

Lecture 2 Two Kinds of Truths and the Difference in Their Universality

Last time we discussed that every cultural system at the beginning has to manifest itself through an aperture. It therefore has limitations, from which we may talk about particularity. Although its manifestation has limitations, once a concept or an idea emerges through the aperture, this concept or idea then has certain truthfulness. In other words, when it manifests itself and becomes a concept or an idea, it is a truth with universality. All truths have universality. That there is particularity through aperture or limitation is clearly an analytic proposition. That ideas or truths are universal is also clearly an analytic proposition.

However, this is the universality of truth loosely expressed when we talk about the manifestations of cultural systems. Since there are different kinds of truths, all with universality, we should take a closer look at whether their universality is one and the same, or it may also come in different kinds reflecting truths of different kinds. It seems that there is more than just one kind of truths. Clearly there are scientific truths as well as non-scientific truths; there are truths of empirical science, e.g. physics and chemistry, and truths of formal science, e.g. mathematics. Since there are different kinds of truths, the universality in them may, it seems, hardly be the same. However, it does not seem to make sense to talk about the particularity of truths or the particularity of universality. It is acceptable in our ordinary language to use these terms loosely. But strictly speaking, we cannot use the term “particularity” here. The terms “uniqueness” or “individuality” would be more appropriate when we refer to different kinds of truths. There seems to be different kinds of universality corresponding to these different kinds of truths. This difference in universality is the “uniqueness of universality”. At this point, we need to consider when we can adequately use the term “universal” and when we can use the term “particular”. These words belong to two different domains. According to Aristotle, we can use “universal” to describe a concept. All concepts are universal. The term “particular” can only be applied to individual things, namely, events. These two belong to two different categories. That is to say that “universal” can only refer to truths, concepts; “particular” can only refer to individual events, to empirical phenomena or sensible objects. If truths are universal, then what do we mean by “the uniqueness of truths”, or “the uniqueness of universality”?

First, let us look at the term “truth”. We use this term everyday, but few people adequately understand what it means. There are many theories in Western philosophy exploring the problem of “what is truth”. We will not go into those theories here.

We should first realize that there are generally two kinds of truths: extensional truths and intensional truths. Extensional truths generally refer to scientific truths, e.g. truths of natural science or mathematics. Mathematics is a formal science, whereas natural science is a material science. As long as it is a science, whether formal or material, its truths are extensional. Bertrand Russell mentioned in his *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* that there were two basic principles in scientific knowledge: the principle of extensionality and the principle of atomicity. We must presuppose these two principles in order to establish scientific knowledge. Why do we need the principle of extensionality? Extensional knowledge is independent of our subjective attitude. The truth which is independent of the subject and can be objectively asserted is an extensional truth. Let's take a tree as an example. If you admire the beauty of this tree from an aesthetic standpoint, this feeling pertains to the subject; it is not scientific knowledge. To study the tree scientifically is to study botany which is a science; its conclusion from studying the tree can be objectively asserted. This kind of truth is extensional. All propositions in science are extensional propositions; there are no intentional truths or intensional propositions. Russell first used these terms to make this distinction. According to him, all intensional truths are intensional propositions. He was more modest at this stage when he still used these terms. Later he abandoned the term “intensional propositions” altogether and referred to them as “propositional attitudes”. He considered them merely subjective attitudes concerning propositions, pertaining to the subject. Let's use another example. Suppose the existence of God has been proven, then “God exists” can be objectively asserted and it would be an extensional proposition. But when God's existence has not been proven and I say, “I believe God exists,” this statement is not an extensional proposition. There is no objectivity or universality in it, because it pertains to my subjective attitude, “I believe”. You may not believe it, and I can also change my belief someday. Statements starting with “I believe”, “I think” are all intensional propositions, or, as Russell later called them, merely “propositional attitudes.”

