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ARTICLES

St. Macrina's Prayer: A Case Study of Transcultural Dialogue and Innovation

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Abstract:

Composed by one of "the church fathers" known for his contributions to theological anthropology, Gregory of Nyssa's *The Life of St. Macrina* and *On the Soul and Resurrection* nevertheless appear somehow "problematic" from the perspective of modern studies of humanities. Macrina's description of nonintellectual human activities, which is interspersed with critical or even disparaging remarks, often seems to deny the importance of the body and renders emotions and the senses redundant. This article takes Macrina's deathbed prayer as an entry point into her negative view of the body and addresses the two main dimensions of her argument (philosophical and mythical), which complement one another to depict an account of the Christian soul associated with the body in the formation of human beings. I first discuss the genre of VSM, also known as the "philosophic biography," which underwrites the content of the deathbed prayer, and then analyze the ways in which the prayer is organized to respond to the philosophical concept of preparing for death. I then argue that the prayer provides a Christian answer to the concept of immortality while, through a confessing grace, relieving tensions between the soul and body, which was first advanced in Plato's *Phaedo*.

Keywords: St. Macrina, Gregory of Nyssa, the soul

After Macrina the Younger (c. 327–79) died, Gregory of Nyssa authored *The Life of St. Macrina* (henceforth VSM) and *On the Soul and Resurrection* (henceforth AR) in the following years (381-5). VSM narrates the life of Macrina and her family, focusing on her last days and her funeral. AR adopts the form of dialogue, the content of which is expected in VSM: Christian reasoning of death, the soul, and immortality.[1] While Gregory of Nyssa was writing VSM and AR, Plato's *Phaedo* was undoubtedly on his mind. He wished to make his older sister, Macrina, "compete" with Socrates in confronting death and demonstrating her excellence in both theory and practice. As Socrates is for Plato "the best and wisest and most religious man" (*Phaedo* 118a) who defended and bore witness to the philosophy by his death, Macrina is Gregory's heroine "who had raised herself to the highest summit of human virtue" (VSM 1.5); the depiction of her endorsed Gregory's vision that the Christian faith is the true philosophy while the ascetic life is the best life that people can live.[2]

1 Gregory mentioned the conversion in VSM: "And if my narrative were not to expand to an unconscionable length I would recount everything in order, how exalted was her discourse as she philosophized to us on the soul and explained the cause of our life in the flesh, and why man was made, and how he became mortal, and whence came death, and what is the release from death back to life again." (18.5) Translation from *The Life of St. Macrina*, trans. Anna Silvas, in *Macrina the Younger, Philosopher of God* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008.109-148). Ilaria Ramelli situates Gregory's treatment of the soul in AR within the philosophical tradition of treatises given in *On the Soul*. She indicates that Origen never wrote a work titled *On the Soul* but did write an *On the Resurrection*. Origen knew and cited Middle Platonists' relevant books, including Plutach's *On the Soul* and Numenius' second book *On the Indestructibility of the Soul*. Justin the Martyr wrote a σχολικόν *On the Soul* as attested by Eusebius *HE* (4.18) which is now lost but may have been known to Origen and Gregory of Nyssa. Another Christian Platonist, Athenagoras, composed an *On the Resurrection*. Origen's older contemporary Tertullian composed both an *On the Soul* and an *On the Resurrection*. "Gregory opted for a synthesis, in one and the same work, of the philosophical genre *On the Soul* with the Christian (for him, Origenian) genre *On the Resurrection*, within the framework of a remake of a Platonic dialogue," introduction, 4. Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, "Gregory of Nyssa on the Soul (and the Restoration): From Plato to Origen," *Exploring Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical, Theological, and Historical Studies*, ed. Anna Marmodoro and Neil B. McLynn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.110-141.)

2 The term "philosophy" or "philosophize" appears 15 times in the text. In late antiquity, the term "philosophy" was widely used by Christian intellectuals to refer to Christianity. For example, Justine the martyr adopted the term "philosophy" to describe Christian ways of life and belief in *Dialogue with Trypho*. See Saint Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho, First Apology, The Second Apology, Dialogue with Trypho, Exhortation to the Greeks, Discourse to the Greeks, The Monarchy or the Rule of God*, trans. Thomas B. Falls (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of American Press, 2008.373-421.) Also refer to C. Rowe, *One True Life: The Stoics and Early Christians as Rival Traditions* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016.155.)In Gregory's text, "philosophy" is especially attached to the ascetic life, which is characterized by celibacy, consistent praying, reading Scripture, singing hymns, mutual respect and serving the community.

Composed by the church father who is famous for his contributions to theological anthropology,[3] VSM and AR nevertheless appear somehow "problematic" in anthropology. Macrina's marvelous detachment might prove her to be a perfect philosopher for Nyssa and his contemporaries; however, it is hard for the modern reader to identify with her impenetrable attitude towards suffering. Her derogatory or at least marginalized description of nonintellectual human activities seems to undervalue the importance of the body, rendering emotions and the senses redundant. Her standing point seems to cite a permanent tension between the soul and body for living people. This tension is positioned at the center of several works on VSM published over the last three decades.[4] Very recently, a book based on a conference at Oxford titled *Exploring Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical, Theological, and Historical Studies* was released, in which a series of articles concentrate on Gregory's view of the soul.[5] For example, Mark Edwards objects to the recent interpretation of Gregory's integral understanding of humans and puts forward that Gregory is more a Platonist than Origen if the term Platonist is intended to "connote a dualistic anthropology and a lower valuation of the written text as a medium of instruction" (74) based on the comments of Gregory and Origen on the Song of Song. Ilaria Ramelli investigates Gregory's views on

3 Since Daniélou released *From Glory to Glory: Texts from Gregory of Nyssa's Mystical Writings*, a human being's perpetual progress towards God ('Epektasis') has become a preeminent theme in modern scholarship on Gregory of Nyssa. For a description of the *Epektasis*, see "Introduction" in *From Glory to Glory*, trans. and ed. Herbert Musurillo (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979. 3-78.) See also Xueying Wang, "Gregory of Nyssa on the Corporate Nature of the Human Body" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, South Bend, 2014.1-2.)

4 For example, see the discussion of grief in VSM by Rowan William, "Macrina's Deathbed Revisited: Gregory of Nyssa on Mind and Passion." In *Christian Faith and Philosophy in Late Antiquity: Essays in Tribute to George Christopher Stead*. Edited by L. Wickham & C. Bammel, 227–246. Leiden: Brill, 1993; Warren Smith, "Macrina, Tamer of Horses and Healer of Souls: Grief and the Therapy of Hope in Gregory of Nyssa's *De Anima et Resurrectione*." *Journal of Theological Studies*, 52 (2000): 37–60; "A Just and Reasonable Grief: The Death and Function of a Holy Woman in Gregory of Nyssa's Life of Macrina." *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12 (2004), 57-84; and Wessel, S. "Memory and Individuality in Gregory of Nyssa's Dialogues de Anima et Resurrectione." *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 18(2010), 369–392.

5 *Exploring Gregory of Nyssa: Philosophical, Theological, and Historical Studies*, ed. Anna Marmodoro and Neil B. McLynn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018). Articles in the book related to Gregory's understanding of the soul include "Origen and Gregory of Nyssa on the Song of Songs" by Mark Edwards, 74-92; "Gregory of Nyssa on the Soul (and the Restoration): From Plato to Origen" by Ilaria L. E. Ramelli, 110-141; "The Soul as Dynamis in Gregory of Nyssa's On the Soul and Resurrection" by Johannes Zachhuber, 142-159; and "Christian Formation and the Body–Soul Relationship in Gregory of Nyssa" by Morwenna Ludlow, 160-178.

the soul against the backdrop of Plato's theories, focusing in particular on the soul's resurrection or restoration. Her article explores the influence of Gregory's views on Evagrius' theories of "the threefold resurrection (of body, soul, and nous) and of the subsumption of body into soul and soul into nous (the so-called 'unified nous')" (110). Johannes Zachhuber indicates that though "Gregory was heir to Platonic ideas about the soul as an intelligible substance," his replacement of the soul's pre-existence with resurrection leads his theory of the soul to "move consciously and decisively away from Platonic premises" (143). Furthermore, the soul "permeates the body from within as an imminent, moving principle" (149). Morwenna Ludlow notes that Christian formation, in Gregory's view, is not a matter for the soul alone but of "the reorientation of the whole person" (166). The publication shows that Gregory's concept of the soul, as key to his anthropology and psychology, stands at the center of scholarship on Gregory. Furthermore, as Zachhuber concludes, Gregory's "observational starting point serves to justify an empirical approach,"[6] which helped Gregory develop his particular theory of the soul, which has a strong hermeneutic capacity to explain psychological phenomena and guide the concrete process of Christian spiritual formation, as Ramelli argues. Gregory's "(unsystematic) anthropology" and "eclectic psychology" (Smith, *Passion*, 14, 48) attract scholars in its openness towards both philosophical speculation and the possibility for transformation into spiritual practice.

This article attempts to participate in the discussion of Gregory's theory of the soul by focusing on Macrina's deathbed prayer to address to her seemingly negative view of the body. It argues that the prayer interweaves two arguments (philosophical and mythical) shaped by varied resources and that complement one another in depicting an ideal image of the Christian soul closely associated with the body in spiritual formation. I first discuss the genre of VSM as a "philosophic biography" that underwrites the content of the deathbed prayer and then analyze how the prayer is organized to respond to the philosophical concept of preparing for death. I then indicate that the prayer provides a Christian answer to immortality but inherits tensions between the soul and body in Plato's *Phaedo*. Finally, I show how the prayer, in confessing grace, organizes a formational narration that relieves tensions

6 Johannes Zachhuber, "The Soul as Dynamis," ibid, 147. Moreover, Gregory made a long argument for the immaterial and intellectual property of the soul (*On the Making of Man*, 13-15.3) mostly from the medical observation of the human mind. It is worth mentioning that unlike Socrates, Gregory's reasoning depends more on an observation of experiences and completely gives up on mathematic justification. For example, Gregory argued that the harmonious fabric of the universe hints at its wise and skillful designs (AR 1.23) but did not use Pythagorean analogies. The latter, nevertheless, were important to Plato's reasoning.

of philosophic arguments of the soul and body by virtue of a mythical approach.

The Genre and Textual Background of the Deathbed Prayer

The rise and prevalence of hagiography represent a new understanding of the world and of human beings. Hagiography emerged in late antiquity and prevailed for roughly 1000 years as the dominant narrative in the Middle Ages. Simon Swain comments that "[t]he period of the Roman Empire shows a great increase in the portraiture of the individual in writing and art, i.e., in biographical texts in the widest sense" (Swain, 2). He suggests that the transformation of the concept of status and solidified social stratification played a crucial role in prompting the emergence of hagiographies (Swain, 4). On the other hand, Peter Brown, in a series of publications,[7] argues that "[h]agiography served as a magnifying glass to focus into the burning pinpoint of one man's life the sun of 'divine power'" (*Making*, 14). Swain and Brown's perspective is based in the social functions of the holy man. Their research focuses more on the background and reception of hagiographies than on the intentions of the writer. Though Gregory of Nyssa hoped to make Macrina an exemplar, it is difficult to claim that his main purpose was to depict Macrina as one of "the limited number of exceptional human agents" for the "divine power" (*Making*, 12). While his narration includes the two miracles of Macrina, Gregory expected his narrative of Macrina to participate in the "debate for the holy"[8] but in the vein of philosophical concerns. Anna Silvas suggests that "Macrina fell naturally into the role of a Christian Socrates on the eve of her death discussing with her brother-disciple why she was not afraid of death, and arguing for the continuance of the soul."[9] Silvas calls AR "the Christian Phaedo" (Maraval, 155). Nevertheless, it might be more appropriate to say that VSM and AR comprise the "Christian Phaedo," for they together respond to two components of Phaedo: the narrative on how Socrates faced death in the company of friends and his reasoning on the existence of the soul.

7 Peter Brown, "the Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in *The Journal of Roman Studies*, Vol. 61 (1971): 80-101; *The Making of the Late Antiquity*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978; *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981; Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations*, No. 2 (Spring, 1983), 1-25.

8 A Debate for the Holy is the title of the first chapter of Brown's work *The Making of the Late Antiquity*.

9 *Macrina the Younger,* 159. Maraval calls VSM 'philosophical biography,' *Vie de Sainte Macrine*, 21–23, 92. Pierre Maraval, ed. and trans., *Grégoire de Nysse: Vie de Sainte Macrine* (Paris: Cerf, 1971).

Plato's *Phaedo* was a classic from the moment of its appearance.[10] The figure of Socrates was extraordinarily heroic for his unparalleled detachment and optimism in facing death. On one hand, Gregory knew that Socrates's reasoning on the soul and immortality was influential; therefore, a Christian answer to the same topics should have a dialogue with *Phaedo* and appropriate it to Christianity. On the other hand, as a man of letters, Gregory realized the infectious narrative qualities of *Phaedo*. The narrative depicted Socrates as an animated and tragic human being, arousing the reader's sympathy. Hence, AR alone, which has only two interlocutors, cannot compete with *Phaedo* in the rich interactions of it characters; an equivalent narration of Macrina must be created to attract the reader with a charismatic heroine. Sensitive to different functions of different genres, Gregory split his "Phaedo" into two texts: a biography of Macrina and a dialogue between Macrina and himself. The hagiography was addressed to a friend "in an unstudied and simple narrative," (1.5)[11] which is accessible to common readers, while AR is a philosophical dialogue for intellectuals. With these two texts, Gregory made Macrina a rival of Socrates.

The biography of Macrina is more than a counterpart of Socrates' deathbed scene and includes more elements. Gregory combined the form of biography, or hagiography as later scholars call it, with a detailed description of Macrina's deathbed days according to his personal experience on the spot, which was apparently inspired by *Phaedo*. VSM is a literary masterpiece. Among the many stereotypical legendary hagiographies coming before and after it, VSM stands out in its touching and persuasive narration from the witnessing of an affectionate sibling.

Gregory adopted several narrative threads to delineate the ideal figure of Macrina. Gregory and Phaedo are both first-person narrators who witnessed their masters' deaths. Their roles as loyal and defective disciples set off the narrates' superiority and flawlessness. In contrast, the figure of Gregory is richer than Phaedo. Gregory was a priest with a good reputation as a prominent theologian; nevertheless, he demonstrates a series of unstable emotions; readers are exposed

10 L. G. Westerink., *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, Amsterdam; New York: North-Holland Pub. Co., 1976-1977. Introduction, 7.

11 For a review of Gregory's style, see Silvas: "In favour of 'artlessness', Gregory does show a certain freedom in his construction of the VSM, not holding himself bound to all the conventions of late antique biography or encomium. The narrative weaves backwards and forwards in a way that might have been tidied up in a more thoroughly revised work. So much for 'unstudied'. Yet rhetoric is never absent from Gregory's style. Cf. for example the summary description of the virgin's way of life (13), Macrina's prayer before death (24), and the sisters' lament (26), all highly wrought literary pieces." *Macrina the Younger,* 111.

to his weakness in feeling and interior conflicts, helping readers sympathize with the narrator's perspective and receive his opinion for his humble posture and accessibility. Furthermore, the monastic women function similarly to other friends of Socrates, who mourned losing Macrina and needed to be oriented to higher levels of philosophy. In taking advantage of the biographical genre, Gregory depicted much more their words, activities, and, particularly, affections towards Macrina than dialogue as Phaedo could incorporate. This enriches the view of Macrina as an influential and deeply loved leader in her community and strengthens the force of the eulogy. Finally, VSM traces Macrina's family story, including her illustrious family and her formative years. This part is totally absent in *Phaedo* and in any of Plato's dialogues. The narration of her growth makes her more understandable and accessible to the reader. With these approaches, Gregory constructs the figure of Macrina from many angles, rendering her an animate protagonist.

In VSM, Gregory records Macrina's deathbed prayer, which also constitutes her last words. The prayer is long but harmoniously embedded in the biography of Macrina. If VSM functions as a replacement of the narrative part of *Phaedo*, this prayer serves as a full disclosure of the Christian philosopher's inner world. Some scholars noticed this peculiar prayer. Pierre Maraval suggests that "[h]er final prayer and the liturgical context of her last moments make explicit the Christian sense of her entire trajectory [...] The pursuit of the philosophical ideal is none other than the mystical ascent to Christ."[12] Anna Silvas remarks that "[h]er life of Christian philosophy which was always an anticipation of the angelic life of the resurrection climaxes at last in her mystical communion in prayer on her deathbed, a prayer of final self-offering that bears features of a Eucharistic anaphora" (105). She also indicates that the prayer is liturgical and mystical (104-8). Nevertheless, though the prayer allows for some institutional associations, the content is strictly biblical and not mysterious. Below is Macrina's deathbed prayer:

> "It is you O Lord…who have freed us from the fear of death (Hebrews 2. 15), you who have made the end of our life here the beginning of true life for us, you who put our bodies to rest in sleep a little while and will waken them again at the last trumpet (I Corinthians 15. 52), you who return our earth fashioned by your hands (cf. Genesis 2. 7), to the earth (cf. Genesis 3. 19; Job 10. 9; Ecclesiastes 3. 20) for safekeeping, and will retrieve again what you once gave, transforming what is mortal and unseemly in us (cf. I

12 Maraval, *Vie*, 92. Translation from *Macrina the Younger,* 107.

Corinthians 15. 53) with immortality and grace, you who have rescued us from the curse (cf. Galatians 3. 13) and from sin, having become both for our sakes (cf. II Corinthians 5. 21), you who have shattered the head of the dragon (cf. Psalm 73. 13, 14, Septuagint) who had seized man in his jaws and dragged him into the yawning abyss of disobedience, you who have opened up for us the way to the Resurrection, having trampled down the gates of Hades (cf. Psalm 106. 16, Matthew 16. 18) and brought him who had the power over death (Hebrews 2. 14) to naught, you who have given a sign (Psalm 59. 16) to those who fear you, the symbol of the Holy Cross, to destroy the adversary and to secure our life. O God the eternal one, to whom I have cleaved from my mother's womb (cf. Psalm 21. 11), whom my soul has loved (Song of Songs 1. 7) with all its strength (cf. Mark 12. 30), to whom I have dedicated my flesh and my soul from youth even until now, send an angel of light to be by my side to guide me to the place of refreshment (cf. Psalms 65. 12, 38. 14), to the water of repose (Psalm 22. 2), in the bosom of the holy Fathers (cf. Luke 16. 22). You who averted the flame of the fiery sword (Genesis 3. 24) and brought to Paradise the man who was co-crucified with you and implored your mercies remember me, too, in your kingdom (Luke 23. 42), since I, too, was co-crucified with you (cf. Galatians 2. 19, Romans 6. 6), having nailed my flesh in the fear of you, for I have feared your judgment (Psalm 118. 120, Septuagint; cf. Galatians 5. 24). Do not let the terrible abyss sunder me from your elect (Luke 16. 26), or the Slanderer stand in the way to oppose me (cf. Zechariah 3. 1, Revelation 12. 10), or my sin be uncovered before your eyes, if I have sinned in word or deed or thought, led astray in some way through the weakness of our nature. O you who have power on earth to forgive sins (Matthew 9. 6, Mark 2. 10), spare me, that I may revive (Psalm 38. 14) and as I put off my body (cf. Colossians 2. 11) be found before you without stain or blemish (cf. Ephesians 5. 27) in the form of my soul. But, may my soul be received into your hands (cf. Psalm 30. 6) blameless and undefiled (cf. 2 Peter 3.14) as an incense offering in your sight (Psalm 140. 2; cf. Romans 12.1)."

