Ezra Pound's Conversion to Confucianism*

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The paper aims to explore Pound's early discovery of Confucianism and his conversion to Confucianism. Pound's interest in Confucianism coincided with the time when Christianity, already "contaminated" by "historical diseases" in Pound's view, could not offer a valid vision by which to guide the spiritual life, resulting in losing self in a modern society. Pound discovers three main deficiencies of Christianity: lack of respect for individuality, the decline of ethics, and open attack upon nature, which could not provide solutions to Western problems. Pound turned to Confucianism to search the existence of modern man in the face of society, and nature, which results in Pound's Confucian medicine to cure Western moral obtuseness.

Keywords: Ezra Pound, Confucianism, Christianity, conversion

Introduction

Pound's conversion from a Protestant to a Confucian was not a sudden decision; his spiritual quest permeated his controversial life. It was T. S. Eliot that first questioned Pound's belief. Eliot's famous inquiry that "What does Mr. Pound believe" became a highly-quoted question when Pound's belief was under discussion. Pound's first direct response to Eliot took place two years later in his *Credo* (1930), "I have for a number of years answered such questions by telling the enquirer to read Confucius and Ovid" (Pound, 1975b, p. 53). Four years later, in 1934, Pound became more certain and made an announcement rather than an answer to Eliot's question in "Date Line": "As to what I believe: I believe the *Ta Hio*" (Pound, 1985, p. 86).

In his first answer to Eliot's question, he avoided the terminology "believe" but provided an alternative to his "enquirer"; however, in 1934 he vowed his singular faith "I believe the *Ta Hio*". That is the *Da Xue*¹ 大学 (Pound's *The Great Learning* or *The Great Digest*), one of Chinese classics *Four Books*. In 1955, Pound reiterated his belief, by referring to its Japanese title, in Canto LXXXVIII "I believe the Dai Gaku" (p. 581).

Pound's Confucianism has been grouped into three phases by Poundian scholars. LAN (2005) categorizes Pound's Confucianism into the period of imitative—from early years of contacting Confucianism to the year of 1928, creative—from the early 1930s to the end of the Second World War, and comprehensive—after the Second World War (p. 3). Cheadle (1997) offers a similar classification:

Pound's Confucianism began about 1910, and developed into the certainty of "belief" only after about two decades

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¹ The *Hanyu pinyin* system is used through the dissertation for Chinese names, dynasties, and titles of Chinese works. Pound's Romanization spellings of Chinese characters are preserved only in quotation from his works.

(ca.1930); the second period ran from the 1930s to the first half of the 1940s, and the last was after World War II and the fall of Mussolini's Italy. (p. 9)

Moreover, there are no remarkably divergent views on Pound's Confucianism in the first two periods. Namely, the first period is marked with Pound's strong interest in individual freedom and social responsibility and the second period is characterized with his fervent enthusiasm for social order accompanying his polemic political views. As for the third period, however, the opinions of the two main Poundian scholars are a little different. Cheadle (1997) considers "this last phase of his Confucianism is marked by a return to what he (Pound) regarded as Confucian fundamentals, with a concern for precise verbal definitions at the center of them all" (p. 9). Nevertheless, LAN (2005) argues that "Pound's postwar cantos were characterized by an arduous spiritual quest sustained by, among other things, his extensive quotations from Confucian texts and his intensified inscription of a Confucian anthropocosmic vision" (p. 5). Between the two views, the author has a more favorable attitude towards LAN's than Cheadle's; that is, Pound served as a real liberal Confucian disciple who pursued inner growth of mind in the last period of his Confucianism.