We should note that Russell made this distinction in order to discuss scientific knowledge and mathematical knowledge. All the propositions in math and science are extensional propositions. None of them can be intensional propositions, or statements that have to do with subjective attitudes and are in fact not propositions. The Logical Positivists that came later basically followed this line of thought and even expanded on this distinction. They recognized that only extensional propositions had cognitive significance. All statements without cognitive significance, or statements that cannot be extensionalized are not propositions to them; the term “proposition” should not even be used here. From here, they further asserted that the statements in metaphysics were not propositions because they did not have cognitive meaning. Up to this point, the Logical Positivists were not mistaken in making this distinction. But they jumped too hastily from the assertion that “metaphysical statements have no cognitive meaning” to the conclusion that “metaphysics is meaningless.” A statement having no cognitive meaning can be considered as having no scientific meaning, but it is not necessarily meaningless. The Logical Positivists defined the term “meaning” too narrowly as applying only to extensional knowledge. Without such cognitive meaning, metaphysics was therefore, to them, meaningless. The statements of metaphysics were then no more than “conceptual poems” to satisfy our feelings in the same way as poetry appealed to our emotions.

These conclusions are not necessarily wrong if we accept and follow their line of thought, for that was how they defined the issue. If extensional truth is the only criterion and if there is no other truth than extensional truth, then their conclusion is tenable. I have already mentioned that there are intensional truths in addition to extensional truths. But are intensional truths really truths? In other words, are there intensional propositions? Must all propositions be extensional propositions? In fact, we must recognize intensional truths. If metaphysics is mere conceptual poems to satisfy our subjective feelings, then it is not truth. But do statements in metaphysics, as well as the teachings in Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity, etc. merely satisfy our subjective feelings? They are of course not extensional truths, but that does not mean that they are therefore not truths. They are intensional truths. You cannot simply dismiss them as “conceptual poems”. Well, let’s look at poems first. Li Shangyin’s poems, Du Fu’s poems, Li Bai’s poems are great poetry, not scientific knowledge. Do they then express nothing? The novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* is fiction,

and not an account of historical events. But why do we enjoy reading this literary work so much and are often moved to tears by it? It is because great literature expresses the truths of human life and arouses the same feelings in us the readers. These are truths in human situations of happiness and sorrow, a reality outside the realm of science. They are certainly not extensional truths. Human life has many facets, of which scientific knowledge is but one. Why should you only recognize this facet of human life as truth, but not other facets?

Considered from this perspective, poetry and literature are not scientific knowledge, yet not void of content. The expression of their content has truthfulness—the truths in human life as such, human life as a whole. When life is taken as a whole, it is very concrete and rich of content. So it is of course wrong to single out science and knowledge—a small portion of life—as truth, and then use it as a criterion to reject life as a whole. Poetry and literature are part of the rich content of human life as a whole. Then what about the statements in metaphysics, the statements about God in Christianity, and the statements about *prajna*, *mukti* in Buddhism, etc.? These are also not scientific truths, not extensional propositions. Do they still have truthfulness as poetry and literature do? They certainly do, if we recognize human life as a whole in its richness. It is self-denial to reject them and recognize only scientific truths. Yet if you recognize the significance of these statements, how would you explain their truthfulness, their truths? None of these statements are extensional propositions. In this respect, they are similar to poetry and literature, but nonetheless they are not the same. They all have truths, but their truthfulness are not identical. The truths in these statements are different from the truths of poetry and literature, therefore you cannot label them as “conceptual poems”. The statements in these teachings are neither extensional truths, nor poetry, yet they still have truths. It is then clear that we must also recognize another kind of truths—intensional truths—in addition to extensional truths.