The most prominent feature of Macrina's deathbed prayer lies in the intensity of its scripture. Apart from its sentences and phrases that quote Scripture directly, the rest of the prayer is filled with biblical concepts and images. The Gospels, Epistles of apostles, and Psalms are cited most. This echoes Gregory's retrospective treatment of Macrina's education since childhood. Their mother thoughtfully

selected her daughter's formational texts, avoiding conventional Greek classical works, including "tragedy," "comedy," and Homeric epics. Instead, "whatever of inspired Scripture was adaptable to the early years, this was the child's subject matter." Exposed to the Wisdom of Solomon and to other scriptures that "lead us to a moral life," Macrina was especially well versed in the Psalms, thinking and praying with the Psalter all day (Silvas, 165).

Furthermore, prayers were the center of Macrina's ascetic practice. Gregory praised the community: "there was constant prayer and an unceasing singing of hymns distributed throughout the entire day and night" (Silvas. 172). Women prayed at the reception of Gregory; Macrina devoted her night to prayers after speaking with Gregory; her last breath accompanied the prayer; people prayed while burying her; the soldier narrated the healing function of Macrina's prayer. The prayer permeates the whole text; it serves as a condensed image of Macrina's life. In Gregory's eyes, Macrina is the "holy" (27.4, 29.1, 30.4, 31.2, 32.2, 33.1, 37.1, 40.3, 41.1), "that blessed soul" (40.1), "the lofty and noble soul" (12.4), and "this divine soul" (29.2). While Macrina prayed at the end of her life, her body almost ceased to function. Her physical and spiritual state shows that she was detached from her body and lived like a pure soul. Therefore, it is appropriate to regard her deathbed prayer as a disclosure of the soul in an ideal Christian way.

Phaedo is a dialogue about facing death and is also widely known and referred to as 'on the soul' in antiquity (Gertz, 14). Since *Phaedo*, the existence of the soul has become a strong argument for immortality. Socrates defined death as the separation of the body from the soul (*Phaedo* 64c). He announced that philosophical life prepares people for their death best by embracing the correct understanding of the soul and living a philosophical life.[13] His famous claim that the philosopher practices "nothing other than dying and being dead" (64a) illustrates his main view. As a Christian philosopher, Macrina faced death with her prayer, which, for Gregory, is her philosophizing.

A Prayer of Resurrection and the Problem of the Soul

A second look at Macrina's prayer reveals that it is a summary of scriptural (mostly from NT) teachings about death and immortality. Scriptural verses, images, and concepts are carefully interwoven to represent a Christian view of immortality echoing Macrina's idea on the same topic given in AR.

13 "[A] man who has truly spent his life in philosophy feels confident when about to die, and is hopeful that, when he has died, he will win very great benefits in the other world" (64a). Plato, *Phaedo*, Translated by David Gallop, New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

The prayer begins with "[o] Lord…who have freed us from the fear of death" (Heb. 2.15). This indicates that Macrina was confronted with imminent death without fear; her courage originated from her faith in Christ and from His redemptive work. The prayer is Christ-centered and narrates Christ's mission in the world: Incarnation, Crucifixion, breaking the gates of Hades, and Resurrection. Macrina believed that Christ's series of deeds in dealing with death opened up for Christians the way to the Resurrection, making "the end of our life here the beginning of true life for us" (26.2). She was not afraid of death for she believed that she would be raised.

Naming afterlife the "true life" discloses that the prayer was influenced by *Phaedo*, for it was originally a Platonic idea to regard this world as a shadow and the world of Forms as reality. Socrates claimed a longing for death in contending that "the philosopher differs from other men in releasing his soul, as far as possible, from its communion with the body" (*Phaedo* 65a); yet the philosopher discerns that "all the bodily senses are neither accurate nor clear" (*Phaedo* 65b) and "disdains the body and flees from it" (*Phaedo* 65d). The theory of Forms is not as clear in *Phaedo* as in *Republic* and *Phaedrus*, but Socrates' argument presumes the theory of Forms. For example, his argument of anamnesis (recollection) is based on the theory of Forms. He argued that humans reference concepts such as absolute Beauty, absolute Good, absolute justice, and "pure knowledge" that cannot be obtained from the senses because the soul achieves these before being embodied and retrieves them from memory after birth (*Phaedo* 65a-d). Compared to the permanent and divine world of Forms, the material world is the shadow of this real world (*Republic* 514b–515a). The divine world was also where Socrates repeatedly said that he wished to arrive after death. In contrast, though Paul showed a desire for a "better" afterlife, he never regarded the created world as a shadow or lesser entity because the Hebrew tradition to which Paul belonged did not hold a dualistic worldview. However, for intellectuals of late antiquity immersed in Greco philosophies, some passages in NT inevitably seemed to endorse a Platonic view of the world. Gregory inherited Origen in Christianizing Platonism. Hence, the vocabulary of Macrina's prayer shows a Platonic interpretation of scriptures with respect to the afterlife but accepts the interpretation in the realm of the catholic doctrine.[14]

The prayer then turns to teachings of resurrection in I & II Corinthians. Macrina's understanding of the resurrection is strictly biblical and orthodox with

14 For example, Paul said that "to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better" (*Philippians* 1.23); *Hebrews* also praises the faithful ancestors in that "they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one" (*Hebrews* 11:16).

God creating the human body from the earth and where in virtue of Christ's ministry the body is retrieved and turned immortal (ἀθανασίαν) in its last days. Paul announced that the raised body would be "imperishable" (ἀφθαρσία, 1 Corinthians 15.42, 53) and "a spiritual body" of immortality (ἀθανασίαν, 1 Corinthians 15.44, 53, 54). This is Macrina's belief. In contrast to her belief in resurrection that guarantees her immortality, Socrates' detachment from death was grounded on an argument: the immortality of the soul. Socrates argued that the soul is essential to and a permanent part of humans; it remains when the body dies; hence, people should not fear death. It is worthy to note that while Macrina accepted Plato's idea that the soul forms an essential part of human beings and remains after the body dies, she did not discuss the immortality of the soul or speculate on the soul's independent existence. Gregory's silence regarding the animal's soul stands in sharp contrast to Middle Platonist's interests in the topic. For Gregory, the soul is created and cannot be immortal, for God alone is immortal. While adopting many Platonic vocabularies and arguments, Gregory did not share all Platonic assumptions of the soul.

For Macrina, the final authority comes from Scripture. If there are some theories that conflict with Scripture, Christians must abandon them.[15] Along with Plato's idea of the immortal soul are two theories: the preexistence and reincarnation of the soul. The soul's unfleshly existence entails anamnesis and reincarnation, which explain where the soul has been and will be when it is not with the body. Hence, forms the complete narration of the soul: where the soul has come from, how the soul conflicts with the body in this life, how it will exist after people die. Macrina, however, rejected these two theories, for they did not conform with scriptural teachings.

First, God created the whole human being with one action; the body and soul are in the seed of His creation; thus, there is no preexistence of the soul. Gregory accepted Socrates' argument that the property that differentiates one from others is the essential part of the entity; this, with respect to humans, means that rationality forms the essential part of the soul and of human beings (AR 3.16). However, he related the soul's rational essence to its divine origin, God, and did not go further to follow Socrates in connecting human intellectual capability with the theory of Forms and anamnesis. He resorted to Scripture to explain the origins of human intellect: the human being is the image of God, whom God appointed to dominate the world image (Genesis 1.26-27); rationality as the distinct intellectual ability that

15 The authority of Scriptures sets the boundary for what Gregory could receive and reason (AR 44, 45, 50, 54).

originated from God is afforded to humans to fulfill the task (On the Making of the Man (henceforth HO 4.1).

Second, the theory of reincarnation is absurd for it is neither in accordance with the doctrine of the resurrection nor convictive. Socrates used reincarnation to support human immortality: death does not take away their better and fundamental part; instead, it can accomplish purification and free the soul from the body. Nevertheless, for Gregory, since resurrection clears the way to immortality, the theory of reincarnation is redundant and even undermines the doctrine of resurrection, for it provides another version of immortality incompatible with Scripture. To reject reincarnation, on one hand, Gregory highlights the defects of the theory. First, even the soul returns to the heavenly world, it is where it falls; this forms "a cycle of much the same recurring patterns" (AR 8.19-25). Second, the theory neglects the continuity and accumulation of sin. In introducing the biblical idea of sin to anthropology, Gregory reasoned that it is impossible for the soul to return to a rational state once it falls into irrationality, for its close association with passion can only lead to a further fall. The soul has no chance of being purified when it combines with a lower state: irrational animals, insentient plants, or inorganic matter (HO 28.3-7, AR 8.3-22). In this way, Gregory persuasively rejected reincarnation.[16]

In the prayer, Gregory skillfully employs scriptural resources to respond to the Platonic doctrine of the immortal soul. VSM and AR follow *Phaedo*'s focus, scenes, forms, and reasoning but adapt them to Christianity. Nevertheless, the deep involvement of the VSM and AR with *Phaedo* also creates the same tension in Gregory texts as observed in *Phaedo*. That is, a prioritization of the soul leads to "inhuman" violence, at least linguistically, inflicted on the body. Accordingly, this tension becomes a complication of Gregory's theory of the soul as it does for Platonists.

The Unsolved Problem of the Soul

This part discusses problems of Plato's theory of the soul that remain in Gregory's texts about Macrina. It first introduces the contribution and inherent

16 Other related arguments for resurrection include the fact that Jesus raised several dead people in the Gospels (HO 24.10-13); some materials can reunite after separation: seeds that die in the earth grow into new plants (HO 26.6, 7; AR 5.5-11); and the soul leaves signs in its original material elements for their commixture (HO 27.2, 5; AR 16-23). "[T]he soul is disposed to cling to and long for the body that has been wedded to it, there also attaches to it in secret a certain close relationship and power of recognition" (HO 27.2).

tensions between the soul and body in Phaedo and then indicates that the "problematic" figure of Macrina comes from this tension when Gregory inherits many of Plato's arguments.

Ancient texts show that existence beyond the tomb was a widespread concept in most civilizations around the Mediterranean (e.g., Homeric epics and Theogony, Egyptian Book of the Dead, Gilgamesh, and The Hebrew Bible) no matter how diverse and ambiguous the idea is.[17] This existence of an afterlife was named "the soul (ψυχή)" in Greek. E. R. Dodds comments, "[t]he Classical Age inherited a series of inconsistent pictures of the soul and the self" (Dodds, 177). *Phaedo* is one of the most important resources for the discussion of the soul. Its contribution covers several crucial aspects. First, Socrates' theory of the soul helps explain some fundamental conflicting existential experiences, which include mortal humans desiring immortality and difficult choices made between the senses and morality. Second, in constructing the idea of the immortal soul, it sets a rigid moral retributive system between this life and the afterlife, laying the foundation for the argument of morality. Third, the dialogue identifies the soul with intellectual activities; hence, it confirms the divine essence of both the soul and human beings. Fourth, *Phaedo*'s arguments and conclusion were witnessed by a great philosopher who faced death with remarkable courage. Socrates' witness was so powerful and influential that, since the appearance of *Phaedo*, any schools or intellectuals who wished to touch the topic needed to respond to *Phaedo*'s arguments on the soul.[18]

Phaedo's theory of the soul, nevertheless, is not faultless. T. M. Robinson contends that a good number of "inconsistent pictures of the soul and the self" seem to have found their way into *Phaedo*, in which the soul-body relationship is in essence "unnatural." On one hand, the soul is "our most genuine self, complete with all the complexity and change that go with cognition, desire, decision making, and a whole range of potential pains and pleasures" (Robinson, 40). On the other hand, it is "most like the divine and immortal and intellectual and uniform and indissoluble and ever unchanging" (*Phaedo* 80b). As a result, the theory of the soul

17 See Alan E. Bernstein. *The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 1993.

18 Plato's view of the soul is original but unsystematic. According to T. M. Robinson, Plato's dialogues suggest that "Socrates himself had some difficulty grappling with the problem, offering various tentative solutions—ranging from the purest dualism of *Gorgias*, 493aI-5, to the mitigated the dualism of *Alcibiades* I to the uniquely formulated monism of the *Charmides*." See "The Defining Features of Mind-Body Dualism in the Writing of Plato." In John P. Wright and Paul Potter ed. *Psyche and Soma: Physicians and Metaphysicians on the Mind-Body Problem from Antiquity to Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 37-56. 40.

that claims to prepare people best for their happiness goes against all sensible parts of human beings. Put differently, the theory tends to split human beings, depriving humans of the flesh. Speaking in the context of imminent death, Socrates' eulogy of the soul separating from the body shows his unbeatable bravery, which transformed into the persuasive power of his argument. Nevertheless, to expect this separation in daily life means renouncing the whole material world, including the human body, emotions, and the senses. Such a radical dualistic theory creates two problems. First, it is difficult to explain how the soul animates the body, constituting the reason for Aristotle rejecting Plato's theory in De Anima (I 3, 407b13–26). Second, it is difficult to judge the soul's boundaries and difficult to practice in daily life. Later, Platonists also found that this rigid point requires clarification. For example, to solve tensions the theory created with regard to statesmen who deal with material things, Platonist Olympiodorus explained that statesmen who deal with civic life not only know sensible things but must know the principles of all three.[19] The function of statesmen was crucial for Plato in other dialogues on political life. In this way, Olympiodorus attempted to harmonize Socrates' detached attitude towards the material world with statesmen's occupation with worldly issues. The tension between the soul and body constituted one of the most important intellectual premises when assertions about death, immortality, and the soul in NT appeared in the Greco-Roman world.[20]

Gregory's adoption of Platonic theory of the soul was strictly limited to the realm of scriptures. The word "soul" (psyche) as it appears in the New Testament is not a dependent or philosophical concept but leaves room for its development against the Greek background. N. T. Wright argues that "for Paul it is the body, not

19 *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, 76-79. Olympiodorus attempted to have different dialogues be in accordance with one another. Therefore, he needed to consider the noble status that Plato gave to statesmen in *Republics* and avoided disvaluing them for dealing with sensible things. Plotinus also showed strong interests in the difficult issue of the soul–body relation; see S. Clark, 'Plotinus: Body and Soul', in *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, 275–91.)

20 This tendency is developed in Stoics in regard to atheism. Phaedo's emphasis on rationality has many echoes in later generations. Refer to Xian Gang 先刚. "Plato's Doctrines of 'Recollection' and 'Immortal Soul'" 柏拉图的"回忆说"和"灵魂不朽论"(Bolatu de'huiyi shuo'he'linghun buxiu lun') *Yunnan University Journal*1(2017): 5-12.. Print. Xian claims that "stripped off the cloak of the myth, doctrines of 'recollection' and 'immortal soul' demonstrate but a thorough rational worldview and rational epistemology." 12. Furthermore, he recommends viewing "the immoral soul" as "immortal rationality," as the former cannot be achieved through Plato's reasoning and is the concern of religion rather than philosophy. 10.

just the soul, the mind or the spirit, which is the temple of the living God."[21] Wright asserts that if people are loyal to the New Testament in its original Jewish context and setting, there is a need to refuse a dualistic understanding of the soul and body that was "contaminated" (Wright) by Plato(nism). In NT, the soul often refers to life or creatures (e.g. 1 Thessalonians 2.8; Philippians 1.27; 2.30; Romans 2.9; 11.3; 13.1; 16.4; 2 Corinthians 1.23) (Wright). Nevertheless, scholars have long noted that certain scriptural passages in the Letters to the Corinthians show "apparent Platonic dependence."[22] Other similar passages include 1 Thessalonians 5.23, Romans 7.22; 2 Corinthians 4.16, and Ephesians 3.16. Furthermore, there are immaterial beings in NT: God and spirits.[23] Even if the dualistic view does not fit the original meanings given in NT, there is still a need to describe these immaterial beings and human relationships to them. For instance, what allows humans to communicate with the spiritual world where God belongs if humans do not enjoy an immaterial existence? Against the intellectual setting of late antiquity, intellectuals of late antiquity adopted existing ideas of the soul in understanding Paul's words.[24] For an original theologian such as Gregory, who discerned various hindrances and traps associated with using Platonic soul without discrimination, it was a challenging but necessary work to explain what the soul is for Christians. His dialogue with Macrina clearly indicates his awareness of this challenge.

While Gregory admitted to the difficulty of exploring the concept of the soul,[25] it was too important to be avoided. Understanding of the soul stood at the center of anthropology in late antiquity. Christian needed to clarify how salvation functions

21 N. T. Wright, "Mind, Spirit, Soul and Body: All for One and One for All Reflections on Paul's Anthropology in his Complex Contexts" at the Society of Christian Philosophers: Regional Meeting, Fordham University on March 18, 2011. http://ntwrightpage.com/2016/07/12/mind-spirit-soul-and-body/, NTWrightPage, accessed January 2, 2020.

22 Theo K. Heckel, "Body and Soul in Saint Paul," 117-132. in *Psyche and Soma*, 118. Bultmann believes that these passages of "dualistic" tone can be attributed to the fact that "Paul's ability to reason abstractly is not developed." Bultmann, *Theologie*, 199. Heckel argues that "the dialogue about body and soul grew out of an interrogation of Paul by the Corinthians" who belonged to "religious Platonism," 120-1.

23 For example, see John 4.24: "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

24 To see how common non-Christian Roman readers understood Pauline anthropology through Greek philosophy, refer to Outi Lehtipuu, "Some facets of Pauline anthropology – How Would a Greco-Roman Reader understand it?" *Anthropology in the New Testament and Its Ancient Context*, eds. Michael Labahn and Outi Lehtipuu. (Leuven; Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010) 55-86.

25 In the spirit of apophatic theology, he claimed that the nature of the mind as invisible from its prototype, God, is unspeakable and lies beyond human understanding, as his image is (HO 11).

in humans and the soul as an essential part of human beings playing an unavoidable role in clarification. Furthermore, an understanding of the soul also helped Christians practice their religion daily since they are supposed to live a life that shows signs of salvation. Discussion of the soul in the ancient world functioned like today's psychology in helping people understand themselves and assess themselves with regard to their faith and virtues.

