

Platonism Across Borders: From the Global Point of View to the Inner Life of Things

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Abstract

Historicist scholarship has contributed to obscuring a fundamental sense in which classical, canonical Chinese scholarship is by and large Platonic. Chinese classics have been systematically *used*, rather than properly *understood*. As a result, they have been effectively denied the right to guide us into an understanding of what they point to—their message. Now, such a message may prove to significantly help today’s scholarship in facing a crisis of standards unwittingly exposed by historicism itself. The present work questions historicist assumptions by way of 1. accessing traditional Chinese literary sources in their original poetic context and 2. testifying to the sense in which Platonism cuts across civilizational borders. In this respect, the present investigation serves as a case study inviting recognition of Platonism as a currently viable *poetic* solution to the crisis of modern science.

Keywords

philosophy, platonism, chinese classics, buddhism, historicism, poetry

Introduction: The Formal Challenge

Mercantile exchanges have always constituted a challenge for dialogue—for *wrestling with ideas*—insofar as commerce continuously draws people before others, usually “different” *others*, thereby exposing acquired habits to novelty and complexity (Kaldis & Heath, 2017).¹ What is challenging here is what stands “outside of the box,” what escapes all certainties, what threatens pre-established harmonies, what reminds us of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of obtaining any durable closure in dialogue.

¹ Cf. *Wealth, Commerce, and Philosophy Foundational Thinkers and Business Ethics*. Byron Kaldis and Eugene Heat.

To the extent that modern society is built on mercantile principles, it calls us all to face each other. It might seem, then, that dialogue thrives in the modern world. Yet, in the act of fostering dialogue, notably in the name of Diversity, the modern marketplace comes to redefine the Self as a function of the Other. The *modern* Self is called to a special dialogue the essential condition of which is the *uprooting* of the Self, not merely from its fossilized convictions, but also and most importantly from its *natural right* to respond *poetically* to its "inner," *metaphysical resources* (Nelson & Drabinski, 2014; Zuckert, 2018).² The Self is driven to face an open-ended horizon of dialogue—indeed, to be free—while being denied the right to bear direct, conscious witness to the *ground* of all dialogue, the *meaning* of all freedom.³

Does this *mean* that the *pre-modern* conception of dialogue as pertaining primarily to its ground has been conclusively abrogated? While being granted *textual* or *physical* access to literary works from a great variety of epochs or places, are we being compelled to feed into the *physicalist* dogma that those works are incapable of bespeaking our roots as a permanent ground of intelligibility, a bedrock of *permanent ideas*, of *living questions* allowing us to retrace *Platonically* any and all perspective or "point of view"—above all the Global one of "the End of History"—to "the inner life of things," the life that is not "mine" or "yours" (thus, not a predicate), but proper/original to the ontological constitution of ourselves and our world?⁴

Today, it is only in resisting the temptation to yield to the *anti-Platonic*, mercantile impulse of our Global or Open Society (Patt, 1997),⁵ that we can draw classical literary works "across boundaries" into dialogue about their common ground of intelligibility, thereby reliving dialogue "anachronistically," or *Platonically*. It remains to be seen if the *experiment* proposed here will confirm, or unsettle the certainties that we, as Citizens of a New World Order, are being raised to cherish (Andreacchio, 2022b).⁶

Methodology

Including a Diagnosis of Our Current Situation

The present study's methodology is phenomenological in an Aristotelian sense that tends to be obscured by methodologies of a modern-Cartesian extraction.⁷ While contemporary scholarship tends to remain "perspectival," if only by conceiving perspectivism *a posteriori* as a universal or "global" mode of investigation, the present study addresses its ancient sources as stages for the illumination of a non-perspectival methodology. In this respect, it would be fair to suggest that the "method" advanced here involves a Socratic hermeneutics that strips

2 See e.g., *Between Levinas and Heidegger*. Eric Sean Nelson and John E. Drabinski (2014), eds. For an exposure of the bankruptcy of the modern project to cut ethics off from classical metaphysics, see *Leo Strauss on Political Philosophy Responding to the Challenge of Positivism and Historicism*. Catherine H. Zuckert (2018), ed.

3 For a recent historicist defense of the "meaning" of freedom as a function of the modern individual-ego's will within the strictures of a "social contract," see Toby Buckle, *What is Freedom? Conversations with Historians, Philosophers, and Activists* (Buckle, 2021). On the reduction of classical appeals to freedom to expressions of racial bigotry, see Tyler Stovall, *White Freedom The Racial History of an Idea* (Stovall, 2022).

4 Modern liberalism's abandonment of a classical metaphysical grounding for ethics/politics has opened the door to staunchly illiberal reconstructions of classical metaphysics in terms of "traditions" serving as receptacles of what Nietzsche called our "will to power". See e.g., Alexander Dugin, *Political Platonism: The Philosophy of Politics* (Dugin, 2019).

5 With the possible exception of Hegel, there are arguably no greater prophetic spokespersons of the anti-Platonist *Geist* incarnated by our Global Society, than Kant, Nietzsche and Heidegger. See *Formen des Anti-Platonismus* by Patt (1997).

6 On the practical problems inherent in the constitution of any "world order," see Andreacchio, "Redemption: The Third Act of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*" (Andreacchio, 2022b).

7 On Aristotelian phenomenology, see Jens Kristian Larsen, "Counting (on) Being: On Jacob Klein's Return to Platonic Dialectic," in *Phenomenological Interpretations of Ancient Philosophy*. Kristian Larsen and Pål Rykkja Gilbert (2021), eds.

the very category of method of modern prejudices on the way to discovering a *natural* method, or a method defined by natural ends, or more precisely by nature as seat of permanent spheres of intelligibility.⁸

Modernity's 18th century detractors warned that in seeing "more" than the ancients, modern man loses discernment of what he sees (Andreacchio, 2013).⁹ Why do the moderns see more? Because they rise above the ancients (as dwarfs on giants' shoulders, as the adagio has it), thereby gaining sight of a vaster landscape. But how might modern man rise above the ancients? The simple answer is contained in the rise of the modern Self or *ego*.¹⁰ The modern self is so constituted as to have access, or as to *believe* to have access to a vision of the Whole (of reality) that for his ancestors could be entertained only by a biblical God.¹¹ The problem of "seeing more, but without less discernment" is accounted by the new "mode" of vision (as per Machiavelli) characteristic of modern man, or of the modern-Cartesian *ego*. The modern self is *attributed* autonomous powers, powers autonomous of divinely innate ends. Modern man sees, so to speak, on his own, or as an *individual*; what is more, he "individuates" himself. He is not *placed* at the center of the world; rather, as Napoleon crowning himself, he places himself in a center, as an *object* of concern. Descartes performs this operation with clarity and distinction: with the Frenchman, the self is *objectified* as pure "subject," recipient of his environment.