Now, how shall we understand intensional truths? We will start with Russell's definition. Intensional truths cannot be separated from subjective attitudes. For example, *Dream of the Red Chamber* is the truth in life expressed out of Cao Xueqin's subjective emotional life. The statements in religion, in Daoism, etc. are expressed out of subjective truths. They cannot be separated from the subject. These statements express intensional truths. But intensional truths are more than subjective attitudes. More accurately speaking

they cannot be separated from subjectivity. The subjectivity of a literary writer lies in his feelings. But the subjectivity in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius is not a literary writer's feelings; it is also reason. Confucius's *ren* (仁) is apparently not the feeling expressed in a poem. Even if you want to emphasize that it also satisfies our feelings, it is totally different from what a poem does to our feelings. This difference needs to be distinguished and duly recognized. What poetry and literature satisfy in us is a feeling, or, to use a Kantian term, a sensible feeling. It belongs to sensibility. The feeling that *ren* satisfies is not a sensible feeling. It is also reason. Surely this is not the reason expressed in science, logic, and mathematics, but it nonetheless is still reason. It used to be referred to as Dao. Dao is reason, not feeling. *Ren* is feeling, but it is also reason.

So we must also recognize intensional truths which pertain to the subject. As truths, they have certain universality. The word "certain" here does not convey reservation or modesty as it usually does in everyday language. The "certain" here means "corresponding". In other words, the truths have complete, appropriate universality corresponding to their being intensional. Extensional truths have universality corresponding to their extensionality, and intensional truths have universality corresponding to their intensionality. Both kinds of truths have universality. On the other hand, there is no universality in personal feelings. When Du Fu wrote a poem, nobody else had this same subjective feeling, and no one else could express it the same way as he did. But once the poem was done, the truth in the poem expressed out of his special, subjective feeling had universality, namely, intensional universality. The poem would arouse the same feeling in every reader---a proof of its universality. The specific feeling that inspired the poet to write a poem was very unique. The poem would not have been written without this feeling, and this feeling might be very different the next day. Yet once written the poem became an objective work for us to appreciate and resonate. Its truth clearly has intensional universality. So poetry or literature, appealing to feelings, has intensional universality. Even more clearly full of truths are the teachings of Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. These teachings are not science; they have intensional, not extensional, universality. Nowadays many people want to force interpret Chinese teachings as science, as if that would elevate the value of Chinese teachings. This is a totally wrong approach. It only muddles these teachings. For they do not

belong in the realm of science, why force them into it? It only shows that these people do not understand these teachings.

Since there are both intensional and extensional truths, we therefore cannot accept the Logical Positivists' simple division of language. Language is needed to express truths. Since they recognize only one kind of truths, they divided the language into two distinct groups: scientific language, and the rest as emotive language. Metaphysical statements therefore for them fell under emotive language, satisfying only our subjective feelings. This division clearly does not work. Prof. Tang Chun-Yi once suggested a three-way division of language according to its actual usage: Scientific language, emotive language as in literature, and heuristic language which represents the teachings of Dao or Reason. The statements in philosophy, metaphysics, and religion are clearly in this last group. The fault with the Logical Positivists was that they turned their dislike of philosophy and religion into dismissing these statements as emotive language. Yet morality and religion are the most vital parts of human spirit, how can you reduce them to mere feelings? You may not like them, but you cannot thereby objectively deny their value. On this point, the Logical Positivists were really illogical.

Heuristic language is intended to enlighten people. The *Great Learning* says, "The way (method) of the Great Learning is to illuminate luminous virtue." Buddhism expounds the ways to transform ignorance (無明, *wuming*) into enlightenment (明, *ming*). These teachings point to "enlightenment" and try to enlighten our lives. This enlightenment cannot come from science or literature. Literature does not enlighten, instead it often clouds our minds, which is why Plato disliked literature. All morality and religion fall within the realm of "enlightenment". This is a hugely important realm. It's not about feeling. The problem of our present culture is precisely the lack of enlightenment. People prize scientific language; everything is measured by science and technology. Other than science and technology, people only know emotive language. Heuristic language is hardly valued any more. But unrestrained feelings let people bounce and bustle aimlessly, and completely exposed feelings reduce people to animals. As animals, men's sense of guilt disappears, which marks the fall of humanity. Only humans have the sense of guilt. Nowadays, obliterating the sense of guilt, people are only concerned with technical problems. All questions about morality are reduced to technical problems. Nothing is right or wrong in a moral sense, only right or

wrong in a technical sense. People use every kind of excuses, every kind of scientific terminology to whitewash the sense of guilt. All concepts of good or bad, right or wrong are seen as technically correct or incorrect. It is certainly not morally wrong to install a light bulb erroneously, only bad workmanship. [But not everything can be viewed this way.] God does not have the sense of guilt, nor do animals. But we must have this uniquely human sense. For humans, the lack of the sense of guilt indicates the fall of humanity. This is a serious problem of our time.