AR begins with Gregory's questioning of the existence of the soul. After putting forward the theory of intelligent design, Macrina avoided recollection and contended that the capacity for rationality alone serves as evidence of the soul. In her definition, the soul "is an engendered substance, a living and intellectual substance which infuses into an organic and sensate body the power of living and of receiving the impressions of sense" (AR 2.5).[26] While viewing the soul as an organizing and life-giving power, Gregory's focus is to argue on whether the soul is rational, as irrational features such as anger and desire can be observed. Macrina answered that emotions are passions that do not share the substance of human nature and should be removed (AR 3.16, 22-30). However, Gregory retorted that this opinion does not benefit virtues and that even Scripture admits that certain emotions are positive (AR 3.31). Macrina then conceded and said that emotions are neutral; they "[lie]on the borderland of the soul" and do not belong to the archetype (God) of the soul. In Genesis, creation is first insensate, and then sensate, and then rational (AR 3.37). The human being was created in the final stage with rationality alone bearing "the stamp of the divine character" (AR 3.41). It is also appropriate for the irrational to mingle with the intellectual part of the soul, as reasoning power cannot come to be in bodily life "except that it comes into being with the senses" (AR 3.41-43). Moreover, emotions are instruments of virtue or vice according to the ways that humans make their choices. For example, in controlling rationality, "[f]ear would only generate obedience, and anger courage, and timidity caution, and the impulse of desire would sponsor the divine and undefiled delight" (AR 3.44). These senses and emotions might be useful and even necessary for the soul to restore its image of God.

As can be observed above, Gregory, in some sense, inherited Plato's tensions with respect to the soul and body. The term "borderland" is an ambiguous metaphor hinting at the fact that emotion is a temporary and inessential part of the soul; after

26 See also AR 11, 24-31, 53.

resurrection, emotions disappear and rationality alone remains.[27] This also forms the origins of Macrina's "unnatural" attitude towards grief. Cleansing fleshly attachments or passions then becomes the most important work for the living (AR 6.4). An attitude rejecting this life makes Macrina's ascetical theory and practice adhere better to Platonic dualism and seems to lose a solid foundation in scriptural anthropology.

A Prayer that Confesses Love

Regarding Gregory's views on the connection between the soul and body, his anthropology undoubtedly is an ascetic theology. Nevertheless, it would be a misunderstanding to think that his ascetic theology was Platonism disguised as Christianity and that Macrina simply applied this dualistic view upon practicing in the name of piety. Johannes Zachhuber believes that certain Christian premises such as resurrection limit the use of Platonic interpretation in Gregory's theory. This section argues that the mythical argument made in VSM, as demonstrated by the deathbed prayer, shows Gregory's understanding of the soul through a visible model. Only by joining philosophical and mythical arguments can one develop a full account of Gregory's views of the soul.

It was common for Neo-Platonists to use both philosophical and mythical arguments. For instance, Olympiodorus named these two arguments in his commentary on *Phaedo*.[28] He offered allegorical interpretations of Greek myths to support Socrates' moral request even though these myths do not appear in *Phaedo*. At the end of *Phaedo*, Socrates describes a myth without clear origins, which might have been fabricated to make the afterlife desirable. It is worth noting that after thoroughly renouncing the fleshly world, Socrates depicted the other world as including splendid materials impressively pleasing to the senses. This also shows that Plato was not alien to the mythical argument.

While serving as an underlying dialogue with *Phaedo*, Macrina's deathbed prayer employs a mythical argument in contrast to the lengthy reasoning given in AR. Olympiodorus believed it important to have dialectical arguments agree with Greek myths; hence, he dragged the latter into his commentary. Gregory,

27 This is the opinion that AR holds. However, Gregory seems to present different ideas in *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, which asserts that the soul never ceases to desire God. Warren Smith discusses the incoherence of Gregory's views on whether eros remains eschatologically. *Passion and Paradise: Human and Divine Emotion in the Thought of Gregory of Nyssa*, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2004.

28 "Socrates, demonstrating by his very reserve the esoteric character of the myth, adds nothing but 'that we are in a sort of custody'; the commentators, however, add the myth from other sources." *The Greek Commentaries on Plato's Phaedo*, 42.

however, did not need to do this, for he had access to rich resources of the "Great Narrative" in the tradition of Christianity. Scripture contains a full narrative from the beginning of the world to the last days along with an omnipotent and faithful God who is actively involved in human history. This "myth" serves as self-evident support for Macrina's account. Moreover, the prayer interweaves two other narratives with this "Great Narrative."

The first is the aforementioned Christ-centered narrative embedded in God's salvation plan for human beings. The second is Macrina's confession of God's grace in her life. The prayer includes a brief summary of Macrina's life. She "cleaved to God from [her] mother's womb," as Gregory recorded in his account that their mother had a dream when she was expecting Macrina that foretold Macrina's life. "From youth [she] has dedicated to God," which refers to her education and choice of celibacy. She was "cocrucified with Christ" and "nailed (her) flesh," which means that she took an ascetic life. As a result, she was before God "without stain or blemish in the form of [her] soul." The original image of "without stain or blemish" is from Scripture and refers to a lamb sacrificed to God (1 Peter 1.19). In NT, it became a metaphor for the church. "[I]n the form of the soul" is added by Gregory to a scriptural image of another biblical origin: "whom my soul has loved" from the Song of Songs 3:4. The Septuagint translates OT "נַפְשִׁי" into "soul (ψυχή)" in Greek, which Paul and other NT writers kept in their letters. Gregory employed the OT phrase to represent the relationship between God and humans in the relationship between God and the soul. The phrase "without stain or blemish" indicates that Macrina has purified her soul of passions. Moreover, the prayer and brief biography show that the process of purification was by no means a reflective one, though Gregory often referred to it as a form of philosophizing. In the long discussion between the siblings, there is a scene in which Macrina recalls her life, and her bodily experiences are given a positive account due to grace. In VSM, Gregory mentions that she lost many important persons in her life: her fiancé, her two beloved brothers, her mother. However, according to her recollection, her life is full of grace, for God paved her way to philosophy from a young age with unceasing provisions. This recollection was constructed from an awareness of God's work in her personal life. Hence, Macrina's narrative is also God-centered. In this respect, Macrina was influenced by the OT. The Psalms to which she was devoted were filled with two types of narratives. The first is Israel's ethnic memory of God's salvation from Egypt, confirming Israel's identity and its relation to a merciful and just God. The second is the named or anonymous poets' personal narrative in front of God. These materials apparently affected the style and content

of Macrina's prayer in echoing the monistic anthropology of the OT, characterizing her as a humble supplicant fully committed to God.

There are two characteristics of a Christian soul according to Macrina's prayer. First, a Christian soul is God/Christ-centered. All of Macrina's attention is dedicated to her savior: her thoughts, love, and fears were completely directed towards the Lord. It was Him who led her through life and she expected Him to guide her to eternity. Second, the soul experienced God in the body as a necessary process of purification. Macrina's account corresponds with Gregory's records of her life. Gregory significantly narrated his hero's "failure" with regard to passion: though she was not annihilated even by Naucratius's tragic death, Basil's untimely death caused her irrational emotion. This record indicates that Gregory believed in the need for and possibility of the soul's restoration. Even though Macrina was fully blessed on account of her pious family and personal devotion, she still needed tests to purify her attachment to this life.

Ilaria Ramelli asserts that "the role of philosophy for the purification and illumination of the soul was a tenet of Platonism, both 'pagan' and Christian" (123). However, Macrina's philosophizing/prayer shows that Platonic purification and Christian formation also bear critical differences. For Plato, purification involves rationality controlling passions and finally removing them. For Gregory, Christian formation incorporates another aspect: the subject constructing its life narrative centered on God, whose grace is concrete, manifested, and plentiful in one's life to support one's blessed self-account. In this account, the soul and body are closely associated. As Macrina conceded to Gregory, emotions are useful and even necessary for the soul to achieve virtues. In HO, Gregory adopted the metaphor of the seed to describe the interactive and united relationship between the body and soul: "the seminal cause of our constitution is neither a soul without body, nor a body without a soul, but that, from animated and living bodies, it is generated at the first as living and animate being" (HO 30.29). However, he discussed the simultaneous development of the whole human being, including the soul and body, from the seed. Just as Macrina's soul grew stronger like an athlete who exercises after she experienced Basil's death, the body is not just a prison of the soul. Rather, the soul's growth needs the body, the senses, and feelings. In this way, philosophers' uncertain destination with the possibility of multiple reincarnations is transformed into the one-time Christian journey with bright prospects.

Narratives are naturally filled with bodies and experiences. Macrina's deathbed prayer is interwoven with both a Christian understanding of immortality and a depiction of her blessed journey. In philosophical arguments, the soul is essentially

rational and not necessarily clinging to the body, which alone encompasses an image of the divine, and humans must purify the soul to achieve immortality. In mythical arguments, the subject is a humble and grateful prayer before God, who guides the Christian towards himself with bountiful grace poured upon his life. In Gregory's account, the Christian soul is individual but not lonely given its communion with others throughout life; the ideal Christian soul desires virtuous commitment and an approachable pathway with the body to a bright future. In joining the two philosophical and mythical arguments, Gregory's VSM successfully established Macrina as an excellent saint prominent in the East and West; he also indicates that the soul's main task is purification and achieving moral excellence in the bodily experience of God, which is the process of restoring the image of God in humans. Furthermore, he demonstrated the importance of interweaving personal narratives with God's soteriological narrative in complementing philosophical arguments. This understanding paved the road for his later writings, including The Life of Moses and Homilies on Song of Songs. In these works, he explores the process of purification or restoration and describes spiritual formation in detail, forming the theoretical foundations of Eastern Orthodox ascetic practices.

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Divine Election of David in Psalm 78 and the Chinese Notion of the Mandate of Heaven

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Abstract:

This paper intends to revisit the divine election of King David of Judah and the rejection of the house of Israel as presented in the historical recitation of history in the biblical tradition of Psalm 78 from the perspective of the Chinese conception of Mandate of Heaven in the choice or the abandonment of an emperor. The cross-textual approach will be employed to read the rise of the Zhou people and fall of the Shang people in the retelling of the past in the *Book of Songs*. The aim is to understand the process of how God/Heaven is co-opted and politicized to legitimize the sovereign power on earth. Furthermore, some cross-textual insights will be gained from the notion of inconstancy of the Mandate of Heaven, which depends on morality and ethical behavior of the king in power. This will contribute to the discussion of the ideology of an everlasting kingship as developed from the divine promise to David to its reinterpretation at the subsequent historical event of the devastation of nation in the Exile.

Keywords: divine election, King David, Psalm 78, the Mandate of Heaven, *The Book of Songs* (Shijing), Wen Wang of Zhou, cross-textual interpretation, *The Bible* in Chinese context, ideology of kingship

I. Introduction

As a didactic psalm, Psalm 78 is both highly politicized and intensively religious for the edification of the community with the enigmas of history and the riddle (חידות) of Israel's memory of the past. The perplexing problem of history is presented as a

paradigmatic lesson (משל). It is striking that at the end of the psalm, the election of David as God's servant, the choice of the tribe of Judah and designation of Mount Zion where God's temple stands, are presented in drastic contrast with the utter rejection of Ephraim, the disfavor of the tribe of Joseph and the desertion of God's former dwelling in Shilo. The celebrative mood in the divine election of David is set against the disastrous departure of God from the sons of Ephraim and the people of Israel. What was the context that has given rise to the election of one people (Judah) and rejection of another (Israel)? This paper proposes to revisit this biblical tradition of Psalm 78 from the perspective of the Chinese conception of Heaven's choice or abandonment of an emperor in cross-textual perspective of the rise of the Zhou people and fall of the Shang people in the retelling of the past in the *Book of Songs*. The aim is to understand the process of how God/Heaven is co-opted and politicized to legitimize the sovereign power. Furthermore, some cross-textual insights will be gained from the notion of inconstancy of the Mandate of Heaven, which depends on morality and ethical behavior of the king in power. This will contribute to the discussion of the ideology of an everlasting kingship in the divine promise to David and its subsequent development in the historical fact of devastation. Since the kings in Judah are designated as Yahweh's chosen ones via David and his dynasty (Psa. 78:70-72; 89:3, 20, 35; 132:1, 10, 17; 144:10) and as Yahweh's anointed (Psa. 2:2; 20:7; 84:8; 89:38,51; 132:10), the fall of Davidic dynasty and the destruction of God's Temple on Zion in 586 B.C.E. called for a theological revision of the eternal validity of the Davidic kingship.[1] In this respect, the Chinese notion of the Mandate of Heaven being not always constant in its support of the dynastic rule in power will lead us to the deliberation of the issue of God's conditional/unconditional promise to David.

II. Psalm 78: The Enigma of Divine Election and Rejection

Ps.78 is a didactic historical psalm with the first section (vv. 1-8) being an invitation of the audience to listen to the teaching (תורה) drawn from a recitation of the past. Verse 1 resembles the opening formula characteristic of the prophetic and wisdom teaching of ancient Israel (Ps.49:1; Isa.28:23 etc.) in the claim for an attentive hearing to what is to be said and taught with regard to God's mighty acts to be known from one generation to another. There are roughly two recitals each of which embodies a twofold rejection, a rejection of God by Israel and then a rejection

1 On the king in the Psalms, see the chapter on "The King" in Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, 107-23.

of Israel by God. The recitals are framed between an introductory accusation and eventual forgiveness that leads to a new hope at the end. This pattern can be outlined as below:

	I	I
General accusation	9-11	40-42
God's saving acts	12-16	43-55
Sin & punishment	17-37	56-64
Forgiveness and restoration	38-39	65-72

The response to Yahweh's mighty acts of salvation (78:12-16) is the repeated rebellion of the people. It was intensified in the wilderness (vv.17-29) and even worse after the settlement in the land (vv.56-68). Both of these sections make it clear that the people's sin is directed to the God Most High (v.17, עליון; v.35, אל עליון ; v.56, אלהים עליון).[2] The ancestors of the audience is strangely referred to as "a stubborn and rebellious generation" (דור סורר ומרה) and the central warning to the present congregation of the children of Israel is in v. 8: "they should not be like their ancestors" (לא יהיו כאבותם). Their ancestors are accused throughout the psalm: they did not keep Yahweh's covenant (10a), they did not stand firm in the law (10b), they forgot God's wonderful deeds of salvation (11), they sinned against God (17), they tempted God (18), they had no faith in His wonderful acts (22, 32), they deceived God (36), they were not faithful to His covenant (37), they rebelled against Him in the desert (40), they provoked Him to anger (41), they did not keep His decrees (56) and finally they roused God's anger with their high places and image worship (58). All these accusations are directed against the sons of Ephraim in verse 9 ("The Ephraimites, armed with the bow, turned back on the day of battle"[3]) which is one of the keys to the understanding of the theme of this psalm, but unfortunately the verse also presents us with the most serious difficulties. Many scholars think that it interrupts the sequence of thought between v. 8 and v. 10. The verse, therefore, has

2 עליון is an appellation given to Yahweh in the Psalms, especially in the Asaphite Psalms, Pss.50:14; 73:11; 77:10[11]; 78:17, 35, 56; 82:6; 83:19. It is closely connected with Jerusalem, Gen.14:18, 19, 20, 22; Ps.89:27[28]; Isa.14:14; Lam.3:35, 38 etc.). The use of the title implies the Jerusalem setting of this psalm. In v.17 and v.56, "the Most-High" is probably a contrast to the rebellious people. Later in the next section on forgiveness and hope we shall see that the Most High God is understood to be the compassionate God who takes into account man's weaknesses. It is also this God who has chosen David and Zion.

3 Unless specified otherwise, English translation of biblical verses are taken from NRSV.

been considered an insertion.[4] It is, however, possible to discern the significance of v. 9 in its present position. The verse points forward to v. 57 ("they twisted like a treacherous bow") and the subsequent rejection of Ephraim and choice of Judah which is the climax of the Psalm (vv. 67-72).[5] It is difficult to assign any historical situation to the verse and scholars' proposals are not conclusive and also unnecessary.[6] It is better to understand the verse generally and figuratively in connection with the accusation of Ephraim in v. 57.

Before we proceed further to discuss the historical context and intention of the psalm, we are to give a tentative date to Ps.78. Though it is difficult to be definite on the dating of liturgical poetry, in the case of the present psalm, certain clues may be considered:[7]

1. The range of history covered stretches from Exodus to the house of David.
2. The Davidic dynasty apparently still in existence.
3. The Solomonic Temple is still standing; at least no evidence of the destruction of the Temple can be found.
4. Nothing is mentioned of the Exile and destruction of Jerusalem, which would hardly have escaped the attention of the psalmist if they were within the historical experience of the people.
5. The general outlook suggests the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.E) and the deliverance of Jerusalem (701 B.C.E.), though these events are not referred to explicitly.
6. Some Deuteronomistic attitudes can be traced such as the condemnation of high places and image worship, etc.

4 Kraus, *Die Psalmen*, 702. Some older commentaries will be used in this article as they are concerned more with philology and historical setting of the Psalms. B. D. Eerdmans proposes that "it is a marginal note inserted by a copyist in the wrong place. Originally it explained v.67 telling why Ephraim was rejected." *The Hebrew Book of Psalms*, 376. He also raises the questions of no war being mentioned in the context and the fathers of v.8 being the fathers of all Israel. Butterwieser transposes it to follow v.62, see his *The Psalms, Chronologically Treated with a New Translation,* 125, 147.

5 A. Weiser refers to Ephraim as a particularly telling example of the fate of disobedience to God, *The Psalms*, 540.

6 Several attempts have been made in the past; the final battle of Saul on the mountains of Gilboa (Weiser, 540), the refusal of Israel to advance into Canaan after hearing the report of the spies in Num.13-14 (W. E. Barnes, *The Psalms*), the slackness of Ephraim in prosecuting the conquest of Canaan in Judg.1 (A. F. Kirkpatrick, *The Book of Psalms*, 467) and the defeat at Ebenezer (1 Sam. 4), see A. F. Campbell, *The Ark Narratives*, 212-16, and "Psalm 78: A Contribution to the Theology of Tenth Century Israel," *CBQ* 41, 1979, 60-61

7 Some of the clues are listed by A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms*, II, 562.

7. The divine title of Yahweh, "the Holy One of Israel", "the God Most High" etc., suggests a Jerusalem setting.
8. There is a clear merging of the two great traditional streams: The Exodus-Wilderness-Conquest tradition and the Davidic-Zion tradition.[8]
9. The psalm shows an explicit didactic character in the two-fold introduction (vv.1-4, 5-8) and the two long historical recitals (vv.9-39, 40-72).
10. The historical traditions referred to in the psalm is comparable with those in the Pentateuch except that there is the absence of the Patriarchs narratives.[9]

If we take all of these factors into consideration, we shall arrive at the most likely date of the psalm's origin in the period between the fall of Samaria (722 B.C.E) on the one hand and the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple (586 B.C.E.) on the other.[10] The proposals of Moses Buttenwieser and H. Junker based on the historical evidence from Hezekiah's time are to be taken seriously. Both scholars have directed us to the fall of Samaria when Israel was destroyed as an independent state by Assyrians who deported some of the Israelites. Judah in the south then became the sole hope and claimant to the sacral traditions. The influx of Israelites to Judah added new impetus to the revival of the Northern traditions and Yahwistic faith in the context of the theology and cultic setting of Jerusalem.