In our Cartesian universe, the self—the new "man" decried by the likes of Jonathan Swift¹²—responds not to God or to a hidden natural order of things (φύσεως τάξις), but to his unconscious "material environment" (*res extensa*), if only where this is thereupon projected back onto a nominal or deistic deity.¹³ In this respect, modern man stands as the exemplary "target" of a very hostile universe: he is raised to see his incapacity to see what pre-modern man had assumed to see. Modern man sees his incapacity by seeing that the Whole (*i.e.*, the general context of vision) is hostile to vision, where vision is no longer assumed to be rooted in "things themselves" (*res ipsae*), but in a mere "formal" ego. Hence the need for the modern self to "fill himself" with the world—to explore, to absorb, to conquer *res extensa* (nature conceived mechanistically). Only in the process of "acquiring" his purportedly violent world can modern man find *meaning* for his existence; only in the act of converting "matter" into "Spirit" (as Hegel's *Geist*) can modern man find *himself*. Thereupon, man's "egoic" conscious-

8 At the opposite end of the spectrum of approaches to the problem of methodology stands Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (Feyerabend, 1975/1991). While for Feyerabend, the inadequacy of modern rationalism point to a fundamental conceptual anarchy, here the prognosis to the crisis of modern reason is seen as a return to reason as a (philosophical) problem hidden in the (divine) mystery of being itself.

9 In his 1948 lecture on "Reason and Revelation," Leo Strauss summarized G. E. Lessing's argument as follows: "We see more than the ancients; and yet our eyes might possibly be poorer than the eyes of the ancients; the ancients saw less than we; but their eyes might have been more discerning than ours. I fear that the whole comparison of the ancients and the moderns would lead to this result" (Meier, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, 179; Meier, 2006). Giambattista Vico's work (from the 1708 *De nostri temporis studiorum ratione* to the 1744 *Principj di Scienza Nuova delle Nazioni* (Vico, 1744/2015), which may be rendered as *Principles of the Founding of Nations*, in the respect that Vico's *nuova* refers to the divine or divine-like origin or root of political things) is in agreement with Lessing's conclusion. See Andreacchio, "Autobiography as History of Ideas". See "Autobiography as History of Ideas" by Andreacchio (2013).

10 *Ibid.*, on the significance of the Cartesian ego. Leo Strauss himself identifies concern with the Self as foundational for the modern world.

11 On the modern Cartesian *ego*'s quasi-dethroning of the bible's God, see Jacob Klein's discussion on Descartes in Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought*, 197–210 (Klein, 1968). Klein also recalls the ancient tale of the Cosmos slipping out of Aristotle's hand, as he dozed off. See Klein, "Aristotle: An Introduction," in Cropsey, ed., *Ancients and Moderns*, 68 (Klein, 1964; Cropsey, 1964).

12 Spicy irony colors Swift's Sept. 29, 1725 "confession" to Alexander Pope: "Principally I hate and detest that animal called man; although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth" (*The Works of Jonathan Swift* by Swift (1843)).

13 Adam Smith's case is exemplary. On Smith's modernism, see Joseph Cropsey, "Adam Smith," in *History of Political Philosophy*. Leo Strauss and J. Cropsey, (1987/1963): 635–58.

ness yields to the awakening of Spirit itself as the truth about man's *evolution* from empty/formal universality to the concreteness of a Universal Individual, namely the Open Society that today we are raised to regard as our "global" (diachronically and synchronically) destiny. The Cartesian ego's *monistic* "point of view" (as per Leibniz) yields, today, to a super-variant, the "Global point of view" that is supposed to integrate all old egoic points of view, thereby resolving the problem of the old Machiavellian conflict between man and violent nature. In the Global point of view, "inert nature" has been *integrated* (or has integrated itself) or "channeled and controlled" (as per Machiavelli) into a Society of channeling and control, namely our *technological* society.¹⁴

Modernity's technology is not a mere tool, to be sure, but a *way of life* formalized in modernity's *ideology*, a plan (blue-print) to "change the world," in the sense of "integrating" nature—including all birth, or life—via a process of quantification.¹⁵ Herein lies the key to our ability to see *more*, in the very act of losing our capacity to see beyond or behind *appearances*. Not altogether unlike Goethe's Faust, modernity's "one dimensional man"¹⁶ trades interiority for exteriority: he turns his back on "higher things" after the promise of dominion over "lower things"; he abandons what is above himself, if only in order serve as its vicar vis-à-vis what is below himself. In short, modern man is a man compelled to abandon God in order to be a god among beasts. Yet, this new god serves a second function, standing as pivot for the rise of our Open Society, technological consummation of nature.

Results

The present study finds that classical Chinese literary records have been systematically misread in a modern "scientific" context to feed into a mechanistic conception of nature or life. When read on their own ground, or when not contextualized *ex machina*, our classics emerge as illuminating their own context, allowing us (readers) to question our mechanistic conceptions. In reading our sources by allowing them to guide us to reflect upon the context of reading itself, we expose ourselves to the discovery of our context as an irreducible sphere of intelligibility. In Platonic terms, interpretation coincides with a path of purgation through which the reader is awakened to a mind free of all compulsions. The grounds are thereby exposed for an overcoming of the crisis of interpretation or of reason attested to by the modern rise of historicism. If historicism arises to justify modern (Cartesian) rationalism/freedom and its "individual," it also exposes its groundlessness, opening the door to the consolidation of a regime in which right is might. The present study uncovers classical Chinese literary sources as testifying to the trans-historical character of a "Platonic" alternative to historicism. What is further shown is that the alternative in question is not only still viable for present day scholarship, for it stands as the sole discernible way out of our contemporary civilizational crisis.