I just used Russell's term to help bring out the concept of intensional truth. To recognize intensional truths is to recognize intensional universality. We may use another pair of terms and describe intensional truths as intensive truths, and extensional truths as extensive truths. These terms express our meaning even more adequately here. Extensive truths have to do with mathematical, physical quantity, whereas intensive truths do not. Intensional truths have to do with life; only life has intensity. Intensity pertains to life, pertains to the Subject. Only Life as the Subject can express intensity. Morality, religion must be manifested through the Subject. This Subject cannot be treated as an object of our objective, scientific studies. Nowadays people study humans through psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc; this is scientifically studying humans merely as objects, just as we do with atoms or electrons. Under such studies, humans become external objects and are no longer humans. The Subject becomes only an object, and thereby loses its significance. Well, moral theories also study humans, but they are rather morally evaluating humans than studying them as objects. The significance of being human, the Subject, is thereby preserved. To borrow another term, if in moral studies we look at humans existentially, the Subject can never be objectified. This is the real Subject where morality and religion always rest. Once objectified, the significance of the Subject is lost. Also lost is the "light" (as in "enlightenment") from the Subject: the "light" that manifests, expresses values, and judges right or wrong. When objectified, the "light" of the Subject turned into the discursive understanding in our scientific pursuits to establish scientific knowledge. When we study an object scientifically, the will and thinking process involved is also a "light", but it is no longer the "light" within the true Subject that expresses value and judges right or wrong. The light of the true Subject disappears and becomes the "light" of discursive understanding,

i.e. the “light” in science. More precisely, once you turn the Subject into an object of scientific enquiry, there is no more “light”, only the understanding in such enquiry remains.

Therefore in order to preserve this “light”, we must re-establish the Subject as the Subject, in other words, we must treat humans as humans, not as objects or things. As humans, the Subject can be preserved, and the “light” emitted from the Subject can truly shine. It is not the reason in discursive understanding, but the “light” in value and moral judgments. This true “light” emitted from the Subject is what Wang Yangming called *liangzhi* (良知, conscience). The Subject of this conscience can never be objectified. As soon as it is objectified, the conscience, the “light” disappears. The conscience as light can only shine through when you consciously consider yourself a human being, and existentially recognize yourself as the Subject, not merely as an object. The rational thinking activities are also emitted from the Subject, and it is the understanding which establishes scientific knowledge. Western philosophers all emphasized this side, but they did not realize that there is no conscience or light in the understanding. Kant was more modest. Besides understanding, he also discussed practical reason. He presented the Subject through practical reason, regarded humans as humans. So Kant emphasized that you should always see humans as ends, not as means. To see humans as ends is to regard them as the Subject, from which the light can shine. For Kant, this was the realm of practical reason, not theoretical reason. Practical reason is the *liangzhi* (conscience) in Chinese philosophy. Confucius's *ren* is practical reason. Intensional truths, intensive truths all rest with the Subject. I often call this realm “the learning of the Subject” or “the learning of life”. This is the same “life” when Jesus says, “I am the life, I am the truth, and I am the way.” This is the life when Confucius says, “A person's life is as it should be, a crooked life needs luck to survive.” It is certainly not the life you study in biology. You will never find this “life” of Jesus or Confucius through scientific study in biology.