If this is the proper context, the hope of restoration lies in Yahweh's election of Judah, David and the Temple of Zion (vv.68-72). The election of Judah in verse 68

8 G. W. Coats has an analysis of the tradition incorporated in the psalm, *Rebellion in the Wilderness, the Murmuring Motif in the Wilderness Traditions of the Old Testament*, 199-224. Robert Carroll also regards the Exodus-Wilderness-Conquest traditions as essentially the property of the Joseph tribes, i.e., the Ephraim-Manasseh tribe complex, p.139. Such traditions are preserved in the covenant by Joshua, an Ephraimite (Josh.24), Samuel, another Ephraimite, and King Jeroboam, also an Ephraimite (1 Kg.12:26-29). It is true that there are different emphases in the tradition of the two Kingdoms: the Exodus tradition does not engage the attention of Isaiah of Jerusalem while the Davidic-Zion tradition does not play a significant role in Hosea in the North. But exclusive and rigid division is not possible.

9 Schildenberger, "Psalm 78 (77) und die Peutateuchguellen," *Lex Tua Veritas*, 240-56.

10 Moses Buttenwieser (*The Psalms, Chronologically Treated with a New Translation,*). H. Junker, "Die Entstehungszeit des Ps.78 und des Deuteronomiums," *Biblica,* 34, 1953. The suggestion by Eissfeldt that the psalm together with Deut. 32 are derived from the background of the Philistine events in the elven century (1070-1020) (*Das Lied Moses Dt 32:1-43 und das Lehrgedicht Asaphs Ps 78 samt einer Analyse der Umgebung des Mose-Liedes,* 1958, 42) is not possible on the ground of the strong sense of the inviolability of Zion and the condemnation of the worship at high places. The defeat in 1 Sam. 4 could not be described as a defeat of the "sons of Ephraim" only. Early dates of the psalm are given by W. Albright, N. Freedman, F. M. Cross, G. E. Wright, A. F. Campbell, A. R. Johnson etc. The post-Exilic date is held by Hermann Gunkel (*Die Psalmen,* 1925-26) and Hans J. Kraus (*Die Psalmen, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag*, 704).

is to be contrasted with Yahweh's rejection of the house of Joseph[11] in v. 67a. This can hardly be a psalm used to antagonize or alienate the Northern Kingdom. The psalmist, on the contrary, intended to bring the whole people of Israel together, to unite them under the leadership of the house of David. Yahweh's love for Zion and His Temple (מקדשו) which was enduring like the high heavens and firm as the earth. Instead of the bitter experience of the destruction of Jerusalem we can sense the rise of the belief in the inviolability of Zion, which is most probably consequential of the miraculous escape of Jerusalem from Assyrian invasion in 701 B.C.E. Hezekiah-Josiah's reform would provide the *Sitz-im-Leben* of the psalm. The election of the tribe of Judah, the mountain of Zion and the house of David in Ps.78:68-72 may also reflect the oracle of Nathan to David in 2 Sam.7 (cf. Pss.89 and 132).[12] The belief in God's choice of Zion where the Temple was still standing high like the heavens was so absolute that it is unlikely that Jerusalem had experienced its tragic fall in 586 B.C.E.. Ps.78 cannot therefore be later than God's word of 2 Kg. 23:27 in which Yahweh is about to remove Judah and to cast off the Temple.

The elements of wisdom and law in Ps.78 can also find their place in the time of Hezekiah[13] when a group of "men of Hezekiah" (Prov.25:1)[14] with similar concerns as being incorporated in Psalm 78 was said to be supported by the royal court in Jerusalem. We may well be open to the possibility that among the "men

11 Joseph in the Psalms 77:16; 78:67; 80:2-3; 81:6; 105:17, only in the last case is the story of Joseph referred to. For the history of the tribes, see C. H. J Geus, *The Tribes of Israel*, *An Investigation into the Presupposition of Martin Noth's Amphictyony Hypothesis*.

12 Dennis J. McCarthy adds 2 Sam.7 to Martin Noth's list of passages with meditation on Israel's history at the turning points of history (Josh.1:11-15, 12-13; Judg.2:11-13; 2 Sam.12; 1 Kg.8:14-61; 2 Kg.17:7-23) and attributes to it an important role in the structure of the Deuteronomic history as a whole, "II Sam 7 and The Structure of the Deuteronomic History," *JBL* 84 (1965), 131-38. T. N. D. Mettinger gives a survey of previous research on the problem the prophecy of Nathan, *Kingship and Messiah*, *The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings*, 48-51.

13 H. Junker links these two elements in Ps.78 with Deut. 4:6-8 and prophet Isaiah (5:21; 10:12; 19:15; 28:29; 29:14; 31:2-3) in "Die Entstehungszeit des Ps.78 und des Deuteronomiums," *Biblica,* 34, 1953, 498.

14 On the role of Hezekiah in wisdom tradition, see R. B. Y. Scott, "Solomon and the Beginning of Wisdom in Israel," Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East," *VT,* 3, 1955, 262-79. Scott remarks that the reign of Hezekiah is the most probable time for the blending together of historical traditions, prophetic records and psalm collections of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Therefore, Hezekiah's time is a period of literary activity in Judah, 277.

of Hezekiah" were Northerners from Israel.[15] Joseph Blenkinsopp asserts that the time of Hezekiah is the right time to further develop and consolidate the traditions about David as the servant chosen by God to rule Judah and Israel in Jerusalem where the temple is still standing, "especially with a view to attracting survivors of the Assyrian conquest of Samaria in 722 B.C.E."[16] Hezekiah is portrayed as "a second David" and praised by the Deuteronomistic writers as being incomparable (II Kg 18:5).[17] Psalm 78 is most probably a product of the religious ideology of Hezekiah's time in its advocation of the divine election of David and the rejection of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. In order to further explicate the conception of heavenly justification of earthly rule, a cross-textual reading with the notion of the Mandate of Heaven in the transition from the Shang Dynasty to the Zhou Dynasty in ancient China as found expressed in *Shijing* (*Book of Songs*) is here proposed.

III. The Moral Dimension of Mandate of Heaven in Zhou Dynasty

Chinese culture owes a great deal to the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE) which has left human civilization with the first written Chinese language on the Oracles Bones (turtle shells and animal scapula bones) which were used in divination, a practice of seeking the divine will on military expedition or on court decisions in daily endeavors by reading cracks of bones after heating in fire. The Shang characters written on the bones have been taken "as the etymological ancestors of the Chinese writing system".[18] Though being conquered by the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BCE) military might and overturned by the latter, Shang's legacy survived and continued to exert its influence in the subsequent ages. The Chinese religious practice of ancestor veneration, according to Chad Hansen, goes back to the Shang period.[19] It is generally held among Chinese historians and literary scholars that it is the Zhou's major cultural achievement in its shifting the philosophical tradition of China from focused attention on the religious world to that of humanistic concern on social dimensions of humanity that characterizes

15 M. J. Buss presupposes that some of the psalms of Asaph with ideological and verbal affinities with Hosea and the Deuteronomists may have been "adopted or formulated by former North-Israelites in order to clarify the reason for their new worship in the South," in "The Psalms of Asaph and Korah," *JBL* 82, 385. But Buss regard these Israelites as Levites from the North, who were engaged in the religious education of the people, 386. He also perceives that wisdom themes and forms of address which show a special tone of exhortation proper for a religious teacher are characteristic of the psalms of Asaph, 387.

16 Joseph Blenkinsopp, *David Remembered*, 6.

17 Note a similar statement is also ascribed to Josiah in II Kg 23:25.

18 Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought, A Philosophical Interpretation*, 31.

19 Hansen, like most scholars, uses the term "ancestor worship", 32.

the subsequent culture in Chinese history and literature. There may be some truth in the view that the Shang's reverence for the anthropomorphic *Shangdi* (the Lord on High) has been given way to the Zhou's conception of an ambiguously formulated *Tian* (Heaven). While the former *Shangdi* was not being completely eliminated and substituted, the Zhou's notion of *Tian* has opened up a wider space for a more theoretical notion of Heaven, a clearer moral dimension of nature and a mature philosophical perception of the *Dao*. At Zhou times, *Shangdi* and *Tian* have acquired similar identity and close affinity to the extent that they are interchangeable and interconnected. There are endless debates on the understanding of *Shangdi* and whether the idea of God or god(s) from Western conception can be employed to explain or even to be seen as being equivalent to it.[20] According to Chen Mengjia, a scholar in the field of Chinese literature and the study of Shang Oracle Bones, Heaven was not being regarded as a deity of the Shang people in the Oracle Bones and only in the Zhou Dynasty did Heaven convey the notion of the Supreme God, gradually taking the place of the *Di* or *Shangdi* of the Shang people.[21]

When defeating the Shang Dynasty, the new Zhou leadership under King Wu had to legitimize its power and explain the fall of the former in its own rise to power in order to succeed the Shang traditions and unite the two peoples into one country under *Tian*, the Sovereign Ruler in heaven. We will take from the *Book of Songs* the poem "King Wen" ("文王") which is assumed to be composed by the Duke of Zhou in praise and honor of the virtuous King Wen in Zhou Dynasty. The religious-political context of the poetry is the celebration of the victory of Zhou over the Shang in the grand occasions of royal ritual to Zhou's ancestors. Scholarly position takes it as a dynastic hymn as it is incorporated in the ritual collection of Zhou and used when the Zhou Empire was at the peak of its strength and power. The local rulers and princes of the vassal states of the confederation were invited to assemble to celebrate the illuminous achievement of the Zhou emperor.[22] The hymn constitutes the important political epic of King Wen, the ancestor who was believed to receive the Mandate of Heaven to rule as the Son of Heaven (天子) ("King Wen

20 Most of the Jesuits who worked in China after Matteo Ricci were in favor of taking the Chinese *Shangdi* as the same God as the Catholic Lord of Heaven (*Tianzu*), at least up till the Rite Controversy in the early 18th Century. The Protestant disputes on naming God in Chinese either adopting the ancient term *Shangdi* or just using the generic term *Shen* for the Hebrew *Elohim* and the Greek *Theos* has not been resolved even up till today. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom insistent on following *Shangdi* of the German missionary Karl Gutzlaff's rendering of *Shangdi* in the translation of the Bible.

21 Chen Mengjia, *Integrated Presentation on the Oracle Bones of the Yin Ruins*, 581. Milton M. Chiu, *The Tao of Chinese Religion*, 96.

22 Chen Zizhan, *Commentary on the Three-Hundred Songs*, 909-10.

was commissioned by the Mandate of Heaven to rule the heaven and earth" 【"文王受天命而王天下"】[23]). The repeated use of the word "命" ("mandate") for 8 times in a short poem of 7 stanzas well illustrate the importance of the theme not only for the divine legitimization of the human sovereign embodied in King Wen and his successors based on his moral and ethical behaviors[24], but also the rejection of the Shang Dynasty which has been formerly endowed with a similar mandate from heaven. In this poem it is also underlined that the defeat and therefore rejection of Shang in the east would serve as an example of warning for the current powerful generation of Zhou in the west. The last emperor of Shang, King Zhou (纣王, a different Chinese character from the name of "Zhou Dynasty") has been portrayed as conducting a brutal and tyrannical regime (无道) that justified the revolt by the Zhou people. In Chinese, the term for revolution (革命) literally means revoking against the Mandate. The fact that a grand "metropolitan-state of Shang" (大邑商) was being replaced by a "tiny city-state of Zhou" (小邦周) is something of an enigma of history that lessons are to be drawn and warnings to be issued. The complete hymn is translated into English[25] as follows:

1. King Wen is on high (文王在上), Oh! bright is he in heaven (於昭于天).
   Although Zhou is an old state (周雖舊邦), Its Mandate is still new (其命維新).
   Illustrious[26] is the House of Zhou (有周不顯), The Mandate of *Di* endowed timely (帝命不時).

23 See Chapter 15, section 65 of *Chuxiu Fanlu* ("Suburban Sacrifice"《春秋繁露. 郊祭篇》). Sarah A. Queen classified this section under "The Ritual Chapters", *From Chronicle to Canon, The Hermeneutics of Spring and Autumn, according to Tung Chung-shu*, 105. On "Son of Heaven", see 202-03.《采菽-Cai Shu》in *Book of Songs* refers to "The son of Heaven decrees" (天子命之), 《国风桑扈之什》(Decade Of Sang Hu, Odes of the Kingdom).

24 Chen, *Commentary on the Three-Hundred Songs*, 912. See also the confirmation of the heaven's mandate to the Zhou in three other songs in the same collections of 10 epics of Wen Wang (大明，皇矣，文王有声).

25 There are several English translations of *Shijing*: Arthur Waley, *The Book of Songs: The Ancient Chinese Classic of Poetry,* edited with additional translations by Joseph R. Allen; foreword by Stephen Owen; postface by Joseph R. Allen, (New York: Grove Press, 1996), Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲)，*Book of Poetry* (The Chinese-English Bilingual Series of Chinese Classics), Hunan Publishing Co. 1993, *Book of Songs*, translated into modern Chinese by Tang Ziheng (唐子恒) and Liao Qun (廖群), translated into English by An Zengcai (安增才), (Shandong: Shandong Friendship Press, 1999).

26 The word for "不" in "有周不顯" carries the meaning of "great" in ancient Chinese dictionary of "Shuowen", see the reference to it by Yao Jiheng (姚际恒)，*Collection of Yao Jiheng Writings,* (姚际恒著作集), Vol 1, General Comments on the Book of Poetry (诗经通论), (Taipei: Institute of Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica, 1994), 383.

King Wen ascends and descends[27](文王陟降), At *Di*'s left and the right (在帝左右).

2. Earnest and dedicated was King Wen (亹亹文王), And his fame is without end (令聞不已).
   The gifts to Zhou (陳錫哉周), Extend to the descendants of King Wen (侯文王孫子),
   To the descendants of King Wen (文王孫子), The direct line and branches in hundred generations (本支百世),
   All the officers of Zhou (凡周之士), Shall be illustrious from age to age (不顯亦世)
3. Being illustrious from age to age (世之不顯), Zealously and reverently pursuing their tasks (厥猶翼翼)
   Brilliant are the many officers (思皇多士), Born in this royal kingdom (生此王國).
   The royal kingdom is able to produce them (王國克生), The backbones of Zhou (維周之楨).
   Numerous is the array of officers (濟濟多士), King Wen enjoys his repose (文王以寧).
4. How dignified is King Wen (穆穆文王); Oh! Reverence to him will be extended without end (於緝熙敬止),
   Great is the Mandate of Heaven (假哉天命)! There the descendants of former Shang (有商孫子);
   The descendants of Shang (商之孫子), Are numerous in hundreds of thousands (其麗不億);
   But when Di gave the Mandate (上帝既命), They are to submit to Zhou (侯于周服)
5. Submitted to Zhou they did (侯服于周), The Mandate of Heaven is not permanent (天命靡常)
   The officers of Yin, admirable and alert (殷士膚敏), Assist at the libations in the (Zhou) capital (裸將于京).
   They assist and serve at those libations (厥作裸將), Always wearing their Shang style cap and garment (常服黼冔)
   O you loyal ministers of the king (王之藎臣), Ever remember your ancestor (無念爾祖)!

27 Some exegetes assume that this refers to the spirit of King Wen, Ma Chiying (马持盈), *Modern Commentary and Translation of Shijing* (诗经今注今译) , (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Publishing Co, 1972), 398.

6. Ever remember your ancestor (無念爾祖), Cultivating your virtue (聿脩厥德).
   Should always accord with the Mandate (永言配命), Seeking to secure for abundant blessing (自求多福)
   Before Yin lost the multitudes (殷之未喪師), [Its kings] were in accord with *Shangdi* (克配上帝)
   You should take lesson from Yin (宜鑒于殷), The great Mandate is not easily kept (駿命不易)
7. The Mandate is not easily kept (命之不易), Do not bring about your own extinction (無遏爾躬).
   Display and radiate your righteousness and fame (宣昭義問), And take warnings from Heaven for Yin (有虞殷自天).
   The doings of High Heaven (上天之載), Have no sound nor smell (無聲無臭)
   Take your model from King Wen (儀刑文王), And the all the states will have confidence in you (萬邦作孚).

Due to the limited scope of this article we can just outline a few significant aspects of the Chinese dynastic hymn relevant to the discussion of Psalm 78. King Wen is at the outset thought as a benevolent and brilliant ancestor who has ascended at the left and right side of *Di*, the Sovereign Lord of the Zhou people in heaven. He is in possession of the Mandate which is considered as being still new for the old state and is applicable to the present generation of King Wu who is the son of King Wen. Indeed, the Mandate is believed to be extended to hundreds of generations. King Wen is both in heaven and present on earth as he ascends and descends between heaven and earth. In drawing lessons from the revoke of the Mandate of Heaven, the Shang people are invited to submit to Zhou.

It is at this point that two important aspects of the development of the Mandate of Heaven is introduced. The first is its changing character: "The Mandate of Heaven is not permanent (天命靡常)" (Stanza 4). This is one of the stages of development of the notion of the "Mandate of Heaven" from Shang's idea of constancy (天命恒常) to the new understanding of inconstancy (天命靡常) (Stanza 5) with a conception of it being able to transfer (天命转移) from one dynasty to another, depending on the virtue of the person concerned. It is also admitted that the Mandate of Heaven is not easy to keep (Stanza 6-7: "The great Mandate is not easily kept [駿命不易]"). The second aspect is that of invitation to assemble in the Zhou capital to participate in the cultic ritual of the Zhou: "Assist at the libations in the (Zhou) capital (祼將于京)" (Stanza 4). The Shang people are allowed to wear

their Shang ritual costumes (Stanza 5), but are to identify with the Zhou ancestors. It is further claimed that the Shang ancestors had once the Mandate and were once in accord with the will of *Shangdi*, but they have subsequently gone astray. Their fall becomes a warning given by *Tian* to the present generation which is advised to cultivate its virtue (聿脩厥德) in order to be "in accord with the Mandate [of Heaven] (永言配命)" (Stanza 6). The example of King Wen is then lifted up as a model to be followed at the end of the hymn: "Take your model from king Wen (儀刑文王)".

