



From Radical to Relative Strife: Epistemology in Nature: A Confucian journey

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Harmony Making Virtues, Ecological Citizenship and the Fleshing of the World Social Body

Abstract:

This paper explores the possibility of reconstructing ecological citizenship and human solidarity through a Confucian understanding of harmony (ho), situated within a wider philosophical dialogue concerning nature, embodiment, ethics, and social transformation. Beginning from the Confucian virtues of chung, yi, jen, and li, it argues that harmony should not be understood merely as social conformity or the absence of conflict, but as a dynamic and creative process through which differences can be related within a larger unity. These virtues establish ontological and ethical foundations for communication by cultivating perception, agreement, mutual support, internal togetherness, and the moral wisdom necessary for responsible participation in a shared world. The Confucian ideal of forming “one body” with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things is consequently reinterpreted in ecological terms as an affirmation of the inseparability of humanity and Nature.

Drawing Confucian thought into conversation with Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology, the paper develops an understanding of the life-world as an interpenetration of mind, nature, and logos. Human beings are not detached observers confronting Nature as an external object but embodied participants within the formative processes from which they themselves have arisen. This relationship provides a basis for ecological citizenship, in which Earth is understood as a common home and the unity of Nature and humankind becomes fundamental to political and ethical identity. The idea of a bio-cultural continuum further extends this responsibility beyond presently recognized political subjects to children, future generations, vulnerable forms of life, and those without an established political voice. The paper subsequently connects this ecological ontology with transversal politics and the Confucian image of the “great body” (da ti). Transversal communication allows culturally and historically situated subjects to encounter difference while retaining awareness of a deeper shared belonging. Ecological citizenship thus becomes simultaneously an ethic of care, planetary trusteeship, and transformative participation. Harmony-making ultimately points toward a cosmopolitan world social body in which self-cultivation and institutional transformation become interconnected. Through “well vested” or true action, individual moral development is joined to collective responsibility, enabling ecological citizens to participate creatively in transforming social relations while preserving the unity of humanity, Nature, and the larger cosmos.

Keywords: *Confucianism, harmony, ecological citizenship, jen, yi, li, chung, Merleau-Ponty, nature, transversal politics, cosmopolitanism*

1. Introduction

As the virtues of chung, yi, jen and li are understood and developed, the ontological foundations of human communication are established. The coordinating dimensions of perception, agreement, mutual support and internal togetherness within the primal concept of harmony (ho) are all strengthened. They

generate the emotional and cognitive dispositions, or conditions, for collective insights and chih to blossom. Tu Weiming describes this path of growth toward a greater transcendent unity:

In light of Confucian inclusive humanism, the transformed self personally and communally transcends egoism, nepotism, parochialism, ethnocentrism and anthropocentrism to ‘form one body with Heaven, Earth, and the Myriad Things.’ (Centrality and Commonality, 115)

Pohl explains that though this unity, culminating in the ultimate expression of chih, was traditionally interpreted in “a metaphysical/religious way,” given the planetary crises we face today, “the unity of Heaven and man” should also be interpreted “from an ecological perspective, i.e., as ‘the unity of Nature and man.’” (3) Merleau-Ponty affirms the need for an ecological perspective and the present day validity of emphasizing humans’ unity with Nature:

nature...is not simply the object, the accessory of consciousness in its tete-a-tete with knowledge. It is an object from which we have arisen, in which our beginnings have been posited little by little until the very moment of tying themselves to an existence which they continue to sustain and aliment. (Merleau-Ponty 1970: 64; Reid and Taylor)

Nature is intrinsic to our being as a Subject, and as previously discussed, our cognitive endowments are themselves rooted in evolution and phylogenesis. Nature is not merely an object, it is “an object from which we have arisen.” Our life-world can be viewed as “ecosystem and a common (though open-ended) human project,” an intimate, critical and creative inter-twining of Subject and natural world. (Reid and Taylor 134) Nature is inseparable from our sense of belonging and participation. Realization of the unity of Nature and humankind is therefore a foundational realization of citizenship. In this realization, the Earth is understood as our one home, the living matrix that nourishes us and from which our interior lives cannot be sealed off, despite modern constructions.