Now we need to take a closer look at the difference between intensional truths and extensional truths. Both are truths with universality, but each is in a different sense. Well, what is the difference? We may use another pair of terms to distinguish the two: extensional universality is abstract universality, and intensional universality is concrete universality. When we talk about concepts, we usually refer to concepts within the realm of scientific knowledge. All concepts have abstract universality. Universality is associated with the

abstract since Aristotle. Whatever is universal is also abstract; whatever is concrete is also particular: that's the so-called concrete particular. Plato emphasized Ideas. Ideas, according to Plato, belong to the Intelligible world, and represent ideals. He had very high moral impulses. In Aristotle, ideas became concepts. According to Kant's distinction, concepts belong to understanding, whereas ideas belong to the higher realm of reason. Based on this distinction, Aristotle's "concepts" already lost the significance of Plato's ideas. Aristotle called these concepts categories, and listed ten categories for understanding objects and establishing knowledge. Because he focused on concepts, he only saw that the universality of concepts is abstract, and whatever is particular is concrete, meaning particular phenomenon. This is to say that Aristotle remained in the realm of extensional truths. The thought expressed within this realm is what Heidegger termed "representative thought". Through the concepts, the categories, you may represent every aspect of an object, all its universal attributes and characteristics. For Heidegger, such thought does not belong in ontology. Western philosophy since Aristotle has always engaged itself within the realm of "representative thoughts". No wonder there was later a school of Logical Positivists who recognized science as the only criterion for truth. Heidegger instead wanted to trace a step back from this representative thought and to talk about "original thought". His "original thought" was a kind of enlightenment (*ming*). He wanted to return to the enlightenment, to grasp the enlightenment. You have to trace a step back from the "representative thought", back to the Subject, in order to reach back to the origin. This stepping back, in order to grasp the enlightenment not in the realm of extensional truths, immediately opened up the realm of intensional truths. Within this realm, the universality is concrete universality.

Concrete universality refers to truths, not events. Ordinarily we would use the term "concrete" to refer to events. But the term "concrete" in "concrete universality" does not describe events, because intensional truths are not events, nor occurrences, nor happenings. For example, Confucius's *ren* is not an event. *Ren* is reason. It is universal, and at the same time concrete, manifested in people. To use another example, God is concrete, not abstract; but God is also universal, not an event.

Intensional universality is "concrete universality", a term coined by Hegel. Western philosophy since Aristotle dealt only with abstract universality. It is difficult for them to comprehend concrete universality, but it is rather easy for us Chinese. For example, *ren* is a

universal principle, not an abstract concept similar to the concepts in science, math, or logic. Confucius taught us that *ren* could be clearly manifested in real life right in front of our eyes. Mancius expressed *ren* as sympathy (惻隱之心, compassion), definitely concrete and real. Yet *ren* is not an event, it is universal, with concrete universality. This is a very meaningful term. Hegel's philosophy went beyond the tradition of Aristotle, so he was not regarded as a main stream, traditional philosopher. The major Western philosophical traditions were the thinkers like Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, down to Russell, etc, who by and large engaged in abstract, conceptual analyses. Hegel did not concentrate on representative thoughts, or conceptual analyses, but on concrete philosophy, e.g. morality, religion, aesthetics, history, etc. These were Hegel's emphases, but largely outside of Western traditions. This was part of the reason why Hegel's thoughts were never popular, partly also because there were problems with his way of delivering these thoughts. In some respects, Hegel's philosophy seems easier for us to grasp.

Let's now consider this concrete universality. We just mentioned that *ren* is not an abstract idea; it can be concretely manifested in our real life. Confucius always directed us to the concrete incidents in real life as manifestations of *ren*. For example, Filiality (孝, *xiao*) is *ren* manifested in the special relationship of children to their parents. Although the situation or relationship is special, particular, what is manifested is the universal truth of filiality. There are infinite manifestations of filiality; it is constantly manifested with different degrees of intensity in the concrete, dynamic flow of life, and cannot be accomplished once and for all. The concrete universality and abstract universality are therefore completely different. Scientific truths are not manifested in a dynamic, living process. Once they are established, they are forever valid. Once a mathematical truth or theorem is proved, it is forever acknowledged. There is no variance, and it does not require constant re-proofing. There is no subjectivity in such truths, therefore there is also no elasticity. On the other hand, concrete universality is elastic, precisely because it is concrete. Intensional truths have universality as well as particularity. Yet the particularity here does not refer to events, since truths are not events. That's why we call it "concrete universality". Normally speaking, universality is abstract, how can it be concrete? But with intensional truths, we have to consider the concrete universality properly and seriously. This universality has a special meaning because it is at the same time universal and particular, yet