What is presented in this hymn is also supported from a rich collection of archaeological finds in China, especially by inscriptions on bronze vessels uncovered from archaeological sites of the Zhou period.[28] The Dai Yu Tripot (大盂鼎) is one of the major representations of the bronze corpus known to us so far:

> In the ninth month, King Kang, at the temple of the Zhou royal family, issued an order to his minister, Yu. Thus said the King, "Oh Yu, the most illustrious King Wen has received the Great Mandate possessed by Heaven (*Tian*). And King Wu, succeeding King Wen, has established the national boundary, eradicated the enemies, and pacified the people.[29]

IV. Contextual Reconstruction from Cross-Textual Insights

From the Chinese dynastic ritual hymn above we can take a glimpse at the position held by scholars in the field of ancient Chinese culture that certain degree of discontinuity sets in from the transition of power from Shang Dynasty to that of that of the Zhou in the total transformation of the basic tenet of the world of thought and the idea of divine-human relationship. While it is often assumed that the change was from the dependence on the divine and spiritual realm to the empowerment of the human in an anthropocentric outlook, we can argue that though the Zhou people developed and formulated the idea of "Mandate of Heaven" endowed on the emperor with great emphasis on morality and virtue, there is also the belief in the role of *Shangdi* as commanding the submission of the Shang to the Zhou in Stanza 4: "But when *Shangdi* gave the Mandate (上帝既命)" and "They are to submit to Zhou (侯于周服)". Heaven is assumed to work mysteriously in human history , "the doings of High Heaven" (上天之載) have no "sound and smell" (無聲無臭).

Similar approach to the transfer of power is seen in Psalm 78. According to

28 On the rich sources, both literary from the classics and archaeologically from under the earth, see Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of thought in Ancient China*, chapter 2 ("Early Chou Thought: Continuity and Breakthrough").

29 Modified from the translation of Milton M. Chiu, *The Tao of Chinese Religion*, 96.

R. P. Carroll the psalm is a vestige of a tribal polemic, "a polemic directed against the holders of the older faith in favor of the more recent claimants."[30] He proposes that the occurrence of בחר ("to choose") in the negative form לא בחר ("not to choose", v.67) suggests a polemical intent.[31] It is very unlikely that the intention of the psalmist was to alienate part of the people of Israel or to promote hostility against the Northern Kingdom. Taking a more positive position does not mean to undermine the tension and controversy between Israel and Judah. The address in the introduction (vv.1-8) points to "our ancestors" as the rebellious generation of the wilderness (v.8; cf.17-31, 40-41) and the stubborn generation of the conquest (vv.9-11, 56-58). They were referred to as the ancestors of the audience. With a cross-textual reading from Chinese discourse on kingship and its historical transformation we will argue below that alienation of former dynasty and polemical opposition to the defeated people may not be the major concern of a new ruling power.

This Chinese hymn may have something to offer in enlightening our understanding of Psalm 78 in a cross-textual context. Not that there is any indication of influence and interaction between the two texts historically, but a similar situation of two states (Shang-Zhou and Israel-Judah) in contest may give some insights to the construction of a trajectory from the relatively well-established Chinese tradition for the comprehension of Ps. 78, the context and setting of which are open to dispute. There are richer sources of Chinese texts from the Zhou period to allow us to ascertain and establish some historical information. Though many of the written texts have been edited and redacted with perspectives of Confucius who regarded the Zhou as an ideal of an ideal society and a good religious-political world to return to, the text of the *Book of Songs* is believed to be relatively free from extensive Confucian outlook.[32] We will reply on some consensus that have been arrived at by scholars on the Chinese dynastic hymn to see ways it will contribute to the construction of some of the issues in Ps. 78.

First, there is the notion of the Mandate of Heaven previously endowed on the Shang ancestors, but now being removed to give to the royal house of Zhou. The rejection of the last king of Shang is explained as a result of his departure from the accord with Heaven in his oppressing government. The basis of the appeal to the Zhou Mandate is on the ideal ruler, King Wen at the time of King Wu or other Zhou kings. This is similar to the climax of Ps.78:68-72, which is the election of Judah

30 Carroll, "Psalm 78: Vestiges of a Tribal Polemic," *VT*, 21, 1971, 144.

31 Carroll, 136.

32 In terms of interpretation of the 305 poems of the Book of Poetry, Confucianism has its great impact from Han times, see Schwartz, 41-46.

and David, the selected tribe and chosen king respectively. In the psalm, the use of בחר (vv.68, 70) and לא בחר (v.67) clearly indicates an election theme, a tradition formulated clearly in Deuteronomic terminology and conception.

Reading the Chinese text with the biblical passage, we immediately spot the difference in the latter having the choice of Zion as the site of the Temple (vv.68-70) and the absence in the former of a cultic site where the name of God is to rest. Though there is no mention of any rejection of former house of Heaven in the Chinese hymn, such as that of the rejection of Shiloh (v.60) and the choice of the Temple on Zion, the context of inviting the defeated Shang remnants to come to the Zhou capital to participate in the ritual of reverence to the ancestor with the aim to unite the two peoples as one, is clearly expressed. With this we may explore whether something in that direction is plausible for Ps. 78.

The Books of Chronicles actually recorded a message to the northerners after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.E. Israelites in the North were reported to be invited to come to Jerusalem in the South and celebrate the Passover (2 Chron. 30) together with the Judeans.[33] Passover was the occasion to rehearse and celebrate the Exodus events (Exod.12:1-28; Deut.16:1-8). Hezekiah sent a letter with an explanation to invite the people of the North to come to Jerusalem for that particular occasion (2 Chron. 30:1-10). The invitation stresses the need to return to the Lord: "Do not be like your fathers (לא תהיו כאבותיכם) and your brethren who were faithless to the Lord… (v.7)". Similar themes in Ps. 78 are also found expressed in Chronicles: the importance of coming to the Holy Temple (ובאו למקדשו, v.8); the idea that the desolation was the result of Yahweh's fierce anger (חרון אפו, v.9a) and the gracious-merciful nature of Yahweh (כי־חנין ורחום יהוה, v.9b). All these emphases, hardly accidental, are presupposed by Ps.78. Presumably when the people came together, not only the story of Passover was recited but also a lesson on the mysteries of history, past and contemporary, was drawn with the hope to center the people's future on the Temple, the Davidic king and the Southern State of Judah. The celebration of Passover by people of North and South at the time was appropriate

33 S. Talmon supports the Chronicler's report of the Passover as of great historicity. He even argues for its accuracy in detail by proposing a theory for the Passover celebration in the second month, *VT* 8, 1958, 48-74. His proposal remains a theory and lacks substantial evidence to support it. But one thing is sure, if the Chronicler simple inserts into the reign of Hezekiah the Passover celebration of Josiah (de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 487) or invented it totally out of his imagination, he would not create such difficult problems of celebration at an unorthodox date which he had to explain in 2 Chron.30:3 nor would be allow to take place such an observation not according to regulations, which he attempted to resolve in 2 Chron. 30:17-20. See F. L. Moriarty, "The Chronicler's Account of Hezekiah's Reform," *CBQ,* 27,1965, 404-406.

for reconceiving the context of Ps.78 to be produced in an occasion which "recalled the memories of freedom from Egyptian slavery and the covenant with Yahweh".[34]

In Chronicles, the tribe of Ephraim is also being blamed and condemned in its fundamental sin of splintering off from Judah and the House of David. In the leadership of Jeroboam, the so-called United Monarchy was divided into two kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The division was supported by prophet Ahijah, an Ephraimite (I Kg. 11). The whole Northern Kingdom is sometimes figuratively referred to under the name Ephraim (Isa. 7: 2-5; Hos 5: 2, 5, 9; 6:4). The tribe is portrayed as resisting the reform programs of Hezekiah (II Chron. 30:1, 10, 18) and Josiah (II Chron. 34:6).

In the Books of Kings, Jeroboam, an Ephraimite (1 Kg.11:26), is accused of leading the people of the North into great sins. He is the first king of the North, who disrupted the United Monarchy. He is blamed in the making of two calves at Dan and Bethel for the Israelites, which is regarded as the greatest sin of the Northern Kingdom (1 Kg. 12:28-29; 13:33-34; 14:16, etc.).[35] This is why a prediction of doom is immediately announced in the narrative, which also forecast the reform by Josiah (1 Kg.13:1ff). Since Ps.78 attempts to debase the election of Israel, Ephraim-Joseph and Shiloh in favor of that of Judah, David and Zion, the psalm is presumably post-Ahijah of Shiloh (1 Kg. 11: 29-33; 12:15).[36] A. F. Campbell rightly remarks that "so terrible a statement of rejection might never have come to expression were it not to be followed by the claim of election."[37]

Shiloh, in the area of Ephraim where the Ark was housed in the time of Samuel (1 Sam.4-6), is considered by Ps. 78 as once the dwelling place of God (v.61). The transfer of the Ark signified the succession and continuation of the ancient tradition

34 B. Oded in *Israelite and Judaean History*, ed. John Hayes and J. Maxwell Miller.

35 "The ultimate and crowning wickedness of the Northern Kingdom, according to the Deuteronomic compiler, was the break-away from the Southern Kingdom, involving worship elsewhere than in Jerusalem," N. H. Snaith, "1 and 2 Kings," *IB*, III, 281.

36 Jeroboam, the first king of the Northern Kingdom who was from the tribe of Ephraim and was appointed to be head over all the forced labor of the house of Joseph before becoming king of Israel. "Ephraim" is used 22 times in Isaiah of Jerusalem to refer to Israel. Usually in apposition to Judah: Ephraim departed from Judah (7:17); Manasseh-Ephraim are against Judah (9:21); pride and arrogance of Ephraim 9:8-12, cf.28:1, 3. Only in the passage where the prophecy of salvation is proclaimed are Judah and Ephraim seen to be in harmony (11:13). The name "Ephraim" is frequently used to refer to Israel in the Book of Hosea.

37 A. F. Campbell, *CBQ* 41 (1979), 57. The Deuteronomistic historian worked in the shadow of the two great events, the catastrophes of 722 and 586 B.C. von Rad, *PHOE*, 207. For a structural analysis of 2 Kg.17 and comments on works by scholars, see J. MacDonald, "The Structure of 2 Kings, XVII," *TGUOS* 23 (1969-70), 29-41.

of Shiloh by the house of David.[38] Later the link between Shiloh and Jerusalem was also cited as an example of threat to Jerusalem and Judah; the Temple itself could not give any guarantee of security for Jerusalem (Jer.7:12-14; 26:1-9). Tracing the probable origin of the affirmation of the inviolability of the Temple of Jerusalem may lead us back to the experience of the deliverance of the city from the Assyrian siege (II Kg.19:32-37)[39] as it is proclaimed in the speech of Yahweh to Hezekiah: "I will defend this city, to save it, for my own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (II Kg.19:34; 20:6). Similar claim for divine election of Zion in Ps. 78 as being an unconditional promise of to David may have further developed at the time of Jeremiah who then had to risk his life in attacking directly the root of this popular belief.[40] Jeremiah drew similar analogy as that in Ps.78, but using Shiloh as an example of the judgment of Yahweh that would fall upon Jerusalem should the people refuse to return and repent.[41]

The attempt to restore the United Monarchy under a Davidic king and the effort to bring the Northern Kingdom to the cult at Jerusalem may have its early formulation at the time of Hezekiah. But obviously Hezekiah's reform activity did not gain widespread acceptance when we read of the apostasy of his son Manasseh. This, however, does not in any way lead us to the conception that Hezekiah's attempt was a complete failure. The effective reform of Josiah would not come

38 Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Theology of the Psalms*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 75. The transfer of the Ark acts as "a token of the unification of Israel and Judah under the House of David." (Tomoo Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel*, 146). See also M. Harran, *Temple and Temple Services*, 27.

39 Nicholson, *Jeremiah*, (CBC), 77; R. de Vaux, "Jerusalem and the Prophets," *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition*, Harry M. Orlinsky (ed), 277-300, also de Vaux's *Ancient Israel*, 327-28; J. Bright, *History of Israel,* 1972, 297; G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, 135.

40 John Bright's Currie Lectures, *Covenant and Promise: the Future in the Preaching of the Pre-exilic Prophets London: SCM, 1977*, considers this very question of the clash between Jeremiah and his contemporaries who, Bright presumes, were just as sincere as Jeremiah and just as committed to the traditions of the people, 16-17.

41 R. de Vaux, "Jerusalem and the Prophets," *Interpreting the Prophetic Tradition*, 288-93. The close historical link of Shiloh and Jerusalem is further seen in the "Shiloh Oracle". The enigmatic words עד כי יבא שילו in the Blessing of Jacob (Gen.49:10) are interpreted as "till he comes to Shiloh" by Nielson, who even paraphrases it: "as soon as the Judean ruler arrives at Shiloh his kingship shall be firmly established. It shall even surpass the narrow tribal borders." Nielson, Shechem, 1955, 321. M. Treves speculates that the phrase was added after Solomon's death as a sarcastic remark pointing to Ahijah of Shiloh: "As a man of Shiloh come" in "Shiloh (Genesis 49:10)," *JBL* 85, 1966, 353-56. LXX has שלו "until he comes into his own" or "until that which belongs to him comes", while most medieval Jewish authorities read שַׁי לוֹ, "tribute to him" (cf. Isa.18:7). See E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, (AB), 1964, 366; von Rad, *Genesis*, 425. This line of interpretation has already suggested and argued convincingly by Jon Lindblom in "The Political Background of the Shiloh Oracle," *SVT* 3 *Congress Volume*, 1953, 78-106.

about without his work and the spirit of reform carried on by the Deuteronomist. The historical situation of the gradual disintegration of the Assyrian Empire facilitated extensive reform carried out even to the former Northern Kingdom by Josiah (II Kg. 23:4; 2 Chron. 34:6-7).[42]

According to Finkelstein's archaeological surveys, the fall of the kingdom of Israel after 722 B.C.E. has brought about dramatic growth in terms of total built-up area in Judea. The doubling, if not trebling, in the number of settlements and increase of population of Judah in just a couple of decades in the second half of the Eighth Century may well be explained by the influx of a large number of Israelite refugees.[43] The following words from Finkelstein may be cited to support the pan-Israel ideological frame for the socio-political context of the time of Hezekiah as expressed in Ps. 78:

> The author incorporated the northern and southern traditions but subjected them to his main ideological goals: to promote the Davidic kings as the only legitimate rulers over all Israel and the Jerusalem temple as the only legitimate cult-place for all *Bene Israel*.[44]
>
> It was needed in order to provide historical legitimacy to the Jerusalem claim for dominance over all Hebrew territories and all Hebrew people—in both the north and south. Evidently, another side of the same coin was the need to downplay the importance of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was historically the more important of the two Hebrew kingdoms.[45]

Secondly, on the notion of the changing character of the Mandate of Heaven in the Chinese hymn ("The mandate of Heaven is not always permanent", 天命靡常), it is worth noting that the human dimension of virtuous behavior in Zhou time has superseded Shang's idea of the Heavenly Mandate's constancy (天命恒常). Heaven's Mandate being inconstant (天命靡常) and not unconditionally eternal has facilitated dynastic changes with its transfer (天命转移) from one dynasty to another. This aspect will lead us to consider the issue of conditional and unconditional dynastic

42 B. Oded, 467; M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion*, p.113; and still earlier F. M. Cross, Jr. and D. N. Freedman, "Josiah's Revolt Against Assyria," *JNES* 12, 1953, 56-58, support that the political occasion for the reform was probably the death of the king Assur-etel-ilani and the consequent disorders in Assyria.

43 Israel Finkelstein, *The Forgotten Kingdom, The Archaeology and History of Northern Israel*, 154.

44 Finkelstein, 157.

45 Finkelstein, 158.

promise to David in the Bible. We have at least two forms of the promise being articulated in the Psalms: the unconditional (Ps.89:30-34) and the conditional (Ps.132:12)[46].

> If his children forsake my law and do not walk according to my ordinances, if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with scourges; but I will not remove from him my steadfast love, or be false to my faithfulness. I will not violate my covenant, or alter the word that went forth from my lips (Ps. 89:30-34)
>
> If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies which I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit upon your throne (Ps.132:12).

God's unconditional promise to David may go back to Nathan's formulation in II Sam 7:14-15 which is taken as the original unconditional formulation by T. Mettinger who is also of the opinion that the conditional expression of Ps.132 reveals some Deuteronomistic influence.[47] He further argues that the Exilic and post-Exilic situations have given rise to the stress on the eternal validity of covenant ("eternal covenant", ברית עלם) in the Priestly code and in the Prophets.[48] Ps.89 is to him then a return to the unconditional formulation of II Sam. 7:14-15 in the Exile. Whichever is the case, the biblical traditions did go through a change to a notion of human dimension of divine election and the problem of its continued validity. But they have never gone so far as to take the human behavior as dictating the course of history as the presumably anthropocentric view expressed in China.

In addition to the issue of conditional/unconditional promise there is the belief in the supremacy of Judah and certain degree of inviolability of Zion and the Temple. This reflects a biased position as expressed in II Kg 17. When at the tragic devastation of the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the deportation

46 Considering both the affinities between the two royal psalms with oracles (Pss.89 and 132) and Ps.78, as well as the differences in the mood and intention between them, we may regard Pss.89 and 132 as dramatic rituals while Ps.78 a didactic admonition. Most probably as A. R. Johnson suggests, all three psalms exhibit prophetic functions of representing the past for didactic purpose, see Johnson, *Cultic Prophet*, 1979, 83; on the role of the cultic prophet in intercession and cultic oracle, 166.

47 Tryggve Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 276.

48 The phrase is applied by P in connection with Sabbath (Exod.31:16; Lev.24:8), with Aaron (Num.18:19), with Phinehas (Num.25:13), with Noah (Gen.9:16) and with Abraham (Gen.17:7, 13, 19; cf. Ps.105:8-10). The covenant with David is renewed to the people after the dethronement of the last Davidic king (Isa.55:3; 61:60; Jer.32:40; 50:5).

of the leadership and the population of Judah and the fall of the dynasty, the excessed confidence in the choice of David was confronted by the hard historical experience of disorientation, we see the development of another stage of the relationship between the North and the South. We read of the attempt of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel to re-envisage a hope of reunion of God's people. The "Book of Consolation" (Jer. 30-31) and the "Good Shepherd" in Ezekiel take Yahweh, not David, as the good shepherd to gather God's scattered flock (Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 34). The Oracle of the Two Sticks (Ezek. 37) and the restoration of the Temple (Ezek. 40-48) articulate a different approach to the relationship between North and South in a later date and a dissimilar context from those of Ps. 78. Charles H. H. Scobie says it well in the following quotation:

> The fall of the Northern Kingdom was a great temptation to Judah to see itself as alone the chosen of God. The impending, and then actual, fall of the South evened the score, as it were, so that neither side could vaunt itself.[49]

V. Concluding Remarks

To sum up, Ps.78 may well be a didactic psalm composed in Jerusalem after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. The rejection of Ephraim-Joseph became a historical reality in the catastrophe of the defeat of Samaria. History of the past is remembered and interpreted to illustrate a puzzling historical problem of the present situation of the fall of the North and the desire to unite the North with the South. The Mosaic traditions of the Exodus and wilderness period are attached to the royal theology to form a whole piece of historical recitation for didactic purpose. If the historical, prophetical, sapiential and royal traditions are blended together in the time of Hezekiah, Ps. 78 reflects similar context and may play a role in such a stage of development.

