had begun to work. Student comments included: "I feel more like a total human being"; "never before did I express more of an interest in what I had learned, as opposed to what types of grades I pulled"; and "I did not think it possible that a community could come from the variety of backgrounds that constitute the LIFT family." Part of this was probably the fruit of the special civilized touches (li?) we attempted to include: weekly student-faculty luncheons, a gathering at a professor's home, a LIFT teapot (donated by a student), and regular human-to-human contact in small classes. Part was perhaps the result of the tse shan that the author, in particular, attempted to incorporate into his own class and into the team-taught "interdisciplinary seminar." Part was the pride and sense of wholeness with one's tradition that, according to student testimonies, came from handling the great books, however stumblingly.

One of the pleasant surprises of LIFT was that not only the students' "culture of learning" changed, but also the faculty's "culture of teaching." The evaluations that faculty wrote expressed a delight with being able to teach nourishing things again, with becoming "learners" again, and with "moving out of the isolation of the three-credit structure."

The faculty could not claim any miracles in raising intellectual levels, yet in discussing a typical student's "before" and "after" papers, we could say the following:

> This student's [after] paper is hardly elegant. Her command of the language of the philosophical/ sociological community is limited. But we find it easy to sympathize with her difficulty in coming up with just the right word and phrasing; we almost prefer her roughness, because it reveals an honest search to comprehend difficult material. All three of the things we want are here: We want to see students handle the texts of our tradition, and this student is clearly beginning to get a sense of how to do that. We want to see the students' minds at work at as high a level as possible, and this student is clearly straining to make sense out of a basketful of new, subtlely interrelated terms. We want students to be making some existential sense out of the material we study, and this student is clearly beginning to be involved in the material as providing possibilities for her moral and intellectual growth.

Wang Yang-ming would have been proud.

The next step in LIFT -- and, I would recommend, a crucial factor in other nascent liberal arts core programs -- is further consolidation around the goal of "learning to be human," particularly as new faculty are added. The greatest difficulty is to avoid falling into one of those close fascimiles to human learning that are really very different, such as "great books fundamentalism," "liberal arts for career enhancement and personal enrichment," or "studying for the state liberal arts exams." In this effort, the present essay is meant to serve as a kind of praxis.

NOTES

1. Waley, Arthur, The Analects of Confucius (N.Y.: Random House, 1938), p. 124.
2. Ibid., p. 124.
3. I will later connect this phrase to the Chinese hsueh tso jen 學作人. The term is used by Tu Wei-ming in Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1985), pp. 51-65.
4. Proncunced DA ~~hsueh~~. I am using the Wade-Giles system of romanization, in which t is pronounced d and t' is pronounced t. Hence, DU Wei-ming. Also, Wang should rhyme with long, and Chou is pronounced JO. Ch' is pronounced ch.
5. Bellah, Robert N., Madsen, Richard, Sullivan, William H., Swindler, Ann, and Tipton, Steven M., Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1985).
6. To affect a deeper solution, however, this intervention of teachers must be a part of a larger civilizational effort, such as suggested by Bellah et al in Habits of the Heart.
7. The Chinese term for Confucianism is literally "School of Scholars (Ju)." See Tu, Confucian Thought, where he suggests that the modern approximation of the traditional Chinese idea of ju is "the scholar in the humanities." (p. 55)
8. Willard Peterson (Princeton) argues that Wang Yang-ming and Liang Shu-ming, as well as others who turned in significant ways to Buddhist ideas in their world views, are not well described as "Confucians." For our purposes, however, I think the Confucian designation is adequate.
9. I am anticipating the four components -- in addition to repetoire -- of "learning to be human" that I will discuss in Part III.
10. 仁, also translatable as benevolence, human-heartedness, and authoritative person. See Hall, David L. and Ames, Roger T., Thinking Through Confucius (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1987), p. 110, for an up-to-date summary of various translations. I would propose an additional one not mentioned there: "connected man," in the sense of one who grasps his/her interconnectedness both with other humans and with Heaven and Earth.
11. Bloom, Allan, The Closing of the American Mind (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1987).
12. "The Politics of Remediation," in Teaching the Developmental Education Student (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, no, 57, Spring, 1987), p. 19.
13. Cited in Laingen, L. Bruce, "In Search of Public Servants," in The Christian Science Monitor, March 11, 1988, p. 14. See also the special education section, "The Meaning of America," in the Monitor, pp. B1-B12, April 22, 1988.
14. Richardson, R.C., Jr., Fisk, E.C., and Okun, M.A., Literacy in the Open Access College (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983).
15. McGrath, Dennis, and Spear, Martin, "The Politics of Remediation," pp. 17-19.
16. From George Cronk's presentation to the Colloquium on Community College Education, Princeton University, December, 1987.
17. Ta Hsueh, in Legge, James, Confucius (N.Y.: Dover, 1971), p. 357.