not an event. Our old Chinese tradition is full of such teachings, although not in these terms. If you explain these terms to Wang Yangmin, to Zhizhe Dashi, they would have no difficulty at all, for they had always taught about truths with concrete universality.

I will give you an example. Take Contemplating the Empty (觀空), Contemplating the Unreal (觀假) and Contemplating the Middle-Way (觀中) in *On Contemplating the Middle-Way* (中論). If you merely contemplate the Empty, like the Hinayana Buddha does, you would only understand the Empty as an abstraction. The Empty represents universality. In Buddhist terms, universality is called “equality”, which means the same everywhere, universal. The Empty represents universality---the nature of all things, or dharma. Buddhism believes that the nature of all and every dharma is empty (no substance). Although each dharma is particular as this thing is different from that thing, the nature of each is the same--empty. To contemplate the Empty is to realize the equality (universality) in all these dharma as empty. Merely contemplating the Empty and ignoring the Unreal, concentrating on the Empty and confined by the Empty are the limits of Hinayana Buddhism. When someone devotes his life to the Empty alone, he is stuck in abstraction in his life. It has only abstract universality. Mahayana Buddhism goes beyond merely contemplating the Empty to also contemplate the Unreal. It advances from contemplating the universality of the Empty into also contemplating the particulars. The Unreal refers to dharma with unreal names, all particulars. Only bodhisattvas can grasp the Unreal. Buddhism considers all phenomena as unreal names, fictitious and illusory, all particulars. A person needs to acquire concrete knowledge for particular things before he could reach the status of bodhisattva. But if the bodhisattva gets stuck on concrete knowledge, this is again a big problem. One has to advance further to Contemplating the Middle-Way as a Buddha. This does not mean that there is a Middle-Way separate from the Empty and the Unreal. If it does, the Middle-Way becomes another abstraction. From the perspective of Buddha, Contemplating the Middle-Way is to accept the Unreal while realizing the Empty as universal. In other words, it is to understand the universal through the particular, and to understand the Unreal through the universal Empty. This complete merging of the Empty and the Unreal is the Middle-Way. Therefore the universal that Buddha sees is the universality concreted by particular dharma, and the particulars that Buddha sees are the particular dharma equalized by the universal. These two are inseparable for Buddha. This used to be labeled “inconceivable”, but in fact

there is nothing mysterious about it if you understand it properly. The particulars at this level (Buddha's) are the universalized, i.e. "emptied" particulars. So strictly speaking, these universalized particulars are the real particulars in Buddhist teachings; these are the true concrete particulars as seen through Buddha's perspective. If so, the concrete particulars we usually consider as opposed to the abstract universality are not concrete at all for Buddha. For Buddha, such particulars are actually abstract. "Abstract" here means "dissected and broken". By the same token, the universality that Buddha comprehends is quite different from the universality of abstract concepts, but rather is concreted universality. They are of quite different levels of reality.