Divine rejection can be understood properly in connection with human rejection of God. It is almost always understood in the Bible as a response to human abomination. The reaction of Yahweh to having been first rejected by humans is illustrated in the case of the Northern Kingdom. The Chinese notion of Heaven's Mandate being withdrawn from the ill-behaved Shang Dynasty and newly endowed on the virtuous king of the Zhou well elaborates the human dimension of rejection

49 Charles H. H. Scobie, "North and South: Tension and Reconciliation in Biblical History," *Biblical Studies: Essays in Honour of William Barclay*, 92.

and election. The invitation of Zhou leadership to the former officials to participate in the ritual celebration of the new era for the unification of the two states may provide some insights for our reading of the divine election of Judah, Zion and David in Psalm 78.

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Echoes of Literary Travel

Editor's Note:

Literary travel is an important theme of world literature and a frequent subject in comparative literary studies. With this in mind, we have decided to establish a column in *CL&WL* called "Echoes of Literary Travel." We are interested in publishing essays that chronicle the footprints of writers between cultures and national boundaries and examine their contemporary resonance. The style of the essay for this column is less formal than other articles in *CL&WL*. The column, inaugurated with Prof. Keith Ellis's essay, will appear periodically in the future issues of the journal.

Nicolás Guillén, the Cuban Sage, Goes to Wuhan

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Abstract:

Months after the victory of the Cuban Revolution and Nicolás Guillén's return to Cuba from exile, he was invited by the Chinese People's Cultural Association to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Chinese Revolution. During a trip down the powerful Yangtze River, on October 20, later to become the Day of Cuban Culture, Cuba's prolific National Poet was inspired to write "Voy hasta Uján" [I Am Going to Wuhan], merging inextricably and in friendship salient aspects of Cuban and Chinese culture. As is frequent in Guillén's poetic practice, the poem is in the dramatic mode and involves a decision as to whether the Cuban visitor will realize his desire to go all the way to Shanghai or whether the native boatman's plan to go to Wuhan will influence the visitor to make that city his destination. The dialogue between the two is sparse but friendly. The reader will find fruitful allusions to key aspects of Guillén's poetic art that provide resonance to the characters' words. They are testimony to the potency, economy and durability of Guillén's poetic expression, making it refer discreetly to the past and prophetically to the future.

Keywords: Nicolás Guillén, poetry, humanitarianism, Cuba, China, history, Wuhan, prescience, colonialism, imperialism, science, solidarity, paratext

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In my book, *Cuba's Nicolás Guillén: Poetry and Ideology*, of 1985, I commented briefly (155-156) on the poem "Voy hasta Uján" (Guillén, "Tengo, 1964," 137) [I Am Going to Wuhan], in which Nicolás Guillén (1902-1989), as the poetic voice, had written in 1959 about how he came to choose to know that city on the great Yangtze River. My comments arose in synthesis from my observing or imagining a host of experiences involving biography, national history, geographical determination, education, cultural formation, political influence, economic stress, work experience, as all these are underlying factors in the meeting portrayed in the poem "I Am Going to Wuhan" of a Chinese man and a visiting Cuban man in China in 1959.

The process by which the visitor arrives at his decision to prefer Wuhan over Shanghai as his destination employs centrally, and as is frequent in Guillén's poetry, a variation of the dramatic mode. In this case there is sparse dialogue between two protagonists who seem to be proponents for the different cities; but subtle allusions to Guillén's poetic practice and societal preferences, taken together, pronounce in favour of Wuhan, a decision which earns validity not only at the time of the poem`s composition, 1959, but which also, in an act of seeming prescience, based on the poet's unerring sense of history, makes it apply to the world of today as well.

Guillén had travelled to revolutionary China in 1952 and again in 1953, during his time of exile from Fulgencio Batista's Cuba. On both visits, while he traversed long distances, he wrote nostalgic popular Cuban poetry, featuring the *décima*—a ten-line octosyllabic poem usually rhyming abbaaccddc—widely-practised in Cuba, with its popularity ensured throughout the Hispanic world by its versatility and the extension of its encompassing democratic reach. The *décima* may stand by itself conveying themes of every mood and style, recited or sung accompanied by the *tres* or other forms of the guitar. It is also compatible with theater and with public celebrations. The men, women and children who spontaneously, magically create *décimas*, sometimes in contexts of feigned hostility with each other, are adored in Cuba, especially at the time of the triumph of the Revolution when there are many feats to be sung.[1]

In a brilliant speech on José Martí (1853-1895), Cuba's National Hero, given in Beijing, on September 27, 1953, Guillén guides his Chinese audience, and all readers who subsequently have come to know the speech, to understand how Martí's thoughts and deeds contained the popular basis for the making of the Cuban nation and its history (Guillén "José Martí" 158-166). The speech, given two months after the July 26, 1953 attack, led by Fidel Castro, on the Moncada Barracks, on units of the Batista regime's forces in Santiago de Cuba, is a lucid explanation of the necessity for, and the inevitable triumph of, the Cuban Revolution. The speech also gives an indication of Guillén's command of history as a basis of his literary writings in both prose and poetry.

With the triumph of the Revolution on January 1, 1959, the value of Guillén's cultural work became freely recognized, as by acclamation throughout the island he came to be Cuba's National Poet. In September of that year, the nation was making preparations for the founding meetings of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (to be held eventually in 1961), meetings that led to Guillén being voted President

1 The *décima* is also a fundamental pillar of another popular genre, the glosa (Ellis, "The Glosa: A Genre to be Noticed for its Constructive Values."

of UNEAC. All its sessions were attended by Fidel Castro, and the final one was historic for being the occasion on which he summed up what had been discussed in the sessions concerning the new role of artists and writers in the Revolution. A month after this important plannng conference ended, Guillén paid his third visit to China. This time he was invited, as Ángel Augier, Guillén's peerless biographer, tells us (Guillén *Obra poética 1958-1977 II*, 501), by the Chinese Peoples' Cultural Association for Relations with Foreign Countries, to join in the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the Peoples' Republic of China. It was during this visit, on October 20, 1959, that he wrote the poem "Voy hasta Ujáń":

Por el Yang-tse, río abajo,
por el Yang-tse, Yang-tse kiang,
¿de Chunking vienes tal vez,
rumbo a Shanghai?

—No voy tan lejos, mi amigo,
voy hasta Ujáń.

Pero el Yang-tse kiang
sigue hasta el mar.

Por el Yang-tse, río abajo,
tu barca va;
llévame, amigo, en tu barca,
voy hacia el mar.

—No voy tan lejos, mi amigo,
voy hasta Ujáń.

Pero el Yang-tse kiang
muere en Shanghai.

Por el Yang-tse voy soñando,
por el Yang-tse, Yang-tse kiang,
arriba, el cielo sin nubes,
lejos, el mar.
¡Por el Yang-tse kiang

voy hasta Ujján!

(Escrito el 20 de octubre de 1959)

[I Am Going to Wuhan

Along the Yangtze, downstream,
Along the Yangtze, Yangtze Kiang,
¿are you perhaps coming from Chongqing,
heading for Shanghai?

—I'm not going that far, my friend,
I am going to Wuhan.

But the Yangtze Kiang
continues on to the sea.

Along the Yangtze, downstream,
your boat sails;
take me, friend, in your boat,
I am going down to the sea.

—I'm not going that far, my friend,
I am going to Wuhan.

But the Yangtze Kiang
dies in Shanghai.

Along the Yangtze I go dreaming,
along the Yangtze, Yangtze Kiang,
up above, the cloudless sky,
in the distance, the sea.
Along the Yangtze Kiang
I am going to Wuhan!

(Written on October 20, 1959)]
Trans. Keith Ellis

During his trip down the mighty Yangtze River, the Cuban speaker of the poem is in bouyant mood, a mood that has nature as setting and as participant, with sunshine as far as can be seen and beyond in liberated Shanghai. The mood is enhanced by the developing social relationship between the Cuban visitor and the native Chinese boatman, to whom the garrulous Cuban demonstrates proudly his knowledge of China by describing the route of the Yangtze River that he thinks or hopes the boatman is taking. By repeating his query about the destination of the boat, the visitor makes it clear that he wants to enjoy the whole trip and come to know a substantial part of China, all the way to the well-known far-eastern port city of Shanghai. The occasion for his trip down the mighty river—the celebration of the tenth anniversary of China's Revolution—is for him a thrilling, friendship-promoting event that makes him think with satisfaction of his own new national status. The cities he names, Chongqing and Shanghai, now free, are historical allusions which explain his joy. Hence the prominence of words expressing cordiality or cultural compatibility in the poem from its beginning: fundamental and uncomplicated words, the word "amigo" for instance, used by both the Chinese and the Cuban protagonists of the poem. Also, there is no preliminary sorting out of social status between them. They both go directly to the use of the intimate familiar form of pronoun (tú) and adjective (tu).

In this sense it is useful to know other Guillén poems in which he refers to his Chinese experience. In an earlier poem, "La canción del regreso" (1952) ("La paloma de vuelo popular, 1958," *Obra poética 1958-1977*, 13-14) [The song of return], he celebrates the recently triumphant Chinese revolution that he has come to know and report on to his people. He emphasizes, as he does in "I Am Going to Wuhan", getting full measure for Chinese place names, the musicality of Chinese cultural references:

Yo vengo de Pekín.
Pekín
sin mandarín,
ni palanquín.
Yo vengo de Shanghai:
no hay
ni un yanqui ya en Shanghai.

¡Canta conmigo, amigo,
y di como yo digo!

No hay
ni un yanqui ya en Shanghai.

[I am coming from Peking.
Peking
without mandarin,
or palanquin.
I am coming from Shanghai:
there isn't now
a single Yankee in Shanghai.

Sing with me, my friend,
and say as I say!
There isn't
a single Yankee now in Shanghai.]

This poem was written just before Guillén defended the Kikuyu people of Kenya from the terror and the propaganda of British colonialism with his poem "Mau-maus" (also of 1952).[2] He was always unwavering in his opposition to colonialism.

On this same 1959 visit he wrote other poems in which he shows open support for China's well-being. In the poem "Primero de octubre" (1959) ("Tengo, 1964", 137) [First of October] he celebrates the new day when, thanks to China's revolutionary victory, the humiliations, deprivations and impositions of its colonial past are definitely of the colonial past. The poem shares the emotional charge of the poem "Tengo" [I have] and of many other Guillén poems that were soon to be collected in his celebratory book of the Cuban Revolution, *Tengo* (1964). The high degree of psychic comfort that Guillén feels in China is revealed in other poems he composes on this visit. For example, in the poem "Wu Sang-Kue" ("Tengo, 1964", 138), he feels free to delve into Chinese seventeenth-century history to take sides against, and regard as traitor, the warrior Wu. This ideological activism is to be contrasted with Guillén's reluctance and ultimate polite refusal to endorse, in different circumstances, a candidate for the presidency of Chile in 1946. When pressed in Santiago, the capital, by a crowd led by his Chilean good friend, host and fellow poet, Pablo Neruda, to vote for Gabriel González Videla, he would go no further than saying, "Amigos, les agradezco la invitación, pero no puedo aceptarla,

2 See my analysis of Guillén's poem "Mau-maus" (Ellis, "Caribbean Identity and Integration in the Work of Nicolás Guillén").

porque soy un extranjero en este país. Sin embargo, si fuera chileno mi voto sería por González Videla" [Friends, I thank you for the invitation, but I cannot accept it, because I am a foreigner in this country. Nevertheless, if I were Chilean my vote would be for González Videla] (*Páginas vueltas, Memorias*, 161). Guillén was at that time in the first decades of his extraordinary lifetime record of showing good judgement in the political matters that informed his poetry. All these poems exemplify a prominent trait in Guillén's poetry: the aggressive and unyielding opposition he shows to colonialism and imperialism.[3]

The Chinese interlocutor, quickly and firmly identified by the visitor as a friend, ultimately prevails. The Cuban visitor announces emphatically that he -- like his Chinese friend, both of them with their people's progressive and sovereign victories clear in their minds (China's on October 1, 1949 and Cuba's on January 1, 1959) -- is going to heroic Wuhan. At this point of presumed logical convergence on Wuhan, let us intrude on and expose the reasoning of the two protagonists, based on the historical reality of Wuhan as the favoured locus of their Chinese experience: the native's on what he has lived and learned, the visitor's on what he has learned and imagined.

Part 2

Before the steadying hand of Mao Zedong (1893-1976) arrived to definitively calm the city's relationship to the Yangtze and ensure the end to foreign predatory incursions and frenzied local squabbles, Wuhan had to develop and rely on its extraordinary recuperative skills to bring itself safely to our day.

In the minds of the two travellers of the poem there would be thoughts concerning the relative attractions of the two destinations: Wuhan and Shanghai. As could have been fresh in their minds, and moreso in that of the Chinese speaker, Shanghai's coastal location had made it vulnerable to foreign attack and largely uncontested imperialist intrusion and humiliation, such as that city had known firsthand in the course of its history. Paul French, quotes the British historian, Robert Bickers, as follows: "After the First Opium War the British annexed Hong Kong as a colony and opened Shanghai, on the coast at the head of the Yangtze in eastern China, as a treaty port. Sixteen years later they understood the importance

3 It turned out that González Videla, having won the election, was very soon to contradict radically his campaign pledges. Neruda himself had to leave Chile, disguised and on horseback for Argentina to escape likely grave physical harm, at the beginning of a long exile spent mostly in Europe and in Mexico.

of inland China better and so zeroed in on Wuhan, as well as Tianjin." [4] This quote tells us a great deal when it receives a close reading. In the first place, the nature of the military action is formed by a war which lasted for three years (September 1839-August 1842). The war itself, we learn from Bickers who is a prolific writer on pre-1949 foreign military incursions into China, was conducted as a series of mainly naval engagements initiated by the British who could rely on their traditional dominance of maritime warfare. The aim of the war was to expand, on British terms, imperial Britain's intervention into China, which was under the Qing dynasty. Opium was the commodity of choice. It was widely used by Great Britain at this time, by all social classes. There is evidence that some of the leading English poets and essayists (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the poet of "Kubla Khan," and the essayist Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*) were prominent members of the dreamy Romantic school who indulged in the habit.

But the regular customers—those to whom laudanum (a tincture of opium) was available at corner shops, the ones we heard about in the colonies where the production and consumption of cannabis were illegal—were the workers, many still children of the most oppressed classes, who suffered the brunt of the burdens brought on by Britain taking the lead in the industrial revolution and adopting at home a policy that was liberal in the extreme (Berridge). It was important for the large profiteers of the foreign enterprises not to risk incurring excessive domestic expenses. By drugging more and more Chinese people as well, the imperialist enterprise, with its predatory nature, thrived.[5] Ellen Castelow in her essay "Opium in Victorian Britain"has shown concisely the wreckage wrought on a society by the effects of opium. Nevertheless, the British found the gains from the First Opium War to be insufficient, even though they had the prize of Hong Kong as an obedient colony and five treaty ports as well, including Shanghai, with the treaties governing their trade with China being notoriously unbalanced in favor of the imperialists.

In order to impose the necessary changes and expansions, Great Britain, the

4 As quoted in Paul French, "A History of Wuhan: From One-time Chinese Capital to Coronavirus Epicentre," *CNN*, Jan. 22, 2020. Thanks to Paul French for sketching out the history of the West's knowledge of Wuhan during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, on the part of Guillén scholars, for helping to give present relevance to the great poet's words.

5 "By the early 19th century, more and more Chinese were smoking British opium as a recreational drug. But for many, what started as recreation soon became a punishing addiction: many people who stopped ingesting opium suffered chills, nausea, and cramps, and sometimes died from withdrawal. Once addicted, people would often do almost anything to continue to get access to the drug. The Chinese government recognized that opium was becoming a serious social problem and, in the year 1800, it banned both the production and the importation of opium. In 1813, it went a step further by outlawing the smoking of opium and imposing a punishment of beating offenders 100 times." (Hayes).

lead imperialist country of the time, with arms and the willingness to use them, declared the Second Opium War (Oct. 8, 1856 - Oct. 18, 1869) against the Qing Dynasty (China). While the imperialists feasted themselves on the riches to be found in China's lucrative coastal ports, the Chinese administrators began to be faced with rebellion from peasants who were put under unusual stress from measures introduced by the Qing administrators to cope with the British demands. A stage of armed conflict or rebellion was reached between the Hakka people and the Qing Dynasty;[6] and the valiant but losing Hakkas had to accept rude refuge provided by the British and other colonialists in countries as far away as Jamaica,[7] newly liberated from slavery, but with no compensation given to the former slaves for their centuries of hard labor.

Hence we have at this time the interesting coincidence of two types of appeal on the basis of morality to the British Queen Victoria. Lin Zexu, a scholar and appointed official of the Qing emperor, saw the drug pushers as the problem and wrote against the imposition of opium on the Chinese population (1839). With emancipation from slavery occurring in their country in 1838, groups of Jamaican former slaves—impoverished by the increasng lack of work on the plantations, by their lack of political power (due to discriminatory poll taxes) and their poor economic and health conditions—wrote petitions to the same obstinate "Missus Queen"(1865), whom they had been led to believe had kindly given them their labor freedom and their land. One of these petitions, from "peasants of St. Ann Parish," received an answer known as the "Queen's Advice," written by the Colonial Office and publicized by Governor Eyre, callously recommending hard work and thrift as the only solution to their misery (Craton, 327-328). Since all these conflicts are occurring during the government of the highly educated and empathetic first president of Paraguay (1811-1840), Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, and his

6 A peasant rebellion known as the Taiping Rebellion against the Manchu-controlled Qing dynasty, which took control of Wuhan from 1852 to 1864, had weakened both the urban and rural areas of the lower Yangtze River with the constant fighting. Some among the diaspora of the defeated Hakka forces would later be found fighting in Cuba's revolutionary wars and, still later, participating in Cuba's support of African independence struggles. (Personal note from Keith Lowe, a Hakka researcher and educator (http://torontohakkaconference.com/keith-lowe/) May 30, 2020.

7 The Hakka diaspora had another consequence, a personal one, with which I associate Wuhan's scientific bent. The son of the shop owner in my home village, Allan Chung, a good friend of my father, helped him to teach me, in what we called our river, a more scientific form of the breaststroke, which made me second fastest in the stroke when I entered high school at age eleven. I also used it to win freestyle and backstroke competitions in my age group in my high school and some years later to beat one of the famous Nash brothers, Gary, in a 100 yard extramural breaststroke race.

immediate successors, there is little doubt that these Paraguayan leaders would have been steeled, by this atrocious British conduct, in their decision to give no quarter to British trade representatives who kept showing up seeking deals in Asunción.