Pound's Discovery of Confucianism

What the author wants to make up is that Pound has developed a comparatively comprehensive understanding of Confucianism in his "imitative" phase. At the first period, Pound has established Confucian ethics. What he insisted and extended during his second and third periods could not be diverted from his fundamental recognition of Confucianism in the first period. What intrigued Pound in his Confucian study of the early years is that he had a tentative impression—Confucianism can cure Western diseases. It may be said that his lifelong devotion to Confucianism started with his disappointment and doubt towards Christianity in his early academic years because as a mainstream culture dominating Westerners' mind, Christianity could not provide a way to cope with Western problem—alienation. Pound's Confucianism, as Cheadle (1997) argues, is "born from his discontent with traditional Western monotheism" (p. 9). Monotheism, simply speaking, is Christianity. Just as Pound's belief in Confucianism is never static, his repudiation of Christianity never ceases along his life. Pound's conversion to Confucianism will be explored. Therefore, the first period of his Confucianism will be discussed in detail. Then some questions may be raised: "who or what led Pound to be a Confucian believer?", "why does Pound object to Christianity?", and "what is his Confucianism?". These questions will be answered in the proceeding part.

The first period of Pound's Confucianism can be divided into two phases: a random study and a serious study. In the phase of random study, Pound benefited from several scholars among which some are prominent Orientalists and who led him to know Confucius as well as Chinese poetry. In the phase of serious study, the outstanding achievement is the publication of Canto XIII and this phase culminated in 1928 with his first English translation of *Da Xue* 大学 (Pound's *The Great Learning*) which was rendered from Pauthier's French version of *Four Books*.

Pound's early contact with Confucianism started with his parents' interest in Christian mission in China. According to Stock (1982), Pound probably has read some Confucius "as early as July, 1907" (p. 176). Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), an English poet, and oriental art historian in the British Museum, opened a door for Pound to step into the real palace of Oriental paintings. Pound became a frequent visitor to Binyon who at that time served as Assistant Keeper of the British Museum in charge of the collection of Far Eastern paintings and color prints, and who vigorously worked on expatiating upon the nature and monument of Chinese art.

Pound (1981) regularly “ate at the WIENER CAFÉ” (p. 506) near the British Museum with Binyon’s group and their conversation definitely expanded his interest in some specific topics associated with Oriental art. Pound cherished a good memory of his time with Binyon and about three decades later he recalled his early days in London in his *Pisan Cantos* as “the British Museum era” (Pound, 1981, p. 506). He mourned “the loss of that cafe (in 1914)/meant the end of a B. M. era” when “the WIENER CAFÉ” “died into banking”. Pound also expressed his heart-felt gratitude to Binyon several lines later, “So it is to Mr Binyon that I owe, initially” (Pound, 1981, p. 507). In Canto LXXXVII, when he had been deeply, and almost totally, involved in Confucianism, he highly praised Binyon by comparing him to sequoias with the lines: “Only sequoias are slow enough./BinBin ‘is beauty’./‘Slowness is beauty’” (Pound, 1981, p. 572). Pound’s attendance at Binyon’s lectures, those conversations in Binyon’s group, and his frequent visit to the British Museum to inspect the collection of Chinese and Japan paintings—all this offered Pound a preliminary education in Oriental art and aroused his lifelong attachment to Chinese traditional culture.

The real mentor, however, who led Pound to Chinese literature and Chinese classics, was Allen Upward (1863-1926), the author of Confucian anthology, *Sayings of K’ung the Master* (1904). Two of Upward’s writings influenced Pound much: One was his book *The New Word* (published in 1907 but originally written in 1901), and the other was a sequence of verses entitled “Scented Leaves—from a Chinese Jar” (1913). The former caught Pound’s attention about the ideas of K’ung; while the later was the one that triggered Pound’s real curiosity of Chinese poetry and stimulated Pound to go “down to Upward’s family home in the Isle of Wight to soak some of it up” at the end of September 1913 (Carpenter, 1988, p. 218). Upward had no idea of Chinese language and he explained to Pound that *Scented Leaves* sequence of poem was made up out of his mind with the help of “a certain amount of Chinese reminiscence” (Carpenter, 1988, p. 218). Upward showed Pound the book from which he got inspiration, Giles’s *History of Chinese Literature* (1901), and also instigated Pound to read Pauthier’s *Les Quatres Lives de Philosophie Morale et Politique de la Chine* (1841). Pound not only admired Upward’s “esoteric knowledge of folklore and anthropology”, but also spoke highly of Upward’s thought. Pound stated in 1914, “his mind is as clear as Bacon’s... his middles are less indefinite than Plato’s” (Pound, 1975b, p. 418) and in 1945 he maintained his early opinion in *Pisan Canto* ““the mind of Plato... or that of Bacon’ said Upward/seeking parallel for his own” (Pound, 1981, p. 469). The master K’ung was highly praised by Upward for his wisdom and his refusing to talk about the unknown in *The New Word* (SUO, 2003, p. 18). About 10 years later, Pound claimed in Canto XIII, “Kung said nothing of the ‘life after death’” (Pound, 1981, p. 59).

