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**ABSTRACTS**

Adam Bowles, La Trobe University

### Reflections on the History of *Dharma*.

This paper arises out of ongoing Ph.D. work on the *âpaddharmaparvan* (*Apaddharmaparvan*), a sub-chapter of the *ântiparvan* (*Santiparvan*) of the *Mahâbhârata* (*Mahabharata*). The *âpaddharmaparvan* (*Apaddharmaparvan*) is ostensibly about politically expedient conduct, concerning itself with how the king might re-establish the prosperity of his kingdom when it has been afflicted by distress (*âpad* (*apad*)). In comparison with other related texts, like the *dharma* literature and the *Artha-âstra* (*Arthashastra*), this text (or rather, groups of texts) strikes one as self-consciously applying the word *dharma* to its particular concerns. The starting point of this paper is the question: why does a text concerned with political expediency attempt to explain itself in terms of *dharma*, which seems to imply that such expedient behaviour is 'correct' and 'meritorious'? In seeking to come to an explanation of this situation, this paper will discuss the origins of the word *dharma* in the Vedas, its rise as probably the central concern of Brâhmaïism in the early *dharma* literature, and subsequent changes to its use and meaning in later *dharma* and epic literature, where, especially in the latter, a certain conflict in its application becomes apparent. This, I will suggest, forms the background to the particular rhetorical configurations involving *dharma* frequently employed in the *âpaddharmaparvan* (*Apaddharmaparvan*).

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N. Serina Chan, Adelaide University

### How Might the Thought of Mou Zongsan Contribute to the Formation of A World Culture?

This paper explores how the thought of Mou Zongsan (1909-1995) might contribute to the formation of a world culture. Mou, the most influential New Confucian thinker of the twentieth century, recasts the Lu-Wang school of Neo-Confucian thought using Buddhist paradigms and Buddhist and Kantian terminologies. He describes the Neo-Confucian thought he expounds as both a moral metaphysics and a religion. From the perspective of present-day moral philosophers preoccupied with objective laws and non-metaphysical and cognitivist justifications of norms, Mou's moral metaphysics is unbearably antiquarian. Mou, however, believes that his understanding of the human mind based on that of the Lu-Wang school of Neo-Confucian thought has fundamental bearings on the formation of a world culture. Is Mou's understanding of the human mind relevant to the modern era? What specific implications does it have for the formation of a world culture? This study undertakes to answer these questions by focusing on two key themes underlying Mou's understanding of the human mind. The first upholds the unity of emotion and reason. The second posits the human mind as the root source of all values. The study is not intended to be an in-depth treatment of the subject matter. Rather, it aims to present to a Western readership unfamiliar with Mou's thought an intelligible overview as to how it might contribute to the formation of a world culture. The study draws heavily on a declaration Mou and three other New Confucians jointly published in 1958, as it is the piece of writing that most directly articulates Mou's formulation for a compassionate world culture. The author also engages sympathetic views of contemporary scholars and experts in the West in order to illuminate and amplify the two themes in Mou's understanding of the human mind.

In discussing Mou's theme of the unity of emotion and reason, the study shows that it has the potential to contribute to the formation of a world culture by revealing the futility of cognitivist, objective justifications for compassion and other moral values. In presenting Mou's understanding that the human mind is the root source of all values, the study focuses on the joint declaration's critique of the unremittingly progressive rationality of the West. It brings out the declaration's underlying premise that a compassionate world culture is founded on the type of humanity that would enable it. In addition, it highlights the immense faith that Mou and the other authors of the declaration have in the power of the human mind to effect changes in the world. The consonant views of Western scholars and experts help to amplify Mou's understanding of the human mind and give an indication that Mou's thought might have contemporary relevance to not just China but the entire world.

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David Lea, , University of Papua New Guinea,