At first we said that the term particular refers to the concrete and the term universal refers to the abstract, but through our analyses and discussions we have advanced to this much higher level. From the perspective of this higher level, the particulars we first mentioned are strictly speaking not truly concrete, but rather "dissected and broken" particulars. Such particulars are abstract, in the state of attachment (執著, *zhizhuo*), belonging to consciousness (識, *shi*) in Buddhism. Whatever establishes scientific knowledge, whether it is sensibility or understanding, belongs to consciousness. The particulars for Buddha are particulars in wisdom, not in consciousness. Consciousness and wisdom are opposites. Buddhism teaches the transformation from consciousness to wisdom, while the "wisdom" here is not the rational activities we ordinarily mean, but the wisdom as opposed to consciousness. From Buddha's perspective, Buddha sees the Middle-Way, it means that Buddha sees the particular (the Unreal) and the universal (the Empty) both in wisdom, not in consciousness. That's Buddha's all-encompassing-diverse-wisdom (一切種智). Hinayana Buddha has all-encompassing-wisdom (一切智) which only comprehends that every dharma is empty, no matter what that dharma is. Such comprehension of the Empty is of course limited, the Empty is only in abstraction. Bodhisattva has all-diverse-wisdom (道種智) to comprehend the Unreal, he therefore can acquire particular knowledge. On the one hand, with all-encompassing-wisdom one comprehends the Empty, on the other hand, with all-diverse-wisdom one comprehends the dharma of the Unreal names. Buddha, with his all-encompassing-diverse-wisdom, synthesizes and merges the two. Once these two are merged together harmoniously, the meaning of both the universal Empty and the

particular Unreal names is also transformed. Now the universal is concrete universal, and the particular is universalized (emptied) particular. There is a dialectical development here.

Such truths---the truths with concrete universality, universal particulars---are infinite. Confucian *ren* has infinite manifestations. There isn't any single one abstract principle of *ren*, the same as the Empty cannot be separated from the Unreal names. The two are always immediately connected. The manifestations of *ren* occur in response to different situations, e.g. toward parents, toward friends, toward brothers, etc. *Ren* manifests itself in a dynamic flow in different situations. The word "dynamic" helps elucidate what we mean here. To manifest in a dynamic flow is like playing music. Music has rhythm; the dynamic represents that rhythm. Or like the vibrating or stirring of its flower when the night blooming cereus blossoms. This cereus rarely blossoms, and when it does, the blooming is completed in only a couple of hours. But while it is blooming, fully radiating its luster, the blossom would be filled with life so strong and dynamic that it cannot help but vibrate and stir. Intensional truths are all manifested in such dynamic flows of life that cannot be stopped or nailed down. There is universality as well as particularity here. But this particularity is no longer the particularity through an aperture which we discussed in Lecture 1, but the particularities of the intensional truths themselves. The concrete universality is one of the particularities (uniqueness) of the intensional truths, which extensional truths clearly do not have.

Both extensional truths and intensional truths, once they manifest themselves, are universal. Western culture excels in expressing extensional truths. This tradition values knowledge, studies objects, studies nature and establishes science. That's their aperture. Although these truths are developed out of this aperture, once they are manifested, they are universal. There could be no English science or Chinese science. Once they are established, everyone can learn them, can utilize them. Intensional truths are universal, too. Our Chinese tradition emphasized intensional truths, this is our aperture. But once these truths are manifested, they are also universal. People in Western tradition might not have valued these truths, which were discussed though not as thoroughly as should have been, the truths are universal to them as well. Although they did not develop and cultivate this realm, they would explore the same set of intensional truths when their lives encounter this kind of questions. Extensional truths are universal; every person in every culture can learn science. So are intensional truths. It is a mistake to say that there are Chinese Confucianism and

Western Confucianism or Chinese Buddhism and Indian Buddhism, because there are differences. The differences are not in the intensional truths themselves but in the emphases or treatments of these truths. We should not take these differences to mean different truths. There is only one Confucianism, only one Buddhism.