The terms of the settlement of the Second Opium War (1856-1860), exacted from the Qing Dynasty, gave the imperialists access to China's multiple interior trading routes via the Yangtze and some of its tributaries and led to new imperialist goals being set and new conflicts being stirred affecting the development of China and Wuhan. The British had promptly shown an interest in a group of three riverside ports collectively known as the Three Towns of Wuhan: Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang; the British demanding that they be opened.[8] From this conglomeration, industrious and inventive, Wuhan emerged to be the rapidly expanding home to an entrepôt, receiving a range of products--commodities and manufactured goods--from the hardworking interior of China, and sending them on to the port cities and other destinations designated largely by the imperialist countries to be centers of high margins of profit.[9] China was good business, in which Wuhan was strategically involved as China's largest inland transshipment center, a distribution point for commodities, such as tea, meat and tobacco, and manufactured goods, such as iron, steel and silk, to the coastal port cities (French).

In 1911 Wuhan was again the site of an anti-Qing rebellion, the final one that eventually ended the 267-year-old Qing dynasty and established the Republic of China. On October 10, 1911, followers of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) launched the Wuchang Uprising; and in 1927 Wuhan became the capital of a leftist Kuomintang government, in opposition to Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) and the nationalist government in Nanjing. Wuhan, like the rest of the Republic, was in the early stages of industrialization and modernization when it was caught up in the conflicts involving the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Communist Party of China, local warlords and the Empire of Japan. The full-scale Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937 to 1945 moved Chiang Kai-shek's government to retreat back up the Yangtze to Wuhan which was temporarily a wartime capital of China ("Wuhan,"

8 I must expose my embarrassment at using the verb "to open" without making explicit how firmly rooted in the etymology of this verb is the pratice of opening up an economy or parts of it to imperialist exploitation, so firmly indeed that people tutored by the imperialist media or propaganda may even be victims of the inverse application of the terminology. I give a Caribbean example. Almost from the beginning of its revolutionary era, Cuba has been subjected to a U.S.-imposed economic embargo, so strictly enforced that it is being justly called a blockade. Yet in neighboring Jamaica it has not been unusual over the years to hear even university educated people ask when is Cuba going "to open up"?

9 Foreign traders (British, German, French, Japanese, Belgian, Russian and American) moved their trade centers up the Yangtze, making Wuhan a well known industrial city (French).

Wikipedia). When Wuhan fell to the Japanese in 1938, much of the city moved further up to the final Nationalist capital of Chongqing, forming the backbone of China's wartime heavy industry. As a key center on the Yangtze, Wuhan became an important base for Japanese operations in China, posing for the Chinese leadership the problem of how to destroy the enemy without ruining China's former capital city. The Chinese leadership in Chongqing, including Chiang Kai-shek, approved the tactic of strategic firebombing of the enemy-occupied Wuhan. Firebombing at this time was treated by some almost like sport. In December 1944, the war in Europe being near its end, the city was largely destroyed by U.S. firebombing raids conducted by the Fourteenth Air Force. For the next three days, Wuhan was bombed by the Americans, who went in with fury, destroying all of the city's docks and warehouses, as well as Japanese air bases in the city, and killing or injuring more than 20,000 Chinese civilians (French). The widening opposition between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party made a coalition government impossible, resulting in a resumption of the Chinese Civil War, in 1946, shortly after the Japanese surrender to the Allied Powers in September, 1945 ("Chinese Civil War"). With the end of World War II and with the achievement of the People's Republic of China in 1949, even with greatly reduced exports and foreign business gone, Wuhan, demonstrating firm recuperative powers, eventually resumed its position as central China's political, economic, financial, commercial, cultural and educational centre.

Today's reader of Guillén's 1959 poem will recognize the realization of the Chinese boatman's quiet confidence. In 1957 the Wuhan Yangtze River Bridge connected three major rail lines, making Wuhan once again the country's major transshipment center. The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest power station in terms of installed capacity since 2012, brought China a much needed source of green power, seasonal flood control for the cities along the periodically dangerous Yangtze River and transportation by 3,000 ton ships from Shanghai to Chongqing ("Three Gorges Dam"; Peter Ford;).[10]

10 Peter Ford indicates that a 2011 government report stated: "Although the Three Gorges project provides huge comprehensive benefits, urgent problems must be resolved regarding the smooth relocation of residents, ecological protection, and geological disaster prevention." In reaction to the heavy flooding in the Yangtze River basin, starting in June 2020, Qingfeng Zhang announced two important initiatives («China Must Act Now to Prevent Yangtze Floods Getting Worse,» *Nikkei Asian Review*, July 22, 2020: 1) "To build back better, protect and restore the ecosystem services on which China's economic growth and jobs depend, [...] a national green development fund with total registered capital of $12.7 billion, focusing on key areas of green development along the Yangtze River Economic Belt, was established in Shanghai on July 15" and 2) "[...] the Asian Development Bank has invested about $2 billion to support the Yangtze River Economic Belt program to address environmental, social and economic issues."

Wuhan had been for decades a traditional manufacturing hub and was growing into one of the areas promoting modern industrial changes in China ("Globalization in China"). This is the Wuhan of Nicolás Guillén's Chinese interlocutor, whose warm, contented focus the Cuban observes and by which he is eventually moved to choose to go to Wuhan. This Chinese boatman is welcoming and purposeful, confident in the future. His Wuhan will by 2020 consist of three national development zones, four scientific and technological development parks, over 350 research institutes, 1,656 high tech enterprises, numerous enterprise incubators and investments from 230 Fortune 500 firms ("Wuhan" Wikipedia). The city will become home to multiple notable institutes of higher education, including Wuhan University and the Huazhong University of Science and Technology. With Wuhan's renewal and the advent of globalization, foreign business has returned. Honda, Citroen and GM will become major investors in the city, in a joint venture with one of China's longstanding major automotive manufacturers, Dongfeng Motor Group (founded as Dongfeng Motor Corporation in 1969) ("Dongfeng Motor Corporation," *Wikipedia*). Wuhan was designated as a UNESCO Creative City in the field of design in 2017 ("Wuhan, A Creative City of Design") and is presently classified as a Beta world city by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network ("Wuhan" *Wikipedia*).

This is the Wuhan whose Institute of Virology ("Wuhan Institute of Virology: Brief Introduction"), founded in 1956, specializing in virology, viral pathology and virus technology, among nineteen other biological and biomedical research institutes of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, whose BSL-4 (biosafety lab level 4), the first in China (2015), would become famous in December 2019 for identifying the emergence of a new Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2; and whose researchers and international collaborators, would hopefully put China, Cuba, and the world on the path to the research and development of therapies and vaccines to disarm its lethal and fast-spreading illness, COVID-19. This knowledge would result in the imposition of a strict 76-day lockdown on January 23, 2020, aimed at stifling the disease's spread in Wuhan and in China in general, and, in multiple efforts, some in collaboration with Cuba (Sameh), would help the world to deal with its spread (Simiao Chen et al.), which has resulted in worldwide health, economic and food crises. In its effort to contain future outbreaks, Wuhan, China's ninth most populous city of 11 million people, tested 10 million residents in only 19 days.[11] On June 3, 2020,

11 The big media in the West will almost certainly apply the word they reserve and teach to their acolytes, in their effort to diminish the true impressiveness of such an achievement, the word "draconian," implying that people from the socialist world are forced to do whatever good thing they do. On the other hand are those who are grateful for the fact that literary criticism and other branches of the humanities may extend to these regions of usefulness.

300 positive cases were identified, all with no symptoms, and with no infections among the 1174 close contacts of those who had tested positive, suggesting that those asymptomatic cases were not spreading the virus by casual contact to others.[12] The careful, preventive measures being taken in Wuhan and elsewhere in China have taken place, as the New York Times explains, because President Xi "is pushing to restore the pre-pandemic agenda, including his signature pledge to eradicate extreme poverty by this year, while cautioning against complacency that could let a second wave of infections spread (Myers)." Cuba likewise is taking careful measures to guarantee both the continued success of its prevention, containment and therapeutic policies against COVID-19 in order to save its tourist economy and the development of new medical technologies for export or transfer (Marsh "Cuba to test...").

Part 3

Guillén wrote his poem "Voy hasta Uhán" in Wuhan nine months after he had returned to Cuba from nearly six years of exile. In his absence, the dictatorial Batista regime had collapsed on January 1, 1959, in the face of the revolutionary movement led by Fidel Castro. Guillén returned precisely on January 23 from Argentina where he had been able to find safety for the last period of his exile and had eagerly joined the revelry organized by local and foreign cultural figures, renewing old friendships established in different parts of the world. On his return to Cuba, the demand for the renewal and acceleration of his personal cultural participation in the revolutionary process that had been suspended in 1953 was huge and comprehensive. Cuban cultural activities now being open to the whole population, the new inclusiveness broadened the relevance of Guillén's role as poet, journalist and cultural leader.

His popular presence and the powerful voice with which he read his sometimes stirring, sometimes moving, sometimes witty verses, always conveyed with rich musicality and with scrupulous attention to history what was on the tips of the tongues of the vast majority of his people. His first mass poetry reading upon

12 See Hernández, "After New Coronavirus Outbreaks, China Imposes Wuhan-Style Lockdown" and also "Wuhan Tests Nearly 10 Million People in 19 Days, Finding Just 300 Coronavirus Infections" by Associated Press-Time, which concludes: "[Finding just 300 coronavirus infections in 10 million people] is a potentially encouraging development because of widespread concern that infected people without symptoms could be silent spreaders of the disease. There is no definitive answer yet on the level of risk posed by asymptomatic cases, with anecdotal evidence and studies to date producing conflicting answers."

his return was at the invitation of Che Guevara, who presided at a reading of Guillén's poetry at the headquarters of the rebel army in Havana on March 2. This was followed by several such events in different parts of Cuba, all with massive attendance by a people who were developing a growing sense of ownership of the salient aspects of Cuban life. Guillén, having already articulated in his poetry the need for change that would accommodate this new national reality, was himself eminently capable of leading the thoughtful celebration of its realization. He thus became for the people a cultural icon, expressing in poetry and prose many of the essential concepts arising from or that guided the practical work of Fidel and other leaders of the Cuban Revolution. By ably carrying out this work, a fact acknowledged by his appointment to membership on the Central Committee of Cuba's Communist Party, he became one of his country's leaders.

Nor was this admiration for the Revolution and for Guillén restricted to Cuba. The Revolution and Guillén's poetry also resonated with people in many countries with respect to matters that were central to their material and spiritual lives, especially to those vast sectors of humanity that had suffered or were suffering the privations and humiliations imposed on them by colonialism and imperialism. Cuba soon set up what would become the Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP) [the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples], Casa de las Américas, the already-mentioned Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), all of them involved in strengthening ties with other countries. In the European and Asian socialist worlds, the counterparts of the new Cuban institutions were well established, so that Guillén, who had also been involved in founding ICAP, was, in addition to his work within Cuba, busy with extending and assessing invitations. It is in this context that he was invited to Beijing in 1959 and made the trip down the Yangtze Kiang that became the subject of the poem that is now occupying our attention.

It is important to point out a detail in Guillén's presentation of his poem dealing with Wuhan that infuses the poem with a deep Cuban identity and therefore tightens the ties between Cuba and China. Guillén is careful to include the date on which he wrote the poem in Wuhan: October 20, 1959. When "Voy hasta Ujáń" was first published in the Havana journal *Trabajo* [Work] in March 1961 and before it was collected in Guillén's book *Tengo* of 1964, it bore, in addition to the title, the heading "Sobre el río Yang-tse, el 20 de octubre de 1959" [On the Yangtze River, October 20, 1959]. This is another example that shows how the Cuban master's inventive skills allowed him to make original and structurally meaningful his usage of paratextual devices (Ellis, "Before and Beyond Genette: Cuba's Nicolás Guillén

and the Empowered Paratext").

October 20, 1868 is recognized in Cuba as the day on which the first victory of the independence struggle against Spanish forces was achieved in Bayamo in eastern Cuba. The victory inspired Perucho Figueredo, a nationally recognized musician, poet and composer to write the anthem then known as "La Bayamesa" and which has become Cuba's national anthem. This creation gave special significance to the 20th of October; and in 1980, by an act of the Cuban parliament, that day would become officially the Day of Cuban Culture. It is highly probable that Guillén's poem, bearing that date as a paratext, would also be endowed with special national Cuban significance. By considering on October 20, 1959, the significance of that October 20 ninety-one years earlier, in one of his very important first creations as National Poet of Cuba, Guillén imbued his poem "Voy hasta Uján" [I Am Going to Wuhan] with extraordinary significance, significance that is both solemn and cordial between Cuba and China, and from which have sprung and are springing creative treasures for Cuba, China and humanity. These treasures have been coming both in the humanities, as in this poem, "Voy hasta Uján", for example. and in the sciences.

With regard to the sciences, let me go to the lead therapies of the moment for the treatment of COVID-19, the "pneumonia of unknown cause" that was detected in Wuhan and that has caused a pandemic that is challenging the resources of the whole world (Prashad, "CoronaShock and Socialism"). A March 31, 2020 article on the website of *China Global Television Network* (GGTN) points to scientific collaboration between China and Cuba, with respect to both effective treatment and hopes for a preventive vaccine (Chirino).

> ... A highly promising Cuban drug for COVID-19 called Interferon alfa 2b, produced by Cubans during the 1980s, is currently being developed in China through a joint Cuban-Chinese venture.
>
> Doctors in the Asian country reported positive results when it was used on recent COVID-19 patients and the drug tops a list issued by the Chinese Pharmaceutical Association to treat the respiratory disease.
>
> Interferon alfa-2b was produced by the Havana-based Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology Center and over the years has been used for diseases from dengue fever to hepatitis and HIV.

> Scientists assure that current reserves and production of Interferon alfa-2b allow for the treatment of an indefinite number of COVID-19 cases in Cuba and also export to other countries.
>
> Jorge Valdés, Biotechnology Centre scientist and deputy director, said that in his view the drug`s success in China was due to its proven antiviral action and its administration at early stages of the disease, along with some antiretroviral drugs.
>
> The scientist also confirmed that there is movement toward a Cuban vaccine for COVID-19 : "Out of several candidate vaccines, we have one to be submitted to trials in humans soon in order to administer it in the current circumstances."
>
> In line with global efforts to fight the new coronavirus, Cuban scientists are playing an active role in the search for new weapons to stop its spread here and around the world.

Two more recent articles (May 13, 2020 and May 22, 2020), produced for Reuters by Susan Marsh, "With Castro-era biotech, Cuba seeks to compete in coronavirus treatment race" and "Coronavirus: Cuba says 2 drugs have reduced its death toll", show further successful treatments developed by Cuba and China:

> [Cuba] says it has been successful in treating the novel coronavirus at home and in China, and that 80 countries have already expressed an interest in buying its interferon alpha 2b.
>
> [...] China, where the pandemic emerged last year, included interferon in its treatment guidelines for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. One of the interferons it used is produced by a joint Cuban-Chinese venture Changheber, Cuban authorities said.
>
> Cuba [...] says it has treated nearly all of its patients with interferon injections and credits the medicine for helping it achieve a lower mortality rate among its 1,804 confirmed COVID-19 cases - 4.1% versus an average of 5.9% for the rest of the Americas.

In a separate trial at Union hospital in Wuhan, China, COVID-19 patients who inhaled interferon in an aerosol formulation had faster improvement in respiratory symptoms and clearance of the virus from their blood than patients who did not receive interferon, according to another informal report by Chinese, Australian and Canadian researchers [....] Cuba [...] is [...] starting to use interferon nose drops for infection prevention in medical workers.

BioCubaFarma President Eduardo Martínez gave a presentation last week on a raft of drugs Cuba is testing and developing to strengthen the immune system against COVID-19, prevent a worsening of symptoms and help patients recover. It is developing its own version of AbbVie's Kaletra, an HIV therapy being tested in combination with other drugs, including interferon, against COVID-19. Martinez said Cuba's efforts were garnering interest abroad, and he anticipates high demand.

* * * * * * *

[...] Cuba said this week that use of two drugs produced by its biotech industry that reduce hyper-inflammation in seriously ill COVID-19 patients has sharply curbed its coronavirus-related death toll.
Health authorities have reported just two virus-related deaths over the past nine days among more than 200 active cases on the Caribbean's largest island, a sign they may have the worst of the outbreak under control.

[...] [The Cuban government], which hopes to increase its biopharmaceutical exports, has touted various drugs it produces for helping prevent infection with the new coronavirus and treating the COVID-19 disease it causes.
It ascribes the recent reduction in deaths of severely ill COVID-19 patients largely to the use beginning in April of two drugs that appear to help calm the "cytokine storm," a dangerous overresponse by the immune system in which it attacks healthy tissue as well as the invading virus.

One is itolizumab, a monoclonal antibody produced in Cuba and elsewhere. The other is a peptide that Cuba says its biotech industry discovered and has been testing for rheumatoid arthritis in Phase II clinical trials.
"Some 80 per cent of patients who end up in critical condition are dying.

> In Cuba, with the use of these drugs, 80 per cent of those who end up in critical or serious condition are being saved," President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on Thursday [May 21, 2020].
>
> Cuba's experimental treatments have helped it achieve an overall COVID-19 death rate of 4.2 per cent, compared with the regional and global averages of 5.9 per cent and 6.6 per cent, respectively, health authorities say.

Sadly, it is already being demonstrated that due to no fault of the Cubans, and that for ideological reasons, a considerable part of humanity is not yet allowed to benefit from this Cuban-Chinese scientific partnership, which has discovered a range of therapies that are applicable to the disease, from immunity boosters for the early stages of the disease to, most recently, urgent care for patients in critical condition (Andy Robinson, "US sanctions..."). On the contrary, a powerful and influential presidential voice belonging to a succession of persons has been around these many years making it known to other countries that their favourable reception of Cuban advances in science or anything else, however life-saving they may be, is not to be countenanced. So this issue is becoming part of a growing confrontation between overt and direct use of social resources to respond to clear and urgent human need, on the one hand, and adherence to a theory of gradual enrichment of the whole society (the trickle-down theory) with the enrichment to be administered by a traditionally privileged sector of this society that always jealously protects its own privilege. Making its way into the crux of the ensuing debate is the idea of human rights, a debate that is ongoing with intervals of violence erupting with increasing frequency. At the same time, paths are being sought to justice and friendship while heavy-handed authorities and their schemes are being evaded. Nicolás Guillén has been one of these dignified peacemakers. His poetry and his essays are surviving him in this humanitarian quest.