Discussion

1. Platonism in the East: Preliminary Sketch of a Buddhist Response to the Global Society

There is hardly any classical tradition that has been coopted to serve the cause of the Open Society of "individuals," more than Buddhism. We need not be familiar with Nāgārjuna's de-

14 For a recent *de facto* or tacitly technocratic critique of technocracy, see Jeffrey Friedman, *Power Without Knowledge A Critique of Technocracy* (Friedman, 2019)

15 See Jacques Ellul, *The Technological System*. Lisa Richmond, transl. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018.

16 See Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Marcuse, 1991).

fense of “the Middle Way” (*madhyamā-pratipad*)¹⁷ and the logic of “double negation” (*neti neti*) it inherits from ancestral Vedic authors, in order to appreciate that Buddhism’s “Four Noble Truths” (*chatvari-arya-satyani*) is incompatible with modernity’s “individuality”—an invention parasitic on Christianity’s doctrine of divine indivisibility (Nāgārjuna, 1995; Aquinas, n.d.).¹⁸

As the Buddhologist Donald S. Lopez discerningly remarked, the long-established English expression “Four Noble Truths” is apt to be misleading.¹⁹ The Sanskrit *chatvari-arya-satyani* may be best understood in the light of its ancient Chinese translation, which easily lends itself to be rendered as “The Sages’ Four True/Trustworthy Declarations” (四聖諦 *sisheng-di*). What do the sage/noble declare? They declare that there is an unacceptable superficial problem/condition (that of the people at large), which stems from a tide/current of “grasping compulsion” (in this sense, the plebes do not live, but “are lived”). The noble speakers invoke the extinction of the grasping compulsion (the vulgar drive to gain satisfaction, or to overcome the authority of the noble), pointing to a horizon or place more fundamental than compulsion—whence the declaration of a pathway bridging the gap between nobility and the vile condition of slaves to compulsion. *Ergo*: sagely/noble authorities themselves show that people are not condemned to their servile condition.

The foregoing reading of the “true/trustworthy declarations” (*satya*) of “the noble ones” (*arya*) and indeed of Buddha himself, invites the conclusion that modernity’s “individual” is but the product of “grasping compulsions” (viz., a vulgar compulsion to overcome authority). In traditional, pre-modern Buddhism, where there is no autonomous “social atom” striving to rise to the heavens of an Open Society—to the zenith of its mechanically “evolving” universe—the noble and the vulgar are both masks (*personae*) of thought itself (where thought is the “mirror” in which the masks appear).

Buddhism responds to the threat of *political* decadence, or of outright barbarism ensuing from all open conflict between aristocrats/authorities and their subjects. Where one pole (standing for “Reason of State”) tries to deny the people (standing for “Natural Reason”) the right to freedom (here, *natural* participation in Reason of State), the other tries to deny authorities their own right to rule. Buddhist “nobles” respond that both poles—the Sages and the Commoners—are but masks on the stage of Mind/Thought. Where the “foundations” are exposed, the two political poles can challenge each other without falling into obscurantism, the demise of the order of Mind itself. Conversely, where the providential agency of Mind (“divine natural providence”) and thereby the *meaning* of human life is eclipsed, the stage of our life is chaotic. In this respect, the crisis of theology is coeval with the crisis of politics; the latter entails the former.

2. The Modern Challenge to Platonic Buddhism

As the modern Enlightenment shows us, in closing itself to the theological, the political gains in *abstract universality*. No longer seeking its redemption “Platonically” in a divine mystery

17 Nāgārjuna’s 1st c. AD *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* (“Root Verses of the Middle Way”) stands among the most eminent texts of traditional Buddhism.

18 See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, First Part, Q. 11 and De Koninck, “Aristotle on God as Thought Thinking Itself,” 473 and 477 (Aquinas, n.d.; De Koninck, 1994). See also Andreacchio, “The Modern Deceit: Emancipation from Social Society.” Though Étienne Lamotte renders Buddhism’s *ātmabhāva* as “individuality” (*individualité*, apparently interchangeable, however, with “substantial Me”/*Moi substantiel*, or “substantial soul”/*âme substantielle*) posited merely expedientially, the Sanskrit term denotes more literally “own-substance” (自體 *ziti*), or even “self-certainty,” as the one characteristic of “my body” (身 *shen*, or 自身 *zishen*). See Lamotte. “Le Concept de vacuité dans le bouddhisme,” 74. On *ātmabhāva* as 自體 *ziti*, see 郭瓊瑤 Guo Qiongyao (2008), 《金剛經》的「即非」之辯—日本學界對「即非論理」的論考與爭議 [“The Debate over “affirmation-in-negation” in the *Diamond Sūtra*: Discussions and Disputes over the “logic of affirmation-in-negation” in Japanese Academia”]; on *ātmabhāva* as 自身 *zishen/jishin*, see 川田 熊太郎 Kawada Kumataro (1967), 瑜伽論の自身所有縁起 [“On Conditioned Substance/ *ātmabhāva* in the *Yogācārabhūmi-Sāstra*”].

19 See *Four Noble Truths* (Lopez, 2024)

beyond all experience (such was the mystery that Rudolf Otto set out to defend in his *Das Heilige*), the political necessarily reifies the eternal into a symbolic “transcendental” universal begging for *realization*. The *liberating experience* invited by abstract universality is formidable. Unlike divine mystery, abstract universality is *empowering*, calling humanity as a whole to the magisterial task of *fulfilling* that of which the abstract or symbolic universal is a mere promise.

Abstract universality discloses a horizon of multiple *special* microcosms mirroring the universe in their attempt to render it *concrete*. These *specializations* are supposed to *integrate* into the constitution of an overarching *concrete universal*, which is what our Open “Leviathan” Society, or Hegel’s consummate State, is supposed to be. Here is the essential *telos* of modernity: the abstraction of symbolic universals produces particulars driven towards the *realization* of universality on the basis of particularity. The “noble ideal” is realized on a “vulgar-material” basis. This is modernity: idealism on a materialist foundation. The notion implies that idealism is somehow given a task “by matter”. It is not enough for the modern idealist to “contemplate nature” (*à la* Epicurus); he must rather *fulfill* nature, or resolve the contradiction between ideal and material, between universal and particular. This can be achieved only through the *logic* of modernity, whereby an abstract notion is supposed to be realized in a special discipline, or other, *autonomously* from *theological* and *ethical* considerations, alike. The realization of the abstract universal must consequently be understood as *technological*, rather than as merely “artistic” or *technical*. Why, technology is “art” (*techne*) for which the theological is a Kantian “as if” (*die Als-Ob*) instrumental to the *resolution* of *common* political problems (Andreacchio, 2019).²⁰ The resolution in question is necessarily *specialized* as long as it does not converge with other *specializations* into the “solution” or *dissolution* of natural problems, of nature as fundamental problem.