18. See Analects, 2:18 and Ta Hsueh, 7.
19. Analects, 7:2.
20. Analects, 7:1 and 7:2.
21. See Analects, 3:4 and 3:17.
22. Analects, 2:11.
23. Analects, 7:18.
24. Analects, 7:34.
25. Analects, 7:7 and 7:8.
26. Analects, 1:2.
27. Hall and Ames, pp. 110-125.
28. Ibid., p. 129.
29. N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1972.
30. Analects, 1:12.
31. Analects, 1:4 and 2:22; Chung Yung, 22.
32. See Hall and Ames, p. xiv.
33. I have borrowed from Legge's, Waley's, and Lau's translations to come up with my own.
34. Again, this is a combined translation.
35. Tu, Wei-ming, Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung Yung (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy Monograph no. 3, 1976), p. 2.
36. Tu, Wei-ming, Confucian Thought, p. 28.
37. Ibid., pp. 76 and 103.
38. Ibid., p. 14
39. Mencius, 3:4 in Chan, Wing-tsit, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 69-70.
40. Tu, Confucian Thought, p. 100.
41. Tu, Wei-ming, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth (1472-1509) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 86.
42. See Lau, D. C., Mencius (N.Y.: Penguin, 1983), p. 40.
43. For a favorable view of Chu Hsi's line of interpretation, see Chan, Wing-tsit, Chu Hsi: Life and Thought (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1987).
44. Tu, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action, p. x.
45. Ibid., p. 68.
46. Ibid., pp. 125-6.
47. Ibid., p. 129.
48. Ibid., p. 135 (quoting Analects, 10:13).
49. Ibid., p. 147.
50. Ibid., pp. 149-50.
51. Ibid., p. 142.
52. Ibid., p. 144.
53. Ibid., p. 141.
54. What I have called "natural reason" is composed of two characters, li 理, principle, and hsing 性, nature. See Alitto, Guy, The Last Confucian: Liang Shu-ming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), p. 184. Alitto's suggested Western equivalents of the term include Coleridge's "reason" as opposed to "rationality," and Neuman's "illative sense" (inferential sense).

55. Alitto, p. 124.
56. Ibid., pp. 248-253 and 206-215.
57. Tu, Confucian Thought, p. 52.
58. Ibid., p. 139.
59. Ibid., p. 113.
60. Tu, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action, p. 143.
61. There is more discussion of this in the repetoire section below.
62. Spear, Martin, and McGrath, Dennis, "A Model General Education Program, in Review and Proceedings (Community College Humanities Association, 1984), pp. 40-47.
63. I interviewed Dr. Ramler in July, 1987, while on the summer faculty at Punahou.
64. I have combined Waley and Lau's translations of Analects, 11:25, to come up with my own.
65. Tu, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action, p. 144.
66. Tu, Confucian Thought, p. 132.
67. (New Haven, Connecticut: Society for Values in Higher Education, Second Annual Memorial Lecture, fall, 1983), p. 3.
68. Bellah, Robert N., "Reanimating Tradition," in Community College Humanities Review, No. 8, 1987, p. 12.
69. "Vision and Compromise: Year One of LIFT Freshman Seminars," unpublished manuscript, Burlington County College, N.J.