Pound did not begin a rigorous study of the Confucian classics in 1913, Cheadle (1997) argues (p. 11). But it does not mean that his “looking at” Pauthier’s work left nothing on his mind because he wrote to Dorothy on 2 October: “I’m stocked up with K’ung fu Tsze, and Men Tsze, etc.. I suppose they’ll keep me calm for a week or so” (Carpenter, 1988, p. 219). Pound gained strength and calmness from his “looking at” Chinese classics, which directed his potential devotion to Confucianism. He was attracted by “Chinese colour”. Under inspiration of Upward’s *Scented Leaves*, he wrote a poem *A Song of the Degrees* which was published in the November 1913 *Poetry*: “Rest me with Chinese colours/For I think the glass is evil” (QIAN, 1995, p. 186).

Mary Fenollosa, the widow of Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), appeared just at the right time when Pound was eager to compose poems with “Chinese colour”, Pound himself said in “Date Line”: “Fenollosa’s work was given me in manuscript when I was ready for it. It saved me a great deal of time” (Pound, 1985, p. 77). Ernest Fenollosa was an enthusiastic Orientalist and his sudden death in 1908 left much work undone. One of

his unfinished works was Chinese and Japanese materials contained in his notebook. Pound met Mrs. Fenollosa in the fall of 1913. Their meeting accelerated Pound's conversion to Confucianism and stimulated his enthusiasm for Chinese and Japanese poetry. Fenollosa was the scholar who influenced Pound most and finally drove his career as a Confucian poet (Palandri, 1974, pp. 301-311).² Fenollosa's notebook started Pound's fervent study of Chinese poetry which resulted in his distinguished work *Cathy* (1915) that earned him the fame as "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time"³, and other works such as *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916) and *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* (1919). Pound started his serious study of Confucianism around 1915, resulting in the publication of Canto XIII (1925) and first translation of *Da Xue* based on Pauthier's (1928) French book. Then more discussions will be focused on Canto XIII because Confucian ethics Pound established in the short poem provides a panorama of Confucianism of the whole epic. Canto XIII was composed in 1923 and published with *A Draft of XVI Cantos* in 1925.

The significance of Canto XIII lies in the fact that Confucian ethics has been established in this short poem. During the years he composed Canto XIII, he concentrated on individuality but he also presented Confucian order and the unity of man and nature in the poem. Canto XIII begins with Confucius' peaceful walk "by the dynastic temple", "into the cedar grove", and "then out by the lower river" (p. 58). Such poetic lines of landscape description create a tranquil picture of an environment-friendly life and imply the ideal co-existence of man and nature. A pursuit of the unity with nature is not all Canto XIII offers in its presentation of Confucianism; what initially intrigued him was Confucius' respect for individuality, moreover what Pound increasingly stressed from the mid-1920s onward was Confucian concern for "order". The two major themes have been already explored and widely accepted by Poundian scholars, such as LAN's "respect for the 'nature' of the individual and an appeal to social order" (p. 106) and Cheadle's "individual integrity and social cohesion" (p. 22). What the author stresses is that a respect for individuality, as for Pound, is his search for his distinguished voice in poetry as well as a part of his search for the real self. "An appeal to social order" is Pound's intention to identify a human being's position in society. In his 1938 prose "Mang Tse", Pound showed special preference to the words written "on the bo leaves" so as to call for "We in the West need to begin the first chapter of the *Ta Hio*, not merely to grant casual admission of it in some out-house of our ethics or of our speculations" (Pound, 1985, p. 86). In short, Confucian ethics built in Canto XIII deals with the relationship between man and nature, man and society, and man and man. Albright (1999) argues:

Instead of a plan, Pound devised a strategy for creating a self-scrutinizing text, continually extending itself, ramifying outward, as it groped to comprehend its own prior meanings, to improvise new networks of connection, and to assimilate new material: a text shaped like a developing brain. New Cantos form themselves out of schemes to make sense of old Cantos: so the story of *The Cantos* comprises two intertwined stories, one concerning Pound's writing of the poem, the other concerning Pound's interpretations of what he had already written. (p. 59)

Albright's argument offers a clue to the author's observation that Pound's Confucianism in later cantos is interpretation and explanation of what has been presented in Canto XIII.

With Eliot's question "What does Mr. Pound believe" enters the second period of Pound's Confucianism. Pound's answer in 1934 became concise and confirmative "I believe the *Ta Hio*" (Pound, 1985, p. 86). What intrigued Pound is Confucian order in the book—establishing the inner order and then spread to the outside

² Pound was first addressed "a Confucian poet" respectfully by Palandri.

³ Eliot called Pound "the inventor of Chinese poetry for our time" in the introduction to *Selected Poems of Pound* (1973, p. 14).

society. The oath of his belief pushed Pound to a second step of serious study of Confucianism. Around the year of 1935, he started to learn Chinese characters so as to be able to study the original texts of Confucian scriptures. His Chinese learning contributed to more Confucian translations and direct quotations of Confucian doctrines or Chinese characters in his poetic and prose writings. Besides his English translation of excerpts of *Lun Yu* 论语 (1937), Pound retranslated *Da Xue* 大学 (1941, 1942) into Italian and offered a fresh Italian translation of another Chinese classics, *Zhong Yong* 中庸 or *The Doctrine of the Mean* (1945) for he was isolated from English speaking countries. The poems he composed in this phase, particularly *Seven Lakes Canto* (1937) and *China Cantos* (1940), are replete with Confucian ideas. His prose writing, including essays, correspondences, and broadcasts, abounds with reinterpretations of Confucian doctrines and such reinterpretations were often manifested in his political views of this period.

With the end of the Second World War, Pound came to his third stage of Confucian exploration and also the third serious Confucian study. The incarceration cut him off from the chaotic world and his controversial political condition and the confinement offered him a tranquil mind to explore the essence of the Confucian classics. Pound's post-war cantos are marked with a grueling spiritual quest, which is quite different from his poetry during the 1930s and the early 1940s—filling with political and economic reformations. Besides explicitly expressing his Confucian ideas with ample quotations from Confucian texts, Pound committed himself to a systematic and complete Confucian translation in this period. During the gray years in Washington, DC, he published his English translation of *Da Xue* 大学 (*The Great Digest*, 1947) and *Zhong Yong* 中庸 (*The Unwobbling Pivot*, 1947)—both were translated during the dark days at American Discipline Training Center (DTC) near Pisa, and *Lun Yu* 论语 (*The Analects*, 1950). The first three of the *Four Books* were later published in one volume with the title *Confucius: The Great Digest, The Unwobbling Pivot, The Analects* (1969). As for *Meng Zi* 孟子, Pound translated four chapters of Book One into English and published them in 1947. Moreover, Pound translated *Shi Jing* 诗经 into English and published it with the title *The Confucian Odes, The Classics Anthology Defined by Confucius* (1954).