While modernity may seem to offer an uncanny reminder of a classical call to transcend mechanical necessity, it deviates from classical antiquity by calling for the apotheosis of “the machine,” rather than liberation from it. The distinction between the two alternatives is brought to light most vividly by modernist readings of Buddhism as rejecting any permanence, stability, eternity, or immutability, in the very act of positing *mechanisms* underpinning our everyday life-experience. Thus would the renowned scholar Étienne Lamotte state: “[the] founder [of Buddhism], Buddha Sākyamuni, declares without ambiguity: “There is nothing permanent (*anitya*), stable (*Dhruva*), eternal (*sāsvata*), immutable (*aviparināmadharman*)”—even as our experience is predicated upon “the mechanism of an immutable production in dependence (*pratīyasamutpāda*)” (Lamotte, 1977).²¹ The implication would seem to be, not that there simply is nothing immutable, but that the immutable is a *machine* underlying our ordinary life-experience—a machine that unsettles any Vedic return of Ātmanic *determination* to Brahmanic *indetermination*; such a return is rejected as representing “immanentism” (Lamotte, 1977). Thus, Buddhism would upset, if not overturn altogether, what we could call a “theory about everything,” or any totalistic doctrine. Yet, Buddha exposes the machine of a beginning-less samsāra only in the act of promising its cessation (Lamotte, 1977). But how can what does not begin be ever terminated? This is *the* foremost problem of modernity.

3. Preface to a Revival of Platonic Buddhism

With Buddhism, there is a horizon of “being” that transcends any mechanism, the horizon of what is neither mechanical, nor personal (hence the doctrine of *anātman*). And yet, Lamotte insists that throughout the centuries Buddhists “faithful to their Master” have always professed

20 See “Review Essay, Part II: Mastery of Nature” by Andreacchio (2019) esp. 234-38.

21 Lamotte (1977), *op. cit.*, 67–68. Lamotte’s Buddhists are *de facto* philosophical Epicureans (78).

the *reality* of the *impersonal* “five aggregates” (*skandadharmātravāda*) constituting our ordinary experience.²² Experience is held together, not by any person, but by a “grasping” called *upādāna* (often translated as “attachment”), a gluing-agent of sorts that the Chinese would name 取 *qu*—“appropriation”. All determinations of consciousness, including consciousness as its own determination, are inherently-impersonal *properties* held together by “compulsive grasping” (*upādāna*) to constitute a flux of innumerable ephemeral identities, or *personal designations*. Thus, personality is not the product of a “higher Self”. Any “higher” Self, no less than any “lower” Self would be a *distraction* from truth, or from liberation from *upādāna*, the “grasping” defining all Selves. Transcendence of illusion, or rather of delusion, is a “letting go” of all grasping, whereby the cohesiveness of properties yields to the “empty form” of consciousness, or *absolute indetermination* in and of itself. Grasping grasps masks of truth; it obscures truth; it projects it into the desert of the past, even as truth returns continuously, from the back-door of the future. Whence the cyclical character of *samsāra*: as we compulsively grasp masks of truth, we are compelled to relive truth as a curse. Our compulsions—betraying *violence*—mask truth, the danger of all dangers.

Now, the grasper is nothing other than an aggregate of “properties” (*skandadharmā*) serving as masks distracting the grasper from truth. Yet, properties *in themselves*, or in a “Platonic” sense, are *mirrors* of truth: not attributes of any “self” (determination), but of the absolutely undetermined. In this respect, the world is originally populated by “Ideas”—forms (τὰ εἶδη) that are “void” of grasping, of *upādāna*; forms of *pure intelligibility* in the respect that they reflect their source, the truth about all forms.

Truth in Greek is “disclosure” or “revelation”: ἀλήθεια, the *presence* of all things. The truth of all things is their *being-present*, their *exposure*. To know something is to see that something exposed, to see it present, to see it unmasked, unhidden, or to see the hidden aspect of it. To know something is to see its *roots*, the part that is in the dark, underground. Seekers of knowledge are necessarily archeologists, un-earthers, revivers: they call people and their properties into the light of the present, lest they be buried in the darkness of the past—into the stream of the compulsion that Buddhists would designate as *upādāna*: *samsāric*, vicious grasping. The very properties that are grasped to obscure the present are originally or inherently “void” of all grasping and thus of all determination; such are the forms of Buddha’s speech, his *Dharma*; the ways of his Way.

4. Unearthing Platonic Buddhism from Beneath the Cavern of Modernity

Buddhism (Buddha’s Way, or the Way of Awakening) is restorative of our life-experience and is “brought into China” textually precisely in this context, to restore language to its proper function. Formally, to save scholarship (儒 *ru*) and its soul (道 *dao*) from mutual alienation. What we have learned to call Confucianism and Daoism were originally two faces of the same coin, as day and night are. The *Dao* was the 先王之道 *xianwang zhi dao*, “the way of the former kings”. Accordingly, *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* (2003) (黃帝內經 *huangdi neijing*) would retrace the problem of “the way” to the question of “the true man” or 真人 *zhenren*. Its introductory chapter, “Discourse on the Heavenly True in Early Antiquity” (上古天真論 *shang-gu tianzhen lun*), calls us to retrace all outward authority to an inner nature; the ascent to “the sagely king” (聖人 *shengren*) is a mirror of the return to what is true about “the achieved man” (至人 *zhiren*) “retraceable to the true man” (歸於真人 *guiyu zhenren*). As the old adagio goes, what is true in the eye of Heaven is not true in the eyes of ordinary men. The *true* man sees with the eye of Heaven and indeed is as invisible as Heaven is. He is what is true *about* all men; he is our hidden humanity. But what is *hidden* is eclipsed by the corruption of mores, foremost among them that of language. Hence Confucius’s exemplary

22 The “aggregates/constituents” of experience include material elements (*rūpa*), sensations (*vedanā*), notions (*samjñā*), volitions/impulses (*samskāra*) and modes of consciousness (*vijñāna*).

call to rectify speech (正言 *zhengyan*) (Confucius, n.d.). The “Daoist” is the “Confucian” who reminds his fellow scholars that outward accomplishment is the function of a common nature: all masks *ought* to serve—because they originally or naturally do so—as mirrors, not eclipsers of an underlying reality. *La comédie humaine*: our outward accomplishment is no more than an echo of an original perfection. The quest for power alienated from the mystery of a divine mind is, as the Bible’s *Bereishit* (Genesis) reminds us, satanic. Our yearnings remain, as they must, unfulfilled in the future because they are fulfilled “in the beginning,” the inevitably hidden, secretive or sacred dimension of the visible, the present.