### Governance, Cultural Diversity and Property Relations in the South Pacific

During the last twenty years political debate in the West has revolved around the issues of community interests versus individual rights, cultural diversity in opposition to uniformity, and the tension between the authority of the state and the self-determination for cultural especially indigenous cultural groups within the state. In the South Pacific these issues have been as urgent and as important as elsewhere in the world. This paper explores the goal of achieving successful governance in the region and questions whether successful governance is achievable in states marked by a plurality of cultural enclaves with distinct systems of law and property relations. In considering this issue this paper makes reference to the recent work of James Tully and Hernando de Soto. Tully's work represents a significant part of the growing antipathy towards uniformity and the universalising tendencies of the modern organization, which, he believes, underwrite a loss of local empowerment. Tully highlights the emergence of modern constitutionalism as the intellectual legacy of writers such as Hobbes, Bodin and Locke. For Tully, modern constitutionalism, not only centralizes authority but also excludes diversity. The empowerment of indigenous groups and communities requires a tolerance and protection of diversity. Hernando de Soto, the Peruvian economist, gives us a very different perspective on the motley of overlapping jurisdictions and argues that diversity of systems, customs and rules with respect to property has conspired to maintain the entrenched poverty of the developing world. He argues that it is the unified, codified and integrated systems of the West which have allowed these societies to mobilize capital to escape the endemic widespread poverty of the pre-capitalist age. In the course of this paper I seek to compare and evaluate the relevance of the competing claims of Tully and de Soto as they apply in the context of the South Pacific.

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John Hanafin, Melbourne University/CAPPE

### Defeasibility in Chinese Ethics

In a previous paper, I argued for the centrality of the notion of a moral exemplar as a determinant of the right in virtue ethics. The *sheng* (sage) was the paradigmatic individual *par excellence*. In this paper I will look at how a moral exemplar or virtuous agent exercises this capacity in the face of competing ethical claims. I maintain that in classical Chinese ethics there are no universal ethical principles similar to Kantian categorical imperatives. This being so, Chinese ethics developed the notion of defeasibility, ethical constants and a fairly complex theory to account for competing ethical claims. There are principally eight technical philosophic terms involved in the discussion of 'defeasibility' in traditional Chinese ethics (the *Yi Jing* to Dai Zhen): *Dao*; *jing* and *chang*; *yi*, *quan*, *bian*; *zhong* and *yong*. These terms are concerned with three more or less distinct aspects or constituents of the basic problematic of defeasibility. These are: (i) the goal of the agent's activity is always an ethical one (*Dao*); (ii) the agent's behaviour in achieving this end is determined by action guides (*yi*, *quan*, *jing*); (iii) moral exemplars (*sheng*) are the source of these action guides; and (iv) these action guides can be invariable or variable in form (*chang* or *bian*). *Dao* is the *telos* of ethical order conducive of social harmony. *Dao* as *telos* can be more specifically understood as encompassing the virtues in general that bring about this ethical order as flourishing. *Jing* are the standards of ethical behaviour (instantiated as virtues) that realise, bring about, *Dao* as ethical order (e.g., *ren* - benevolence). *Yi* is the intellectual virtue of ethical discernment that adjudicates on which standard of ethical behaviour, as instantiated virtue, is appropriate, fitting or required in specific circumstances. *Quan* is weighted deliberation. *Zhong* is a balanced outcome. *Yong* is generality

Ian Mabbett, Monash University

### What did Nagarjuna Really Mean?

The progress of study of early Madhyamaka philosophy has led to widely discrepant interpretations: Nagarjuna's 'void' is absolute nothingness, or a Vedantic Absolute, or emptiness of emptiness, or an absence of meaning in all views, or a common-sense empiricism, etc. etc. The present paper seeks to focus upon Nagarjuna's 'Mulamadhyamakakarikas', largely ignoring commentaries, and consider what is the best sense that can be made of what he actually says. The conclusions are that he is not guilty of most of the fallacies that have been attributed to him, and that to understand his reasoning we need to shun altogether the appeal to anything like laws of nature as factors of causation.

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Khristos Nizamis (Adelaide)

### Without Thought-Coverings': A Meditation on the Meaning and Usefulness of Meditation in the 'Everyday World' as Seen through *The Heart Sutra*

Philosophy without meditation is like a bird with only one wing: destined to live on the ground, and never to understand the sky. The major Indian/Asian traditions of what the West would call 'philosophy', despite their differences of principle and interpretation, do almost unanimously agree, in theory and practice, that *both* analytical thinking *and* meditation are important - and even that meditation is *most* important of all - for self-realisation. They also almost unanimously agree that self-realisation, however this be understood, is implicitly and naturally the highest human goal. Not only attaining that goal, but even effort towards it, are considered beneficial to all beings. Thus, both in methodology and in consequence, these traditions are profoundly 'practical' and are necessarily concerned with the 'everyday' world, although certainly not in an 'everyday' way - a point of potential and actual conflict between the 'meditative' and the 'worldly'. Using the (short version) of the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* as a focal point, I shall offer one possible account of the philosophical and practical meaning, value, and usefulness of meditation, and even of its necessity, within the context of the 'everyday'. I shall also make comparative reference to other sources, including Meister Eckhart, Advaita Shaivism, and phenomenology, in support of this account. Overall, the perspective of this paper is essentially phenomenological.