Holding fast to this emotional and cognitive representation of the Earth’s Oneness is the basis of our shared identity as members of one common family. It is a primal expression both of chung-t’ung (identity through the principle of oneness) and chung-tao. Ecological citizenship invites us to “form one body” and to realize together the active reason and creative unity of yi (Oneness, Unity, Righteousness, and Justice). This is accomplished through responsive concern for conservation and betterment of the Earth’s natural and human resources. As cultural ways of relating (li) to ourselves, each other and the Earth develop, a simple ecological community practice like making a rain garden, can safely return citizens to the mystery at the nexus of the human and natural worlds. Here, the simplicity of the stuff of social being is accepted in its “radical, unimaginable strangeness” and can enliven the playful and mindful present day evolution of li, or li yun. (Reid and Taylor)

In her research as a participant-observer in children’s world-building play, dialectical anthropologist Edith McKeever Cobb recognized a pre-verbal experience of an aesthetic logic within “the gestalt-making powers” of the child’s morphogenetic impulses and developing nervous system. She observed a “dialectical intertwining” between these powers and impulses and a universal aesthetic of logic present within nature’s formative processes. This intertwining of logic, body and place, reveals a bio-cultural continuum that helps us to perceive and remember the unity of Nature and humankind and our creative participation in the evolution of that unity.

Reflecting on Cobb’s research, it is possible to conclude that a return to Nature is the political condition of humankind: an intersection of mind, nature and logos. Merleau-Ponty understood the mind as “the other side of the body,” nature as “the other side of man (as flesh nowise as ‘matter’),” and logos as “what is realized in man, but nowise as his property.” (Merleau-Ponty 1968: 259; Reid & Taylor 2012) Within this intersection, constituent power consists not only of one’s inherent moral and spiritual power, but also of one’s natural creative and aesthetic power. It relates not only to one’s

capacity for normatively-structured cognition and high-reasoned principled reflection. It also relates to one's capacity for pre-verbal experiences of aesthetic logic and one's ability to participate creatively in the formative processes of Nature itself.

The inter-penetration of mind, nature and logos makes possible our reflective, creative and critical co-participation in the evolution of self and society and the "fleshing of the world." The world's flesh is "the formative medium of the object and the subject." It is the "invisible hinge upon which my life and the life of the others turn to rock into one another, the inner framework of inter-subjectivity." (234) The political flesh rising from the intersection of mind, nature and logos reminds us that "to be human is a political position" and that in the practice of "transversal politics," to be political is a creative and poetic act of synthesis, transpiration and renewal of form (Merleau-Ponty 1970: 18). As the primal concept of harmony (ho) is embraced and applied, respect for this unity would support an integrated view of the life-world and a new way of relating as political beings across the territories of our differences.

An example of this movement in transversal politics, that could potentially be enhanced and guided by the concept of harmony, is found at the World Social Forum, described in this passage from research on global responsibility:

World Social Forum has been a place for global civil society. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, it is a place of subaltern cosmopolitanism where subaltern social groups with alternative visions and social projects come together. These different groups argue with each other, sometimes are in conflict with each other but nonetheless there emerges a trans-conflictual field of communication and emergent and moving commonality. (Giri 2013?)

Remembrance of our shared responsibility for our one earthly home, and of the unity of humankind (jen), encourages a transversal politics to blossom. This shifts conventional double contingency ways of relating to triple contingency ways, so that habits of argument, emotional reasoning, limited group identity and either-or dualistic perception are overcome. (Strydom 2014) Transversal politics nurtures a collective of embodied Subjects, or a "lived body," that is aware of how humans are inter-woven with the particularity of place and history and yet, is also capable of holding fast to a transcendent identity, through remembrance of the larger unity of Nature and humankind.

For Merleau-Ponty, it was through the flesh of the world that one can understand the "lived body" and so maintain this fruitful transversality. (Reid & Taylor 2012: 250) This recalls Mencius' reference to the 'great body' (da ti). The great body (da ti) expands the field of humanity's attention: we become able to perceive the bio-cultural continuum and a universal aesthetic logic within all of life. If this logic were defied, it would harm life and violate the unity of Nature and humankind. The bio-cultural continuum places all of life on a moving continuum. It nurtures relations of mutual support by strengthening the agreement that rises naturally when people feel the moral power, te, inherent within life. Children, and Unknown Generations therefore become enmeshed in the struggle (sadhana) of pre-political suffrage, or we could say, in the striving for transformative acts of harmony-making (ho).ⁱ They are essential to the vision of internal togetherness that the great body (da ti) opens to people.