Classical language attests to the duplicity of things, or to the hiddenness of revelation—of light in the dark. Paradigmatic is “the moon” to which long-acclaimed classical writers dedicated hymns of mysterious longing. Notable among old Chinese hymns to the moon is a composition by 張九齡 Zhang Jiuling (678–740), “Distant yearnings in the Moon’s presence” (望月懷遠 *wangyue huaiyuan*), where truth is sought in a dream, or in the medium of poetry, rather than directly:

海上生明月，天涯共此時。

Luminous moon born on ocean’s surface, heavenly banks meet in this moment;

情人怨遙夜，竟夕起相思。

The lover regrets the lengthy night, nocturnal realm arouses yearning.

滅燭憐光滿，披衣覺露滋。

Extinguished candles to cherish light’s fullness, dressing aware of dew’s expanse;

不堪盈手贈，還寢夢佳期。

Cannot contain this brimming gift, return asleep to dream of nuptial date.

The last verse returns to the first, where the moon appears on the surface of the waters to unify lovers placed at the antipodes of the world “in this moment”. The *presence* of the moon serves as medium of communication, yet not directly, but in a reflected manner. Zhang’s own discourse stretches out like the night it evokes, to establish a communication we long for in the ocean of night. Over dark expanses of water, shines the poet’s word, engenderer of yearnings, calling us to rise back to the moon itself. Yet, Zhang warns us not to extinguish our candles for the fullness of light, or to flee the touch of water—of death itself—in search of immortality. For the gift of the present cannot be grasped or contained. The marriage of man and the moon is indeed consummated only in a dream (Zhang, 2011).

Zhang’s Tang dynasty composition provides a fine testimony of the classical “Platonic” understanding of the limitations of the human mind, a mind incapable of seeing itself if not in the medium of its own articulation, its own *speech*, its *logos* (λόγος), or 道 *dao*. The oriental “moon” can be seen only in the medium of prophecy, or poetry—of soothsaying that awakens in the night, not outside of lady night’s own speech, but within it.

Zhang’s contemporary, Caoxi Huineng (曹溪慧能), “Sixth Patriarchal Prophet” (六祖大鑒 *liuzu dajian*) addresses the question of the nature of Mind in his legendary “response” to the patriarch Yuqian Shenxiu (玉泉神秀):²³

菩提本無樹	The Root of Wisdom is devoid of Tree,
明鏡亦非臺	Nor is the Luminous Mirror a support.
本夾無一物	From the beginning, there is not a thing,
何處惹塵埃	Where could dust accrue?

23 The composition is found in Chapter 1 of the *The Great Sixth Patriarch Teacher’s Altar Scripture of the Way’s Treasure* (六祖大師法寶壇經 *liuzu dashi fabao tanjing*; the usual abridged translation of the Chinese is, “Platform Sūtra”; at https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T48n2008_001). Legend had it that Huineng’s statement stood in stark contrast with Shenxiu’s *authoritative* teachings. While Shenxiu had come to serve as “Imperial Preceptor” (帝師 *dishi*), Huineng would be heralded as an illiterate sage whose words bore witness to the original unity of wisdom and truth and so to the *living* wisdom of Buddha. In the persona of Huineng, Buddhist scholars would come to defend the independence of wisdom from political appropriation. In his *The Spirit of Zen*, Van Schaik (2018) skims the surface of the problem at hand.

In Huineng’s poetic stanza (*gāthā*/ 偈陀 *jituo*), the trunk/tree, not the root is negated, where 本 *ben* may be translated at once as “originally” and “origin/root,” as the Latin *principium*. 本夾 *benlai* would then correspond to the Greek ἐξ ἀρχῆς, or even *in principio*, where “the beginning” is the limit/end of all unfolding (the *terminus ad quem* coinciding with the *terminus a quo*). 本夾 *benlai* would indicate, not only “in the beginning,” but “always” and thus too, “in the head,” as in the Septuagint rendering of Genesis (בראשית *Bereishit*; Chabad.org, n.d.).

Where the Hebrew בראשית *bereishit*, from ראש *ros*, or “head,” is “in the head/heading,” where “head” is “seat of authority,” or Mind, ἐποίησεν (which renders the Hebrew ברא *bara*) entails a *noetic* “poetic” production, or a “distinction,” which, in the case of *Genesis* 1:1 pertains explicitly to the heavens above and the earth below.²⁴ The two poles are distinguished in themselves (being *named*) and from each other, much as Adam and Eve are: while both poles are originally *one*, it is “in the *authorial* beginning”—in the heading of the Story, where the Story is *alive* as its Mind—that they are separated, as Father (Thought) and Son (Word) in John 1. Thus may we read *Genesis* 1:1 as follows: “In his Mind, the Divine Ruler produced the heavens and the earth,” with the implication that the production at hand involves a *mental discrimination*. It is *in the mind of the Story* that distinctions are “made,” inviting the conclusion that the divisions point back to the unity of the divine mind. The Bible itself is then to be understood as the product of a divine mind, in which all distinctions are at once unified and sustained/disclosed.

The foregoing excursus into the mysterious “head” of the Bible draws us back to Huineng’s 本夾無一物 *benlai wu yi wu*: “in the beginning there is nothing,” a proposition *de facto* opening the door to the notion and doctrine of a *creatio ex nihilo*. “Nothing” is literally “absence of a single thing” (無一物 *wu yi wu*) a periphrastic expression indicating, not primarily “nothing” per se, but the *purity* of Mind, unfettered by anything. The 明鏡 *mingjing* is an *immaculate* “luminous mirror,” one that is *devoid* of any of the distinctions it produces. Where could illusion, the “dust” of this world, arise? What “support” would allow it to accrue? Huineng’s answer is, *nowhere*. The “dust” cannot, therefore, constitute an obstacle for Mind.