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Guy Petterson, University of Auckland/University of Melbourne

### Distinguishing *Karma* and *Dharma*

*Karma* and *dharma* are closely related metaphysical terms in Indian religious and philosophical discourse. They are distinguished by their respective emphases on action and order, as indicated by clear differences in their basic etymologies. Certain (positive) types of action (*karma*) are constitutive of cosmic and social order (*dharma*) and contribute to the possibility of life for all; negative actions (so-called 'bad *karma*') are those that negate this possibility. This constitutive or creative role is essential to the overall metaphysical significance of *karma*, and gives it a positive cultural value, which is often overlooked. *Dharma* refers to the total complex of moral, social and cosmic order which *karma* produces. *Adharma* is the disorder that undermines the possibility of life in general, rather than being morally 'bad' or 'evil' behaviour as such. At the most basic level of meaning, questions of ethical relevance may be less important than those of ontological viability and life-possibility. These metaphysical considerations greatly widen the significance of *karma* and *dharma* beyond the often anthropocentric focus of much Western moral and ethical theory. Buddhist views of *karma* may have contributed to a particular characterisation of *karma* theory in Western discourse that emphasises ethical relevance, strict causality and individual agency. Western interpretations have also often emphasised the retributive and punitive dimensions of the theory and have focussed on the ideas of rebirth and transmigration, which are not necessarily central issues for all versions of the theory. I argue that the metaphysical

interconnections of karma and dharma need to be given greater consideration if these terms are not to be mishandled in cross-cultural ethical and moral discourse.

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Roy Perrett, Charles Sturt University/CAPPE

### **Gandhi, Morality and Modernity**

Gandhi's seminal work *\*Hind Swaraj\** (1909) presents a radical moral critique of modernity, a position he explicitly continued to affirm for the rest of his life. Many (including some of Gandhi's admirers) have found his views on these matters deeply unpersuasive. However, I shall seek to defend their plausibility by showing how the nature of modernity does indeed threaten to undermine morality in ways that Gandhi saw quite clearly and to which he offered some interesting and often attractive responses.

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Lauren Pfister, Hong Kong Baptist University

### **Reconsidering Metaethical and Ethical Dimensions of Play and Sport from a Comparative Philosophical Perspective**

Starting with a clarification of issues raised in an article by the Canadian philosopher, Kenneth Schmitz, this essay will indicate how four different dimensions of play fit into a broader phenomenology of human experiences of reality. Following this, an initial exploration of the implications of the metaethical structures of play and sport will be applied ethically to certain aspects of contemporary sporting events. Having offered some ethical assessments of these aspects of contemporary sports, the essay will refocus on earlier Ruist ("Confucian"), Daoist, and Buddhist expressions which involve some element of "playfulness". These will also be assessed on the basis of the earlier metaethical scheme revealed in the phenomenology of human experiences of reality.

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Koji Tanaka, Macquarie university

### **The Buddhist Doctrine of No-Self and Human Rights**

The Buddhist doctrine of no-self, *anatman*, has it that there is no essential self that persists through time. There is nothing essential and substantial about persons. The doctrine then seems to pose a problem in a discussion of human rights. It seems to entail the absence of the subject to which human rights apply. The Buddhist doctrine of no-self and the notion of human rights seem, therefore, incompatible, if not contradictory. Many scholars, however, do not find the tension problematic. It is claimed that the problem is only apparent. They then go on to talk about the Buddhist notion of human rights. Yet they do not offer any reason why the problem is only apparent. It may be true that the Buddhist scriptures can be seen as providing material on human rights. None the less, the problem still persists, however apparent it is. In this paper, I examine why the Buddhist doctrine of no-self does not imply the absence of the notion of human rights in Buddhism.

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Wong Wai-ying, Lingnan University, Hong Kong

### **Moral Virtues and Non-Moral Virtues in Confucian Ethics**

Although the question whether Confucianism is appropriate to be classified as virtue ethics is still unsettled, it is commonly agreed that virtue plays a significant role in Confucian ethics. Apparently its significance does not merely present in the moral realm, but also in the non-moral. Several questions concerning these two kinds of virtues are to be raised for a deeper understanding of Confucianism in general, and that of Confucian ethics in particular: Whether

the two kinds of virtues are designed to serve for the same purpose, or each has a purpose(s) of its own? What meaning do they constitute in ethics? Does one of these have an overwhelming importance that the other has to subordinate to it? If not, how to resolve the conflict of virtues? In this paper, I shall attempt to address these questions, with reference to the thought of Confucius and Mencius.

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