Pound's Conversion to Confucianism

Pound's conversion to Confucianism originated from his contemplation on the disordered Western society. In his view, "Today the whole Occident is bathed daily in mental sewage" (Pound, 1975b, p. 76). He pursued what Confucianism could offer and what the West lacked. His fondness for Confucianism kept abreast with his aversion to religion, especially Christianity. "A religion is damned, it confesses its own ultimate impotence, the day it burns its first heretic" (Pound, 1975b, p. 52). As for Pound, Christianity degenerated and "The Church had lost its faith anyhow, and mess, unholy and slithering mess, supervened" (Pound, 1975b, p. 77). "Fall of Church" already pushed Europeans into a "Time when Church no longer had faith ENOUGH to believe that with proper instruction and argument the unbeliever or heretic could be made to see daylight" (Pound, 1975b, p. 77). As a matter of fact, Pound asserts that "Christianity and/or religion in the anglo-saxon world of our time has been something optional. Some of us went to church in our childhood and some didn't" (Pound, 1970b, p. 26). As a result, "'Belief' as the pious once used the term is alien to our age" (Pound, 1970b, p. 26). Modern Europeans lost faith in Christianity. As for Pound, his unfavorable comment of Christianity goes with his favorable intention toward Confucianism. Contrasting Confucianism with Christianity, he found Christianity is

deficient in three aspects. Firstly, Christianity lacks of respect for individuality⁴; secondly, it is not able to provide ethics that teaches man a way of living; and lastly its focus on human-centered concept results in a violent attack on nature.

The first and foremost problem of Christianity, as Pound revealed in his "Imaginary Letters VII" (1918), is:

Christianity... has reduced itself to one principle: "Thou shalt attend to thy neighbour's business in preference to thine own".

It is upon this basis that the churches are organized, it is upon this basis that they flourish, (bar one old established conspirator's club which exploits a more complicated scenic arrangement). (Pound, 1975a, p. 71)

The essential nature of Christianity, in Pound's view, is to spy into others' life rather than focus on his own. Pound's condemnation against religion did not cease. Later in a 1921 essay "Axiomata", his criticism became more poignant: The organized religions were usually "exploitation, control of the masses" (Pound, 1975b, p. 50), and the greatest tyranny derived from Christian dogma that imposed its will upon the individual. Pound defined a belief as "a cramp, and thence progressively a paralysis or atrophy of the mind" (Pound, 1975b, p. 52). However, Pound never denied the existence of god. He announced at the beginning of the same essay "Axiomata", "God... exists", and "The universe exists" (Pound, 1975b, p. 49); but Pound's God is not the religious God but an ethical God who is able to guide and teach people to live in the earthly world. Religion, according to Pound's essay on Arnold Dolmetsch, begins with myth, while "a cult, a company of people who... understand each other's nonsense about the gods" arises around it. The decline of the cult begins when the core of subjective experience congeals into dogma, which the cultists attempt to impose on others (Jackson, 1968, p. 74)⁵.

The second problem of Christianity is its "little concern[ed] with ethics" (Pound, 1968, p.95). In Canto XIII, Pound condemned the useless metaphysical-theological speculation by Kung's saying "nothing of the life 'after death'". The decline of Christianity, according to Pound, "began a flight from reality" (Pound, 1996, p. 133). Pound (1975b) once claimed: "The essence of religion is the *present tense*" (p. 70).

"The present tense" was used to highlight the importance of practice or action into real life. Pound made a further movement to condemn European civilization, "If you squint at European thought from one angle it will appear to burrow into the school and say farewell to reality" (Pound, 1970b, p. 30). The well-known announcement about Pound's belief is that "I believe the *Ta Hio*". The *Ta Hio: the Great Learning* was published in 1928, heavily based on Pauthier's French version of the *Four Books*. There's little doubt that *The Great Learning* initially intrigued Pound and profoundly influenced Pound. What intrigued Pound, the author believes, is the practical nature of *The Great Learning*. "There was nothing mystical or metaphysical about it.