While the Tree of Wisdom may occasion “dust,” wisdom itself does not. There is, therefore, nothing “wrong” with wisdom, nothing reprehensible. Wisdom is then eminently *desirable*—*in itself*, or *by nature*. Were wisdom to be the mere *fruit* of a “tree,” then Mind would serve as support for appearances and thus potentially for deception. Wisdom cannot be something acquired aside from the truth of Mind: wisdom cannot be “learned”. In the absence of any original or proper distinction between truth and wisdom, there is no need to rid Mind of its products (“things”).

Is there, then, no Tree of Wisdom? Is the Tree of Wisdom an *illusion*? If there is no wisdom aside from truth, then eating of the Tree of Wisdom would prove fatal. Conceiving wisdom as something other than truth—if only as an “Other” through which we can access truth itself—would be to go astray, to leave the “Garden” of the Mind; to “fall” into a *desert* in which Mind would appear at best as a fearsome master, a jealous God.

In a “fallen world,” wisdom and truth need to be reconciled. Indeed, the reconciliation of wisdom and truth is precisely what Huineng’s *gāthā* points back to. What is “from the beginning” is Mind, Huineng’s “luminous mirror” (明鏡 *mingjing*), a classical poetic designation. Being void of anything, Mind is a *pure form* (εἶδος), rather than the support/

24 On the meaning of ברא *bara*, see Van Wolde (2017), “Separation and Creation in Genesis 1 and Psalm 104”. Compare Leo Strauss’s 1957 lecture, “On Interpretation of Genesis,” in Green, ed., *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity*, 359–76. Van Wolde’s research is compatible with Strauss’s reading of *Bereishit*’s ברא *bara*, “Platonically,” as διαίρεσις or “division” (Green, 1997).

stage (臺 *tai*) of its products. It does not “justify” anything or anyone; it is thus absolutely (ontologically) independent/unfettered (Mind *in-itself* is not a predicate; it does not serve any[one’s] cause). Hence Huineng’s last provocative/rhetorical question (何處惹塵埃 *hechur e chenai*), where Mind/thought is no-where, not being any of its determinations, “where could dust [ever] arise!” In sum, Mind is not the *tree* of wisdom, but wisdom itself. Wisdom is not Mind’s *fruit*, not something that can “fall off” from Mind, not something that can be “grasped” by Mind. All that Mind grasps is but “the wisdom of the world,” which is to say, *dust*. “Dust” cannot accumulate over Mind without Mind’s grasping it. The obstacles of thought are not obstacles in themselves. There is nothing inherently detrimental to thought, with the exception of the “karmic” byproducts of Mind’s “grasping” (*upādāna*). Where Mind “grasps,” it serves as stage for delusion, a stage opening the door to outright evil. Yet, Mind in itself, or at its root (*in principio*) does not grasp, but give—give of itself. That is the general message of the scripture containing Huineng’s *gāthā*, the 六祖壇經 *liuzu taning*. The 壇 *tan* of the title, is the altar whence the patriarch testifies to the Dharma, the “Way” of Buddha and thus of Mind (for Buddha is Mind’s proper act, namely awakening). The stage (壇 *tan*) is to be understood as source of enlightening or awakening guidance, rather than of precepts ensnaring people. By the same token, we are to conclude that Mind is originally not a stage (臺 *tai*) for evil, but one (壇 *tan*) for good.

As noted above, Huineng’s words respond to the verses attributed to Patriarch Shenxiu (Van Schaik, 2018). These read: “You are the Tree of Wisdom, Mind as a luminous mirror’s support, Time and again diligently wiping, do not let dust accrue” (身是菩提樹，心如明鏡臺，時時勤拂拭，莫使惹塵埃). Here Buddha’s “word/way” (法 *fa*, rendering the Sanskrit *dharma*, etymologically denoting “support”) is not understood radically enough, as stemming from Mind itself. Instead, Dharma is presented as *our* way back to Buddha/Mind. *You*, as “Tree of Wisdom,” confront Mind *as if it were* a support for *your* ascent to wisdom. Mind stands as *justification* for man’s sacred battle against worldly or profane “dust”. What allows us to live unstained by evil is assiduous dedication to wisdom based on truth. Thus speaks the *moral* man.

Huineng’s response exposes the moral life to its “dangerous” foundation. Rather than struggling to live in the Garden of Eden, man is to face the challenge posed by what stands outside of the Garden. More precisely, we are to learn to face the Abyss of Truth without *falling* into it. This is possible only where we cease conceiving wisdom as object of “grasping,” or as the mirage of a “grasping-mind”. Whence the Buddhist doctrine of “absence of self-referentiality,” or of the “vacuity of beings and their ways” (*sattvadharmasūnyatā*). The “way” (*dharma*) of a “being” (*sattva*) is not self-referential or “individual” in the respect that its content ultimately coincides with its *transcendent end*. Beings are not “self-enclosed,” but always and necessarily tending towards their perfection understood as their original place in Mind.

The lesson to be gleaned here is that to live is not to fit in a system, but to expose oneself to a *thought* irreducible to any system. The very doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* (usually rendered as “dependent origination”) bespeaks the limitations of *natura naturata*, or “derivative nature” (where “nature” is birth, as φύσις). Here, things arise out of a background, the “birth” of things entailing a “pre-history” or *context*, a horizon of “conditions” or “occasions” (causes in the ancient Latin sense of *caussa*). Thus would the Chinese render *pratītyasamutpāda* as 緣起 *yuānqi*, where 緣 *yuān* (compound of 糸 *mi* and 豕 *tuan*) suggests “retracing of determination,” or “having a retracable identity”. All objects of experience presuppose a meta-empirical, or “metaphysical” context: Mind, not as its own object, but as the *referent* of all of its objects. Thus, in Aśvaghōṣa’s 2nd c. *Discourse Awakening Trust in the Great Path* (1666) (大乘起信論 *Dacheng Qixin Lun*,²⁵ later echoed by the Ming Dynasty

Record of the Mirror of Mind (n.d.), or 心鏡錄 *Xinjing Lu*), “Mind does not see Mind” (心不見心 *xinbujian xin*); for “no appearance can fully represent it” (無相可得 *wuxiang ke de*),²⁶ even as speech can point to it directly; as a finger indicating the moon (手指月 *shou zhi yue*).²⁷ So while Mind is irreducible to words, words *can*, because they *always do*, empty out into Mind. For they arise out of Mind insofar as in them Mind “descends” to find itself as *avatāras*, its own phenomenal determinations.