Pre-political suffrage is "vital for the critical theory of social change because it promises the inauguration of new political norms" and so protects the ecology of hope for all generations. (135) It is vital for the critical practice of social change because it affirms the unity of humanity (jen) across all constructed divides, including age, and therefore emphasizes the significance of the pre-verbal creative aesthetic dimension of human's constituent power. Remembrance of a universal aesthetic logic relates the bio-cultural continuum to the natural need to include in the circle of care all living creatures on Earth and to give attention to those human beings who do not have 'a voice.' It establishes the ontological foundations of communication in a time before the dawn of human civilization.ⁱⁱ

Cobb's documentation of the child's "ecological sense of continuity with nature" and "cosmopoetic exploration of the environment" offers a view of human beings as "living portions of the vast historical continuum that is nature." (134) Reid and Taylor explain that "the horizons of the flesh attain durable forms from the Earth and from historical remembrance as collective reactivation." (135) As people perceive the substantiality of these "durable forms," the meaning of the "body-politic" is renewed. Humanity's natural moral wisdom, *chih*, rises through the creative and dynamic unity of *yi* empowering people to embrace the great body (*da ti*) roles of planetary trusteeship and stewardship.

Children, and the Unknown Generations who they must care for, are evidence of the sacrality of the bio-cultural continuum and have a most significant role in the human endeavor to ground ecological citizenship not just in a cross-cultural environmental ethics that protects our outer world, but also in an ethic of care that responds to the bare sacrality of every life, and an aesthetic logic that finds higher intelligence and sensitivity in each life's vulnerabilities and susceptibilities. Children, in a sense, are vessels through which the virtue of *jen*, that radiating love for humanity, can optimally manifest.

Children's participation in pre-political suffrage is an act of remembrance and imagination stirred by the primal concept of harmony (*ho*). It awakens the perception that our ancestors' lives, and those of future generations, are as integral to the internal togetherness of the unity of Nature and humankind as those today whose lives are within the established legal visible window for civic participation in society. Relations of mutual support extending across historical continuums and between those in the visible and invisible worlds, brings forward moral comprehension of a sacred order within life, and recognition of the need to generate language and voice that carries forth the meaning of that order and assures its protection. Defying the universal aesthetic logic present within nature's formative processes and within each human being violates the principle of the unity of humanity (*jen*) by violating recognition across cultures and time periods of our unity with Creation. Reid and Taylor write:

In this sense cultures have a concretely transcendental dimension. The urgency of green concerns with the intergenerational claims of future generations must be felt in this context. We have to track the claim of future generations to a structure of needs rooted in lifeworld's generative possibilities requiring a commons that is simultaneously ecological and civic... If the 'pre-political suffrage' of the 'Lebenswelt logos' is to be 'counted' in public affairs, then it can only be through the renovation of the language, and meaning of the body-politic.' (Reid, 1977, 126) ... This move provides access to 'the unity of the human spirit...[that] already exists in each culture's lateral relationships to the others, in the echoes one awakens in the other.' (139)

Perception of the co-existence of cultures and generations involves remembrance of history and of transcendental geology. Our planet is an image of internal togetherness, one home that embraces the evolutionary story and the history of all planetary life. Here, Reid and Taylor affirm Hwa Yol Jung's assertion that "[w]e are in dire need of 'geo-philosophical' ideas in which the earth is not just one element among other elements but the encompassing element of all elements." (Jung, 199, 283, p. 137) To appreciate the primordial significance of this assertion, and its' value in the cultivation of human virtues, particularly in recognizing the universal aesthetic logic at the heart of *jen*, it is helpful to review an understanding of identity (*t'ung*) expressed in the Neo-Mohist Canons. There are four kinds of identity (*t'ung*), one being the "identity of belonging to the same body." (234) Cheng affirms that: "In particular, the identity of belonging to the same body is quite compatible with the notion of *ho*, and indeed basically exemplifies the same structure of *ho*: integration of differences as parts in a unity of totality." (234) ⁱⁱⁱ As the larger whole of culture rises to the apex of the social triangle, ecological citizens are able to feel how the encompassing wholeness of the Earth relates our startling diversity and particularity commonly to the matrix of Being, inspiring the integration of our creativity and nourishing the ecology of hope.