The Confucian *ren* is one of such intensional truths. If you are not familiar with *ren*, or the issue of *xing* (性) in the discussion of human nature in Confucian tradition, and you approach this issue from the perspective of contemporary science, then you would not be able to understand what Mencius said about *xing*. In other words, if you see this *xing* as common human nature, then of course it is not always good. But this *xing* is not merely human nature, it is a special issue in Mencius, in Confucianism, one that did not appear in Western philosophies. In Western tradition, nature is the opposite of super nature, namely, God, all things under God are creatures; God created nature. Human nature belongs to human life; it contains both good and bad parts. But the *xing* in Mencius, in Neo-Confucianism is definitely not human nature, it has very special significance. If you see this *xing* as human nature, you will never be able to understand this issue. But when one day the issues of *ren*, *xing* arise in your life, you will most likely approach them just as the Confucians did. *Ren* and *xing* are universal, therefore they apply to everyone. Cultures can communicate and learn from one another because the truths and issues are universal. Suppose the truths and issues are all particular [to each people or culture], how can we understand each other? Fortunately, it is possible to understand each other through the universal truths and issues in cultures. Someone once lamented that East is always East and West is always West, that the two will never meet. This comment was solely based on material particularities. It is hard to see any possibility at this level. But if you consider the issue from the level of universal truths, why couldn't there be mutual understanding?

When we realize that truths are universal in all cultures, we are confident that cultures can communicate and modify each other. Western culture concentrates mostly on extensional truths. But when people start concerning themselves with intensional truths, they can use intensional truths to modify their culture, to adjust their attitudes toward life. It does not mean to modify or adjust the extensional truths. As we have said, once extensional truths are established, they cannot be changed. What needs to be modified or adjusted is the whole culture or their attitude toward life. They need to recognize that extensional truths are only

part of our lives, that there are also intensional truths. On the other hand, our culture also needs to be modified, adjusted. In the past several thousand years, Chinese culture excelled in the cultivation of intensional truths. All our major teachings and thinkers made great contributions in this realm, yet no extensional truths or sciences were developed. Of course there were a lot of accomplishments in this area, as Joseph Needham documented in the voluminous *Science and Civilization in China*. Nonetheless, these accomplishments did not develop into modern science. We were also deficient in mathematics and logic. But these extensional truths are also universal. We did not develop them but we certainly can learn and acquire them. To learn and acquire these truths has been a major issue for contemporary Chinese intellectuals ever since the May Fourth Movement (1919). [The two main goals of May Fourth Movement were to learn science and democracy from the West.] We Chinese are usually clever enough to learn science, but to establish knowledge, to dedicate oneself to the pursuit and discovery of truths require more than cleverness. Cleverness alone could not have produced Newton, Einstein, or great mathematicians. We also have to cultivate extensional mentality. Only with extensional mentality can science take root and grow. Without extensional mentality we can never truly acquire science and democracy. To learn science is still relatively easy, it is much harder to learn and practice democracy.

So, if we want to learn Western culture, to learn science and democracy, you need more than cleverness and willingness to learn, you also need to adjust your mentality. Our mentality, during the past thousands of years, has always focused in the realm of intensional truths. But extensional mentality is required to establish science and democracy. This is the difference in cultures. We now realize that there are more than intensional truths in life, that we also need extensional truths, so we must thoroughly reflect upon the basis of extensional truths. It will take a long time to gradually learn and adjust our mentality. Western culture needs to do the same. Now Western culture is the dominant culture leading the world, it may not realize its problems yet, at least not as serious problems. But one day when it feels that concentrating merely on extensional truths is insufficient, it may begin to see the value of these intensional truths in Eastern cultures. I don't think they in general have come to this point yet. They hardly recognize the true value of intensional truths. They don't see the intensional truths as an issue, so they don't take Chinese teachings seriously as an issue worthy of objective study and discussion. Generally, Western scholars study Chinese

philosophy with an attitude of studying archaeology; Sinology usually is a part of Asian Studies. There are scholars who study Lao Zi or Zen Buddhism. But with the attitude of archaeological study, how much Lao Zi or Zen can you understand? In order to truly understand Lao Zi or Zen, you have to come to recognize that intensional truths represent a serious issue, and let this issue be connected with your life, your culture, and your religion. This is the correct attitude to treat this issue. Only when you come to recognize the value of this issue as a field worthy of objective study can you afford it the respect it deserves. They are apparently not there yet. It will take a long time. We will stop here today.