Let us pause on this point. Mind sees itself directly in its own “poetic representations,” even as these fail to *resolve* Mind—the *problem* of Mind, Mind as *fundamental problem*—in themselves. What we learn is that poetry *extinguishes* itself (the Chinese will read, 滅 *mie*, as in Zhang Jiuling’s “extinguished candles”—滅燭 *miezhu*) in *bearing witness* to Mind, to the fundamental problem, the mystery of all mysteries (shining as a moon in the dark). This is nirvana, the “blowing out of the candle,” the consummate referent of all modes of consciousness and thus, too, of all speech and thereby of all contents of experience. For experience unfolds in speech, just as speech unfolds in Mind.

Experience is gathered into its *poetic forms* where they *point back* to their transcendent ground: Mind as *fundamental alternative* to all universalism, including that of our Global Society of “individuals”. Mind makes itself known through/in speech *in principio*, before any universal could ever present itself as *solving* the problem of Mind once and for all. Prior to serving as ideological building-blocks of any New World Order, our words are pointers to an original, *underlying order*, allowing for direct knowledge, or knowledge stemming from its own ground. This is to say that prior to our seeking truth, truth seeks us. In this respect, communication does not originally build “castles”—Empires, Caves or Societies, no matter how universal, no matter how “Open”—but gathers *back*, *undoes*, goes “against the current” of all building, entailing what traditional Buddhism would refer to as “an *alternative* transmission outside of doctrines, not standing on words” (不立文字·教外別傳 *buliwenzi jiaowaibiechuan*).²⁸ It is not that words are to be distrusted, but that they are to be understood in the light of a source of pre-verbal intelligibility, cradle of speech, no less than of being. Thus do we read in Chapter 4 of *The Scripture of the Descent at Lanka* (n.d.) (楞伽阿跋多羅寶經 *Lengqieabaduoluo baojing*; otherwise known as the *Lankāvatāra Sūtra*):

Where the infinite depths of the *Cradle-of-Being* [如來藏 *rulaizang*] combine with “the seventh mode of consciousness” [i.e., *volition*, TN], the two together giving rise to *appropriation*, the Wise depart from them. Where Mind appears as an image in a mirror, its permeations spreading without beginning, the contemplative examiner of Being discerns the vacuity of all deeds [i.e., *karma*, TN]. As fools seeing the finger pointing to the moon contemplate the finger without contemplating the moon, literalists do not see what the self [or, “identity”] truly is. Where Mind works

25 Title traditionally attributed to Aśvaghōṣa (fl. 1st c. AD) and usually translated as *Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*.

26 All references to Chinese Buddhist texts are drawn from the *Taishō Tripitaka*, the Buddhist “Three Vehicles” (*Tripitaka*)—of scriptures, interpretations and discipline — redacted in the early 20th c. under Emperor Taishō and carrying the full title of 大正新脩大藏經 (Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō), commonly abbreviated as 大正藏 *Taishōzō*, or more simply as “T”. See Vol. 32, n. 1666 (T.32.1666), at <https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T32n1666>; Vol. 48, n. 2016.85 (T.48.2016), at https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T48n2016_085; and 釋摩訶衍論 (Shi Moheyan Lun, n.d.), T.32.1668.4 at https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/mobile/index.php?index=T32n1668_004. Compare T48n2016_085 and 0881c07 (https://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T48n2016_085); see also the *Record of Pointing to the Moon* (n.d.) (指月錄 *Zhiyuelu*).

27 See *Record of the Moon in the Water Pointing Purely to the Moon* (水月齋指月錄 *Xueyue Zhaizhi Yue Lu*).

28 *Scripture of the Great Brāhma* (n.d.) [“Indian”] *Heavenly King* [Deva Rāja] *Asking Buddha to Dispel Perplexities* (大梵天王問佛決疑經 *dafantianwang wen fo jueyi jing*).

like a backstage operator, volition resembles an actor on stage, while the “five sensory modes of consciousness” gather as companions into a deluded audience. 甚深如來藏，而與七識俱，二種攝受生，智者則遠離。如鏡像現心，無始習所薰，如實觀察者，諸事悉無事。如愚見指月，觀指不觀月，計著名字者，不見我真實。心為工伎兒，意如和伎者，五識為伴侶，妄想觀伎眾。²⁹

What is at stake, here, is the distinction between Mind *in itself* and Mind as mirrored in speech. In the latter case, “mind” is *grasped*, or, to be more precise, Mind’s *aggregate-determination* (a “compound”) grasps itself in terms of a “self” or “identity”—a determination of consciousness “receiving” the activity of Mind as the “external/objective” content of a theatrical play. The real *context* of the play is never questioned, even as it may be *divined* in terms of a supreme deity, or heavenly authority. Yet, the context of the theater of our daily experience is Mind *proper*, Mind as “Cradle-of-Being” (*Tathāgatagarbha*), whence ultimately stem all of our “volitional-deeds” (*karma*, 事 *shi* or 業 *ye*) and so the very freedom that the deluded cherish in terms of self-determination. The Buddhist Scripture appeals to Mind as the source of a freedom that *we* partake in to the extent that *we let go* of ourselves, rather than holding onto ourselves, our self-determination. For self-determination is nothing but a *mode* of Mind (*vijñāna*), a “derivative/conditioned” guise of what is neither a “person” (*ātman*), nor a machine or mechanical process (*samsāra*).

It is for the sake of helping the deluded let go of themselves that Buddha invokes *nirvāna*, the extinction of the beginning-less stream of self-referentiality/determination. *Nirvāna*, the “blowing out” of the “candle” of *samsāra*, entails the very blowing-out of “time,” or of the present as lost in a stream of self-appropriation. In the light of *nirvāna*, the present is disclosed *directly* out of its permanent ground of intelligibility, rather than via the past and/or the future. Both past and future re-emerge as *functions* of the present, of the *avatāra* of eternity. Far from denoting a merely “negative” activity, *nirvāna reinstates* all beings and their world independently of any compulsion (*viz.*, *upādāna*). The Gods themselves, Masters of Men, are “revived” as *mirrors* of awakening, replacing imposters who, in *samsāra*, are mistaken (and mistake themselves) for *alternatives* (opaque masks) to awakening.