Transversal communication, such as that taking place at the World Social Forum described earlier,

expresses a kind of vital cultural ‘common sense.’ It is made possible through a shared recognition of the normative significance of the ecological and cosmopolitan principles common to all global justice movements and a remembrance of ourselves as one “lived body” participating in “fleshing the world.” This remembrance of a transcendent unity and participation in oneness represents the centrality of chung in outreaching action. The acknowledgement of common cross-cultural, cross-generational ecological norms implies a labor of re-centering to counter the entrenched ‘abnormality’ of dominant, political and economic social standards and the proliferation of the ‘wandering circuits’ they provoke within individuals. Reid and Taylor describe this undertaking in their introduction to Recovering the Commons:

Alliance with the margins and the centrifugal makes sense when domination is wholly centralized and emancipation is mere undoing... We argue that fear and denial of the labors of re-centering are part and parcel of other crises—crises of ecology, inequality, fundamentalisms of identity and religion, gender, violence, democratic authority, knowledge, public space. (7)

For them, social theory overcomes negativity and fear, and embodies itself generatively, within nurturing reflective practices that support both triple contingency collective learning and communicative globalization. They see that social theory can understand itself intellectually, “as ways to attend to the world and, practically, as ways to tend to the world.” (7) In this sense, social theory represents the dynamic labor of reason that Hegel described and that is understood more profoundly and metaphysically in the Chinese concept of yi, as the active and creative fulfillment of Oneness, Unity, Righteousness and Justice.

By restoring the meridian of language that re-connects us to the Great Chain of Being, and by understanding that our optimal development unfolds both in relation to the theosphere and to the biosphere, both in relation to “Heaven my father and Earth my mother,” we are finally able to value the ‘social fact’ that the nature of the human, in order to flourish, requires a real ontological sense of security. (Zhang Zai, Western Inscription)^{iv} Or, said another way, that, in order to develop optimally, humans need assurance that the flesh of the political can be known as an open horizon, or bio-cultural continuum, that connects our being to the geology of our historical past and to the theology of our promise to future generations, that their world will be one of beauty, dignity, freedom, justice, prosperity and peace. This represents a constructive social theory that could be mobilized and guided wisely by the primal concept of harmony (ho), and that would be capable of supporting the formation of a cosmopolitan world social body.

Baha’u’llah, who serves as a spiritual representative of “all who are in the heavens and on earth,” promises that a New World Order will be established through “the passing away” of the entire old creation and the “calling into being” of a new creation. In this promise, He affirms the inevitable movement of transformative harmony. In the passage below, we learn how the universal aesthetic logic within Nature speaks to us through its unity with the political flesh of Baha’u’llah and His cosmopoetic world-building capacities. In one sense, we might say that Nature reveals Herself to our common humanity and becomes our Teacher, in the same way that the Maid of Heaven became Baha’u’llah’s Divine Instructor and revealed Herself to Him in the aesthetic vision He had while imprisoned in Siyah Chal. In Baha’u’llah’s Declaration in the Garden of Ridvan, the ‘voice’ of Nature Herself is heard. He pronounced:

This is the Paradise, the rustling of whose leaves proclaims: ‘O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come.’ From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: ‘He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God’s’ while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: ‘All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and

uncovered the countenance of Beauty.’ (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha’u’llah, 27-32)

Human security is established through our sense of belonging within the inter-woven hidden harmonies on Earth, which is, in essence, a veiled Paradise. Harmony-making protects our innate sense of the sacred, the mystical and the poetic within life by awakening our perception of “a soft (aesthetic) universalism in contrast to a hard (rational) universalism in the West.” (Pohl 2013: 7) The transversal communication of ecological citizens reflects an embrace of this soft (aesthetic) universalism. It not only awakens the ‘great body’(da ti) within humanity. It also intentionally transforms our relationship with the temporal world, encouraging us to recognize spiritual ideals, to open ourselves to devotional emotions and perceptions and to invest the time required for processes of creative ethical maturation.^v Swami Vivekananda reminds people that “the highest idea of morality and unselfishness goes hand in hand with the highest idea of metaphysical conception.” (Cicovacki 2013: 1, emphasis my own) Pohl further explains how a transformation in our relationship to the temporal world puts us “into a sequence of responsibilities” that profoundly influences our development, letting us see ourselves as co-participants in a vast evolutionary journey of self-fulfillment.