⁴ Individuality is widely recognized as a social value dominated in Western culture, which highly advocates individual liberty and the distinguished quality of oneself from others. According to Lukes, the individual took shape during the 18th century; one the author shall term the concept of *individuality* strictly speaking (as cited in Hinchman, 1990, p. 762). In the English-speaking world, John Stuart Mill, a famous individualist, contributed the most to maintaining the power of the individuality. He wrote in 1840: In sober truth... the general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind. In ancient history, in the Middle Ages, and in a diminishing degree through the long transition from feudality to the present time, the individual was a power in himself... At present individuals are lost in the crowd. The only power deserving the name is that of masses, and of governments while they make themselves the organ of the tendencies and instincts of masses. This is as true in the moral and social relations of private life as in public transactions... As the various social eminences which enabled persons entrenched on them to disregard the opinion of the multitude gradually become levelled... there ceases to be any social support for nonconformity... (as cited in Morgan, 1942, p. 434). Morgan stated in 1942, "Since then there have been many protests against forces tending to weaken individuality in the modern world" (p. 434). Ezra Pound, the author contends, is one of them because he deplored in 1927, "The drear horror of American life can be traced to two damnable roots, or perhaps it is only one root: The loss of all distinction between public and private affairs" (Pound, 1975b, p. 216).

⁵ Jackson (1968) made a good discussion about Pound's view on religion and mystery.

Here was a practical, ethical system divorced from any religion or religious institution", Nolde (1983) continues, "It pointed a way to world peace and harmony which did not require priests and churches and dogma" (p. 19). Actually, for Pound, the Christian "concentration or emphasis on eternity is not social" although "Rome was the responsible ruler". And thus it fails to provide people a way of life. However, Pound had a penetrating insight into Confucian ethics. In "On the Degrees of Honesty in Various Occidental Religions", Pound (1975b) claims "it appears to me that Confucius has in his dimension a pre-eminence over other founders of ethical systems; while yielding nothing to any of them in other domains" (p. 68). In the same prose, he analyzes the reason why Christianity could not reside in the mind of Chinese:

It is quite certain that Christianity appears or has in known instances appeared both immoral and anti-statal to the serious Chinese literate. He saw it as such when the Jesuits were inserting it into China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Disruptive of family life, disturbing to the quiet and order of the empire, inducing disrespect to the dead and destructive to Confucian ethics. (Pound, 1975b, p. 65)

To put it shortly, Christianity is "destructive to Confucian ethics". A year later in 1940, his condemnation of Christianity became more obvious: "It may be said here that the followers of Confucius and of Mencius were horrified at the immoral and anti-social nature of Christianity and for a long time kept it out of China on those grounds" (Pound, 1996, p. 133).

The third deficiency of Christianity, sharing some similarity with that of Greek philosophy argued by Pound in "Mang Tsze" (1938), lies in the cruel fact that it is "almost an attack upon nature" (Pound, 1975b, p. 86); however, "at no point does the Confucio-Mencian ethic or philosophy splinter and split away from organic nature" (Pound, 1975b, p. 87). Nature, in Pound's world, is an organic whole. As he highly praised nature, he strongly denounced anything which was contra nature. In his poetry and prose, he ceaselessly condemned usury being CONTRA NATURAM (Pound, 1981, p. 230): "The usurer is damned with the sodomite. Usury judged with sodomy as 'contrary to natural increase', contrary to the nature of live things (animal and vegetable) to multiply" (Pound, 1975b, p. 61).

As for Pound, "Usury and revival of ancient Jewish texts (*Old Testament*) may, in part, have been responsible" for "moral and spiritual bankruptcy" of the Church (Pound, 1996, p. 133). Unlike Christ who "founded an ethics of the soul and its afterlife" (Cheadle, 1997, p. 18), "Confucius offers a way of life, an Anschauung or disposition toward nature and man and a system for dealing with both" (Pound, 1970b, p. 24).