Thus does Buddhism’s affirmation of the primacy of Mind over any of its objects—including “mind” as (hypothetical) object, or as “abstract” reification—settle the classical dispute between “idealists”/theists and “materialists”/atheists in favor of the former. Even if, or rather precisely because, the distinction between mind and body is ultimately an illusion, it is more appropriate to believe in the primacy of Mind/form over body/content, than to believe in the opposite. For what we call “mind”—what *for us* is mind as *predicate*—is definitely more akin to *reality* than any “body” ever could be. Theism is truer than atheism, or physicalism. For theism sets aside a poetic space for reflection upon Reality or *Being*, such that no atheism would ever invite.

Buddhism’s lesson is Platonism’s own, which is not about establishing Mind as “heavenly master” (we already have a plethora of those), but about *letting go* of the contents of experience (by recognizing them) as “mere modes of consciousness” (*vijñaptimātra*, or 唯識 *weishi*), as opposed to constituents of a theatrical battlefield populated by perceiving-beings (*sattvas*) and independent “objects” of perceptions (*dharmas*). Thus would Vasubandhu, “founding father” of Yogācāra Buddhism, warn that, “the moment you turn to what is conditioned, knowing that it is devoid of anything attainable, is the moment you

29 T16n0670, 0510c11, at http://tripitaka.cbeta.org/T16n0670_004.

abide in mere consciousness by having let go of both grasping and its objects” (若時於所緣，智都無所得，爾時住唯識，離二取相故) (Vasubandhu, 1985).³⁰ The “self” itself is not to be understood as a determination of consciousness, but as consciousness itself; not as a *res cogitans* (Descartes’s ego), but as *cogitatio* itself, the *agency* of thought whereby thought unifies the contents of experience back to their source—as the *mirror* of their mysterious ground of intelligibility.

The Buddhist doctrine of “no-self” (*anātman*) is not one of self-denial, but one pertaining to “the proper place” of self, just as the Socratic discourse of Plato’s *Republic* addresses the paramount importance of seeking the contents of experience in their original context—outside of the “cavern” of our ordinary experience (Plato, 2007). Our “Platonic Cave” is precisely what the Buddhist addresses as *samsāra*, the world of illusions, of dreams and of “selves” slavishly bound to them—compliments of poetry ill-conceived, or rather altogether *forgotten*, not to say *abandoned* (Alighieri, 1481; Andreacchio, 2022a).³¹ The traditional Chinese rendering of *anātman* is 無我 *wuwo*, which entails absence (無 *wu*) from any designated place, rather than any denial of being. The question is not whether or not there is such a thing as a “self,” but *where* any “self” is; the “answer” being that the “self” is a form irreducible to any content, but also to any *context* (standing inherently or constitutionally free from any “co-dependence”). The identical problem arises *mutatis mutandis* in Plato insofar as he invites us to discover the contents of experience in terms of pure intelligibility. Far from constituting a *material-literal* world (a world of appearances, or μορφές) in which we are lost, experience is a poetic theater in which we are originally *found* (indeed “invented” by poets). Somehow, our being lost in a desert presupposes our being found in an oasis, a *garden* in which the *finder* sees in us his own image.

Platonism is naturally open to the great “finder” present in the biblical Garden, even as the truth about his wisdom is buried in the abyss of the darkness surrounding Eden. Likewise, Buddhism is naturally inclined towards Buddha’s cosmic *apotheosis*. In both “pagan” settings, the supreme “point of view” cannot be one *building* on “individuals” (“individuated” selves) and their “objective-material” context, but one *underlying* the *extinction* of both individuals and their environment. Indeed, the lofty “point of view” of our Age’s Global Eye stands as the consummate nemesis of the Mind that sees all things as mirrors of its mysterious truth. What the Global Eye surveys clinically as inherently meaningless, or mechanically-evolving *res extensa*, Buddha’s “Platonic” Eye *exhumes* out of the cavern of “matter,” restoring it as the living body of truth itself.

30 . 玄奘 Xuanzang’s translation of verse 28 of Vasubandhu (天親 *tianqin*, fl. 4th-5th c. AD), *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā* (唯識三十論頌 *weishi sanshi lunsong*), or “The Thirty Verses of Mere Consciousness”. In the cited passage, knowledge coincides with “letting go” or departing from the twofold “grasping-grasped” scene (here 相 *xiang*, or *nimitta*, a “sign” insofar as all appearances “signal” their ground/source). In his work on 玄奘 Xuanzang’s 成唯識論 *Chengweishi lun* translation of the *Vijñaptimātratā siddhi śāstra* (“Interpretation of the Achievements of Consciousness Alone”) by Dharmapāla 護法, Peter Lunde Johnson renders 相 *xiang* as “mental image”. See Johnson, *On Realizing There is Only the Virtual Nature of Consciousness*, 452 (Vasubandhu, n.d.). It is reasonable to conclude that Johnson’s rendering of *vijñaptimātratā* as “only the virtual nature of consciousness” is only virtually justifiable (Johnson, 2018).

31 The drama of the abandonment, nay betrayal of poetry is represented most vividly in Dante Alighieri’s *Comedy* (1481). See Andreacchio, “*Fleeing Evil*” (2022a). Plato’s “Buddhist” *redemption* of the City reduced to a Cave — the *polis* having decayed to the status of den for misanthropic misogyny — entails recognition of an ultimate harmony between ethics (the life of the City) and metaphysics (life outside of the City). That harmony corresponds to the one between political rhetoric and *eros*. While the two are irreducible to each other, as Leo Strauss noted, Plato does point to their sublime synthesis in “the rhetoric adumbrated in the *Phaedrus*” (“Review of Man in His Pride” by Strauss (1951), 396). Yet mysticism, or the mysterious dimension of human life, is *philosophical*: at the heart of the human lies a *discourse*, a *logos*, of which our “outer” speech is a mere projection. It is that “hidden” discourse that allows us to discover that “love” is not *originally* at odds with politics/morality (Plato, 2003).

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