...this concept of maturing to a ‘great self’ or ‘authentic’ (cheng) person even comprises metaphysical notions: For it is precisely the ‘Way of Heaven’ to be authentic, that is, great, all inclusive, and true to itself. Confucian authenticity thus puts man into a sequence of responsibilities which finally lets him or her partake in the process of self-fulfillment of the entire universe...^{vi}

Our living connection to the Great Chain of Being inspires cultivation of self and participation in the ‘hidden’ virtues within our nature. This affirmation of human capacity is summarized by Cheng as follows:

...Confucius has shown that he has faith in the perfectibility of man through self-cultivation. This no doubt reflects his conviction and perhaps also his perception that there is a deep and hidden harmony in the virtue of man, and thus in cultivating, awakening and fulfilling this deep harmony in man. Man is able to become an agent of transformation who will transform an external chaotic world into a harmonious order of jen, yi and li. (231)

The primal concept of harmony (ho) initiates a journey of evolving creativity, communication and community-making that helps people to understand both ancient and modern concepts about transformation found in holy writings, wisdom traditions and scholarly study throughout time and place. It therefore empowers ecological citizens to embody the virtues of harmony and to rise to meet the challenges ahead, transforming our collective relation to the temporal world. It helps people to participate in “true actions” in which perception of a timeless unified ideal world intersects with perception of a finite dualistic one and we are able to know the mystical, living flesh of the world social body. (Agarwala 2013: 13)

Here, the primal concept of harmony (ho) can help us to appreciate how timelessness (aditya kala) is not only a dialectical feature which arises out of temporality (daitya kala). Rather, timelessness is in a harmonious relation of mutual support and agreement with temporality. It is capable of representing the “fullness of time,” “making time cease to be an empty time of the modernity.” (14) The problems of modernity are in a sense a manifestation of this human fruition point, or end-time; they are a fully embodied sign that we are ready for cosmomorphic inner and outer world transformation. Agarwala concludes that “true action” or an “institutional action” is a “well vested action” (samnyasta karma) when that action is the fulfilling of temporality through the timeless.

The quality of perception required by the ecological citizen for true action therefore revitalizes our agreement about the possible, so that genuine love-infused integrity may enter our world. The primal concept of harmony (ho) reveals how the integrity of the ecological citizen engaged in striving for true action expresses human solidarity (lokasamgraham) and knowledgeable resolve (jnana which entails

cikirsa), as described in the Bagadvadgita. Knowledgeable resolve can be recognized as corresponding with the meaning of chung-te, which is the moral power of holding fast to the chung, and with the labor of reason implied by the concept of yi as creative unity. The loksamgraham can be understood as an expression of the internal togetherness of the human family (jen) and of feelings of mutual sympathy (agreement) for its truest needs (the origins of li that are related to shu, an aspect of jen).

An appreciation of love-infused integrity that is deepened by these ancient insights and concepts is necessary in order for modern day ecological citizens to forge a global path of optimal individual and social transformation, that maintains “unity and harmony not only at the level of practice of human institutions but also at the level of cosmos.” (Agarwala 2013: 22) The clarion call of harmony signals that now is just the time for such well vested action in the temporal world.

Engagement with the life-world at this level calls for a new vocation. (Giri 2013 ?) It requires: “a complete personal transformation, comparable in the beginning to a religious conversion, which then, however, over and above this, bears within itself the significance of the greatest existential transformation which is assigned as a task to mankind as such.” (Husserl 1933: 173). Profound temporal realizations await humanity as we embrace the meaning of the unity of humankind and the ancient Chinese appreciation of our unity with both Nature and with that understanding of Heaven as “a more distant future that we can never really forget.”

At the horizon line of the near future toward which we gaze, pragmatically assessing the utility of truth, there lies a more distant future that we can never really forget. Rorty alludes to this with the term solidarity, which I propose to read directly in the sense of charity, and not just as the means of achieving consensus but as an end in itself. Christian dogma teaches that Deus Caritas est, charity is God himself. From a Hegelian viewpoint, we may take the horizon to be that absolute spirit which never allows itself to be entirely set aside but becomes the final horizon of history that legitimates all our near-term choices. (Vattimo 2011: 139-140) from A Farewell to Truth.

In the act of charity, the ‘absolute spirit’ of the undivided and timeless, aditya kala, is reflected in the temporal, daitya kala, making the act of charity an act of human solidarity (jen) that goes beyond itself as a “means of achieving consensus.” The act becomes “an end in itself” because, in the absence of personal desire (kama), it makes possible a direct and immediate realization of unity (as the primal, neutral beginning ground of chung and cosmogenesis) and of harmony (ho as a verb of transformation embodying the responsive natural mobilization of chung-tao.) It therefore reveals intention and action as inseparable from each other.