Another reason for Pound's strong opposition to Christianity is that Christianity is monotheism. As for Pound (1975b):

The glory of the polytheistic *anschauung* is that it never asserted a single and obligatory path for everyone. It never caused the assertion that everyone was fit for initiation and it never caused an attempt to force people into a path alien to their sensibilities. (p. 56)

Pound hated despotism and valued "recognition of differences, of the right of differences to exist" (Pound, 1985, p. 298). Comparing Catholic Church with Protestantism, Pound prefers the former. He blames Luther as "merely a barbarian bore" and "Protestantism has no theology" at all (Pound, 1975b, p. 57). In the detention camp at Pisa, when Pound was allowed to speak one person each day, "he picked the camp's Catholic chaplain" (Flory, 2003, p. 147). The chaplain Pound chose was Father Aloysius Vath. He wondered "why Pound, who was not a Catholic, had chosen a priest rather than one of the two Protestant ministers". Pound's answer was "What can the other guys tell me? You can tell me something". The chaplain recalled, "He asked me a lot about

the Catholic religion". On June 26, 1945, Father Aloysius Vath claimed, "For a Confucianist and a Catholic, we get along very well" (Flory, 2003, p. 143). Pound's preference to Catholic rather than Protestantism probably results from "Directions for Confession". "Pound is developing his larger point, about the compatibility of Confucianism and Catholicism, by noting the importance of the disciplines of self-examination in both" (Flory, 2003, p. 149).

Conclusions

However, Pound (1975b) finally turned to Confucianism. He wrote in his 1939 prose "Degrees of Honesty in Occidental Religions":

I might almost say that for a period of nearly fifty years I have never met Christian FAITH... Confucian faith I can conceive. I can conceive of a man's believing that if, and in measure as, he brings order into his own consciousness (his own "innermost") that order will emanate from him. The cycle of Chinese history, the reception of the "mandate" (called the mandate of heaven) by various dynasties, seems to offer demonstrable evidence of this process. (p. 66)

Obviously, Pound recognized the core of Confucianism—the harmony created by the unity of the inner transcendence and the mandate of heaven. Pound (1975b) ended this prose by comparing Confucianism and Christianity:

Both Confucianism and Christianity propose a state of sincerity which is almost unattainable, but the Christian proposals are mixed with all sorts of disorder, whereas a Confucian progress offers chance for a steady rise, and defects either in conduct or in theory are in plain violation of its simple and central doctrine. (p. 69)

The ending delivers two profound meanings. Firstly, the purpose of pursuing a kind of spiritual state "which is almost unattainable" makes Confucianism and Christianity in common. In Confucianism, the almost-unreachable state is called *Zhong Yong* 中庸 (Pound's *pivot*); in Christianity, it may be a kind of state which ordinary people can talk with God through prayer. Secondly, Pound attaches importance to the spiritual elevation of an individual. He finds Confucian believers get chance to improve themselves steadily and constantly—that's a process of establishing order within self; however, Christian believers suffer from "all sorts of disorder" and chaos on the way to achieve that holy state and he also signs "I see almost no spiritual elevation in the *Old Testament*, and the *Talmud*" (Pound, 1975b, p. 68).

Pound's great discovery is to cure Western disease by Confucianism. In 1937, just at the eve of World War II, Pound appealed for "Immediate need of Confucius" in which he diagnosed Western disease, that is, "Western disease shows in sixty percent racket on ink money" (Pound, 1975b, p. 76). He reiterated, "That is a *symptom* of moral obtuseness" (Pound, 1975b, p. 76). The "sixty percent racket on ink money", the author is sure, refers to usury—what Pound repeatedly, vehemently attacked with any possible opportunity in his prose, poetry, and etc.. Furthermore, in Pound's view, usury, in part, has been responsible for the "moral and spiritual bankruptcy" of the Church (Pound, 1996, p. 133). The Church, on one hand, could not attract people's frequent visit on Sundays because people lost faith in Christ. On the other hand, Christianity itself is deficient in three aspects: lack of respect for individuality, little concern with ethics, and an attack on nature. Therefore, Christianity is impotent to solve the problems generated in Western society. Pound knew this point perfectly well so that he turned to Confucianism instead to find the power of curing Western "moral obtuseness".

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