In reality, the law of the Gospel is speaking of the act of charity as the act of the hero, who, in the moment of required action, moves in ‘reverse’ of so-called ‘natural’ law of personal self-preservation, fully risking his or her own life, not only to save that of the one in need, but to express the vital truth of the inseparability of our own humanity from the humanity of our fellows. Here, perception of the oneness of humanity (through chung and jen) creates a simultaneous activation of agreement, mutual support and recognition of internal togetherness. This is what is felt in that instant ingathering of the loksamgraham and awakening of knowledgeable resolve: it is an illumined realization of the greater unities (with Nature and with Heaven) that intersect with the oneness of humanity to produce primal harmony (ho). This realization grounds the well-vested, institutional actions of the ecological citizen. Through such actions, the inner and outer world rootedness of harmony (ho) will be made manifest.

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ⁱ Cheng explains: “*Ho* is not simply a state of nature, nor simply a state of mind, but a creative process of harmonizing the world by the mind which results in a better state of the world.” (236)

ⁱⁱ The civilizing aesthetic emotions of reverence and attentive appreciation are known to us today through the cave drawings and early art of our ancient ancestors, reflecting their responses to the beauty of the earth’s creatures and the mystery of their home within the cosmos.

ⁱⁱⁱ Baha’is celebrate this truth in prayers, that refer to humanity’s identity through natural Earth body images of holism, such as: ‘we are leaves of one tree’, ‘we are waves of one ocean’, ‘we are flowers of one garden’, ‘we are waves of one ocean’, ‘we are rays of one sun’.

^{iv} Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty’s view of an “inner framework of inter-subjectivity,” created through the remembrance of logos as a dynamic and living connector of “the object and the subject”, rather than a static and disembodied standard, resonates with these words of Jesus, referred to by Paul in Ephesians 14:21: “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” This indicates that Merleau-Ponty’s concept, of achieving a genuine political inter-subjective framework, through realization of the immanent and embodied ‘political flesh of human body, nature and logos’ is consonant with understandings of logos that conjoin wholly transcendent objectivity, i.e., ‘my Father’, with our subjective self, through the same promise of our inter-subjective relational capacity. What Paul offers is a means to participate in a complement to Merleau-Ponty’s ‘flesh of the world’, through the realization of the transcendent spiritual flesh of human body, Heaven (Son of God) and Logos (Father). This unifying spiritual flesh is ‘set free’ through our love and obedience to the ‘mandate of Heaven’, in this case, the law of the Gospel, intended to guide human development. While Merleau-Ponty offers a way to ground moral community, *ummah*, and ethical cosmopolitanism in a ‘cross-cultural environmental ethics’ that, through an intimate sensitivity to our unity with nature, protects the embodied integrity of our relationship with the natural world, Paul refers to a way to uplift and inspire moral community, through a standard of striving for human virtue and perfection based upon our cognitive sensitivity to ideals of beauty, truth and goodness.

Here, the unity of humanity, *jen*, and the unity of Nature and Heaven is realized through loyalty to the ethical ‘commandments’ of Logos. The presence of Logos not only through the Father, but through the mother, is emphasized repeatedly in Proverbs. When the ‘commandments’ are understood as environmental ethics that insist we respect the web of relationships binding together all life on the

planet, the Word rising from the Manifestation of God who may be understood Himself as an embodiment of the ‘*universal aesthetic logic in nature’s formative processes*’. The Manifestation of God is, after all, prophesized as a Great Beauty, rising through great cycles of time, with the evolutionary unfolding of the formative processes that unite man, nature and Logos, and that represent an imminent and transcendent ‘universal aesthetic logic’. The Manifestation in this way may be understood as natural, not super-natural, in the sense that this word has come to connote, of something that is ‘not normal’. The Baha’i Faith refers to this natural process of communication as ‘Progressive Revelation’. The Manifestation serves as an exemplar for all peoples, guiding them to the realization of the ‘great body’ (*da ti*), to the normative significance of the cosmopolitan principles that will optimally provoke the social transformation that is needed for that day, and to the standard of moral and aesthetic perfection in human development.

^v Respect for process-oriented learning is affirmed by the findings of science and is being explained in books such as *The Art of Changing the Brain: Enriching the Practice of Teaching by Exploring the Biology of Learning*, by James E. Zull.

^{vi} In *The Doctrine of the Mean* Zhongyong further explains:

It is only he who is possessed of the most complete authenticity that can exist under heaven, who can give its full development to his nature. Able to give its full development to his own nature, he can do the same to the nature of others. Able to give its full development to the nature of others, he can give their full development to the nature of animals and things. Able to give their full development to the natures of creatures and things, he can assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth.’ (Zhongyong, The Doctrine of the Mean)