This study has pointed to his abundant artistic qualities. Always the master musician, Guillén reports to his people that, as in the poem "La canción del regreso" [The Song of the Return] he has found a harmonic beat with the Chinese people ("¡Canta conmigo, amigo/ y di como yo digo!/ No hay/ ni un yanquí ya en Shanghai."). Similarly, he will find a harmonic cadence between an epigraph he selects from a poem by François de Malherbe to refer to the longed for relief from the inconsolable pain of lost love ("Time is a doctor who gives good results;/ his remedy is slow, but very sure") and Martin Luther King's hopeful longing for painfully evasive justice, expressed in his well, widely-known and elegant

adaptation of Theodore Parker's words ("The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice").[13] Then there is Guillén's subtle metaphoric language, the variety of forms, many of which are his own inventions, all of them fitted harmoniously to the broadening repertoire of themes, creating another level of musicality that in the course of his poetry has become *sui generis*, in addition to the extraordinary validity of his judgements, a validity so constant that it extends to the prescience displayed in "Voy hasta Ujján". We are accustomed to settings of his poetry in readings of history that are correct in his assessments of currents and trends, as well as in his citings of precise details; and since he does this so frequently without missing the mark, as may be seen also in this poem, he achieves a prescience that comprehends various fields of knowledge and justly acquires for himself the designation of sage.

He leads us to this truth: if you really know history, prescience comes naturally. His fidelity to history is a cardinal asset in his brilliant poetic career. In this poem, for example, everything is set in the context of the historic change that has been brought about in China and in Cuba. The fortuitous meeting of two travellers, the immediately recognized substratum of friendship between them, the preconceived destinations that are along the same route—one knowing at which point along the route he would have arrived at his destination and the other wanting to go on this trip to confirm immediately what his touring mind had imagined to be the full length of the route—illustrate the readily achieved harmony between two newly liberated countries. The conclusive and emphatic vow by the Cuban traveller that he will take the route known to the friendly Chinese boatman comes after the Cuban has desisted from proffering superficial images in favour of Shanghai that do not go to the heart of any essential issue and may well be a matter of mere vogue, as shown in a song popular in the Caribbean and the U.S. on the charts of those times: "Why

13 See my analysis of Guillén's poem "¿Qué color?" in "Before and Beyond Genette: Cuba's Nicolás Guillén and the Empowered Paratext" (12-15). Guillén's use of cadence to indicate his identification with poets and cultures is a striking aspect of his poetic work. He begins his firm identification with his own culture by bringing the popular Cuban rhythm, the *son*, to poetry in his *Motivos de son* (1930) [Son Motifs]. Subsequently, we find his evocation of Langston Hughes' work tied to the blues and Rubén Darío's linked to biblical or Whitmanesque rhythms, functioning within the Nicaraguan master's exemplary multiple styles.

did I tell you I was going to Shanghai" (Hilliard).[14] His final emphatic declaration--"I am going to Wuhan!"--includes the joy of finding confirmation of the definitive direction of the route he had already been taking to a meaningful life.

From the outset the relationship between the two characters in this drama is decidedly cordial.[15] The visiting Cuban feels comfortable enough to initiate the conversation, manifesting his garrulousness by directing at the native boatman a question that in certain socio-political settings could yield some variation of the answer: "Why are you so interested in my route?" The islander's history is replete

14 Bob Hilliard, "Shanghai" (1951).

Why did I tell you I was going to Shanghai
I want to be with you tonight
Why did I holler I was going to Shanghai
I want to be with you tonight
It was just a little misunderstanding
That a kiss on the cheek could patch
I need you so badly
I'd gladly start all over from scratch
Why did I tell you it was bye-bye for Shanghai
I'm even allergic to rice
Why don't you stop me when I talk about Shanghai,
It's just a lover's device
Now who's going to kiss me
Who's going to thrill me
Who`s going to hold me tight
I'm right around the corner in the phone booth
And I want to be with you tonight.

15 This mode also figures as a criterion in his appreciation of the work of some of his contemporary creators for whom he has a special regard. For example, Guillén was in Paris at the time of the funeral of César Vallejo (1892-1938); and, having summed up on that occasion the life and work of this outstanding Peruvian poet, he closed his commentary with the words: "Admiro mucho su dramática poesía" (Guillén, "Mariátegui, Vallejo") [I really like his dramatic poetry]. I dare say, as a reader of Guillén's poetry and prose, Vallejo's "admirable" and "dramatic poetry" would comprise for Guillén a long list of dramatic poems, at the top of which would almost certainly be the masterly prison poem "Trilce XVIII". I believe this, given too, Guillén's enthusiastic appraisal of another of his contemporaries, the Spanish poet, Miguel Hernández (1910-1942), who produced some of his best poems from a Franco prison. In the cases of both poets, the humanitarian impact of the message of the poems is intensified by the circumstances of their composition. Guillén himself suffered two brief detentions in prerevolutionary Cuba (1936 and 1952) and one in Ellis Island, New York (1949) (Guillén, *Obra poética 1958-1977 II*, Compilación, prólogo y notas por Angel Augier, 494, 497, 499). If to this adherence to history with a pronounced humanitarian interest is added Guillén's penchant for engaging in dramatic tone and musical attractiveness, one has the core of the Cuban master's contribution to world poetry.
I wish to thank Nicolás Hernández Guillén who helped me to overcome some COVID-19 communication obstacles by sending me his grandfather's article on Vallejo and Mariátegui, punctually and electronically, from Havana.

with atrocious violations of his country's sovereignty that have continued even in the months since January 1, 1959. If he looks also to his wider region he can see that not only now but from the first attempts of his fellow new countries to be independent and prosperous, as with Paraguay, the most vicious fury has been unleashed on them ("Cuba-Paraguay" 294-296 and "Poder sin responsabilidad: las palabras en *Yo el Supremo*" 225-250).[16] So that remembering the cause of his mission, his being in China to celebrate its ten years of freedom after hundreds of years of imperial interference and chaos, the Cuban visitor is disposed to turn his eyes to Wuhan as the intimate partner emerging out of a general setting of friendship. Having by now, by this stage of the journey, identified the boatman, with his steadfastness and purposefulness, as a real model and not something that is as fickle as the complexion of the sky, our Cuban visitor declares his decision to go not where the Yangtze dies but to shout out resolutely and vigorously, so that one and all may hear, "I am going to Wuhan!", to the heart of China, where its great artery, the Yangtze, is in salubrious flow. There is Wuhan, ready to play a central recuperative role if the whole homeland suffers any wound.

The full role played by the Cuban visitor, in which the first preferences shown by him are seemingly contradicted by his ultimate choice, may lead a reader to postulate as a necessary condition, the presence of irony in the visitor's early words. But there is a certain openness, a certain candor in his manner--which we have called "garrulousness"--that would make us reluctant to ascribe to him ironic usage. What is clear is that the rush at the end of the poem to the emphatic "Voy hasta Ujáan!", with an exclamation sign, washes away almost with the force of the Yangtze any possible trace of contradiction, any irony.

In the generation preceding Guillén's, another Cuban poet, Julián del Casal (1863-93), also developed an attachment to a great Chinese river, the Yellow River; but, true to that generation, his attachment remained in the realm of dreaming, just as Guillén's river experience would have done had he remained fixated on going to Shanghai. The whole last stanza of Guillén's poem and the poem itself would have stayed under the influence of its first line: "Por el Yang-tse voy soñando" [Along the Yangtze I go dreaming]. This is the perpetual state in which Casal finds himself. Everything is in the conditional, the solution by which a productive status may be realized is never declared. And so, in the case of Casal's poem "Nostalgias"

16 See Nicolás Guillén, "Cuba-Paraguay" and my essay "Poder sin responsabilidad: las palabras en *Yo el Supremo*," in which I discuss the problematic value of the aesthetic and historical misrepresentations of Paraguay under the leadership of Dr. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia.

[Longings], there is no connection with the present reality and no suggestive future. What is remarkable is the writing itself, particularly its phonic properties: alliterative and rhyming phrases such as "Iría al río amarillo" [I would go to the Yellow River].

The visitor's itinerary in Casal's poem is governed by fanciful, unproductive dreaming made up of dreams that produce images that are familiar to readers of the airy exoticism exemplified by many Modernist Spanish-American poets, it being clearly understood that Rubén Darío did not stay transfixed in that state and José Martí never lingered there.[17] Guillén here is in the drama, active, on the move, en route along the famous Yangtze River to its mouth at Shanghai, widened as in a long enervating yawn, indulged as it spends its sleepy self in the sea, in the placid surroundings at the end of its exhausting journey. To make this his final view, would be disappointing to the visitor, who would ask "And now what?"

The mind of the Guillén visitor character who is never a laggard can now be cast on a strong rival. Wuhan is a busy place; defined by a river of choppy, dangerous waters, flowing in full force on its slight downward slope, and demanding alertness rather than dreaming or sleeping. The use of poetry to rouse to productivity, or at least activity, is another constant in Guillén. Think, for instance of his book, *La rueda dentada* (1972) [The Gear Wheel]. He gives poetry this invigorating mission even in children's poetry, precisely, for example, in his "Canción de cuna para despertar a un negrito" [Lullaby to awaken a black child], with his subversive inventiveness also capturing the epigraph, which he takes from his contemporary Emilio Ballagas (1908-1954), as he converts

Dórmiti mi nengre	[Go to sleep my black child
mi nengre bonito	my beautiful black child...]

17 In some of his very early unpublished poetry, compiled in "Cerebro y corazón", Guillén acknowledged a kinship with Darío. In a poem which he dedicates "A Rubén Darío", he writes:

> Señor Rubén Darío: por eso es que mi lira
> también tiene entre sus cuerdas la que suspira
> con el temblor alado de un blanco madrigal.
> [Rubén Darío, Sir: that's why my lyre
> like yours has among its strings the one that sighs
> with the wind trembling of a tender madrigal.

In his later full maturity, Guillén portrayed a Darío with whom he could be seen to bear a clearer relationship, the one shown in his essay titled simply "Rubén Darío" and published in 1967, on the centenary of the great Nicaraguan's birth (Guillén, *Páginas escogidas* 613-19).

into

--¡Upa, mi negro,	[Get up, my black child
que el sol abrasa!	for the sun is blazing!
Ya nadie duerme,	Nobody is still sleeping,
ni está en su casa...	or is still at home...]
(*Obra poética* II, 13).	

The alertness and readiness to create, which form a tone of urgency, continue through to the exclamation with which the poem "I Am Going to Wuhan" ends.

The liveliness of Guillén's poetry is typically sustained by the prominence of mixture, propelled by restlessness. The mixture of fields (poetry and science), mixture of genres (adult and children`s poetry)—bespeaks also a characteristic of the Cuban approach to science that Guillén acknowledges and promotes. I have been told by scientists at some of the top research centres in Havana, in the Polo Científico, of the happiness they have felt when President Fidel Castro thought of bringing with him to their Center, so that they could meet him and converse with him, even if they arrive late at night, his friend, the Caribbean Colombian Nobel laureate, Gabriel García Márquez, a writer sufficiently well known to them for them to call him Gabo. Or similarly, their active participation when the leader of the Revolution organizes a Symposium that brings together scientists, artists and writers to speak about matters of health and education experienced by children in Cuba and elsewhere. The result of such sessions is that science comes to be coupled with tenderness in the thinking of the population, and of goodness and kindness as the inspiration for work.[18] The operation of this purposeful link between all kinds of creative work, whether in the arts or the sciences, whether in a small country or a large country, whether between the leaders or the population as individuals, is demonstrated in Guillén's "I Am Going to Wuhan". The poetic voice (or choice) is guided by the discipline of his host's response in the same way that the determination of China and Cuba to serve their people has brought them to respond to a grave world problem, the COVID-19 crisis, by heeding the information for which their search for science and the practice of cooperative self-discipline will have prepared them.

The subtle drama of this poem demonstrates and celebrates, with its gift of

18 I have treated this subject elsewhere: "Tenderness and Science: The Pillars of Revolutionary Cuba." *BIM* (special issue on "Cuba in the Caribbean"). George Lamming, the kind mentor of many English Caribbean writers, clearly wants readers to know this article. In a note to me he says: "Your science article is superb. It justifies the entire issue."

foretelling, the humanitarian work that Cuba equips itself to share with China; and sixty-one years after its creation, the poem evokes, at the outset of Cuba's revolution, the rewarding emotional fruit of the growing success of the individual and joint efforts of these two countries in protecting, treating and saving the lives of their people and others. The manner in which the national epic is undertaken stimulates in the people of both nations a responsible and empathetic spirit that blossoms into an appealing internationalism. Guillén's poem, as is often the case with the works of this great poet, provides an elevated, prophetic level of metaphor, allusion and meaning, giving to itself and therefore to us a new kind of richness.

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In an interview with Christof Dipper in 1996, Reinhart Koselleck, the main founder of "Begriffsgeschichte," or in English "Conceptual History," said that after a long period of having not published any monographs, he planned to publish three collections of essays as to be "heard again" (187-205). Unfortunately, the plan didn't come to fruition due to Koselleck's sudden death in 2006. We can read only *Zeitschichten*, which came out in 2000, and *Begriffsgeschichte* (*The Conceptual Histories: Semantic and Methodical Studies of Political/Social Terms*), which was published only after his death in 2006. Nevertheless, Koselleck's life-long project of conceptual history has continued to be developed around the world, attracting more and more attention, and has become one of the most important historical approaches of this century.

Scholars in the Chinese academic circles have begun to study and to introduce conceptual history since the end of the last century. Among those historical and literary researchers, Professor Fang Weigui is no doubt the most influential and passionate, having written and published many brilliant essays on conceptual history that have enjoyed sizable academic influence around East Asia and even on a global scale. Interestingly, despite the fact that conceptual history is an approach that attaches great importance to theoretical tenets and methodological basis, no monograph dealing with the theory and method as a whole, or translated versions of Koselleck's writings, have been published prior to the completion of this wonderful work by Professor Fang. We sure do have many essays and books that use "conceptual history" in their title, but if we take a closer look and be self-critical about the clarity of the concept itself, we are able conclude that most of those works have made the colossal mistake of confusing conceptual history with the history of ideas and intellectual history, which raises considerable issues regarding the quality of these

studies. Sadly, if not frustratedly, this situation also affects the ability of academic circles and interested readers to understand, master and apply the quite specialized historical research methods of conceptual history, as well as hindering the inquiries and development in China of conceptual history research itself.

Given this background, Professor Fang Weigui's publication of *What is Conceptual History?* is undoubtedly of great significance. This monograph not only makes up to a great extent the deficiency of theoretical sources in the study of conceptual history, but it can also be seen as a good starter for the future study of conceptual history in China, now with more methodological rigor and theoretical framework. In the book, Professor Fang has set out a very precise aim of writing a "small book" that offers an accurate introduction of the basic theory of conceptual history and the history of the approach itself, while taking into account the comparison and clarification of various terms and research methods (Fang Weigui 1-5). The whole book is divided into three parts and, if I may borrow Professor Fang's expression, it can perhaps be generalized under three questions, namely, what may be considered as conceptual history? Which approaches cannot be understood as conceptual history? And, how does the future of conceptual history look like?

1. What may be considered as conceptual history?

"Since it is so common to argue against hypothesis, one should sometime try to approach history without the aid of hypothesis. It is not possible to state that something is, without saying what it is. By just thinking of them one relates facts to concepts, and it is by no means a matter of indifference which concepts these might be" (Koselleck 255). Koselleck cites F. Schlegel's remarks to show the importance of always being critical about the concept itself. Like Koselleck, Professor Fang attaches great value to reflecting the concept of conceptual history itself, and in order to do that he uses two chapters of the book to demonstrate its theoretical background, both in the fields of philosophy and sociology, and then offers us a standard narrative of Koselleck's theory itself.

Of course, any historical research approach has its own understanding of history from which we can draw different perspectives and paths to understand and interpret history, and the same can be said for conceptual history. The first two chapters basically follow this presupposition, starting from the general background of the modern concept of history and the trajectory of research on human history, explaining the two origins of conceptual history which can be called philosophical conceptual history and social history. As far as I can see, this way of expounding

the theoretical foundations of conceptual history demonstrates the author's large-scale academic perspective, while pushing the methodological study of conceptual history to a higher level.

Usually, when writers discuss the academic history of conceptual history, they tend to regard relevant theories and studies of philosophers and historians, ranging from those by G. Frege to those by Gadamer, as the origin and methodological basis of conceptual history, using a somewhat chronical way of narrating that may give the mistaken impression that these scholars are living in quite different ages. Instead, professor Fang puts those writers into two categories and generalizes the first one as "philosophically conceptual history," which is more accurate and appropriate, as well as referring directly to the basic and essential characteristics of linguistic phenomena in modernity. Of course, this also shows the unique philosophical basis of the German method of conceptual history in the study of history.

The emphasis on language is not the sole feature of historical studies of the 20th century. The second chapter examines the field of political and social history and analyzes its relevance to conceptual history. Under this category, the rise of conceptual history research, on the one hand, can be seen as inspired by the criticism and rejection of the traditional history of ideas, which involves the development of German conceptual history from Meineke, to Weber and then Mannheim, and other historical and social researchers. On the other hand, it is through the comparison with social history that conceptual history found its reference. The Annales School and its study of "mentalité" shares many basic concerns with historical semantics, which from 1680 to 1820 resulted in the compilation of reference books of basic political and social concepts of France. This chapter includes a discussion on Koebner's approach of modern historical semantics and examines the theoretical connection between Koebner and Koselleck.

The third chapter returns to the main theory of conceptual history, that is, the theory and practice of Koselleck's conceptual history, focusing on the second stage of Koselleck's academic career. This chapter gives us a full list of "keywords" of Koselleck's approach, including the most familiar theory about "Sattelzeit" (saddle period), "Kolletivisingular" (collective singular), "Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen" (asynchronous synchronicity), four standards of conceptualization including "Demokratiserung" (democratization), "Verzeitlichung" (temporalization), "Ideologisierbarkeit" (ideologization) and "Politisierung" (politicization), "Erfahrungsraum" (space of experience), "Erwartungshorizont" (vision of expectation), "Indikator"(indicator) and "Faktor"(factor), and offers us an

insightful analysis about Koselleck's understanding of the relation among concept, time, history and society.

Sozialgeschichte und Begriffsgeschicht ("Social History and Conceptual History"), written by Koselleck in 1972, can be understood as the fulcrum of the methodical thinking of his conceptual history, which dealt with the relationship between social history and conceptual history. Koselleck believes that concepts and facts have their own distinct history, and in the huge gap and discrepancy between those two, comes the space of the study of conceptual history (Fang Weigui 156). The relationship between time and concept also partly explains why conceptual history, a kind of social and political history, can exist, and why through conceptual history we can study history itself. The last section of this chapter focuses on the relationship between words and concepts, "concepts are words that cannot be defined clearly", and the primary feature of the basic concept is "its indispensability for observing and interpreting social and political conditions." In addition, due to this indispensability, the basic concept is also characterized by its controversy (Fang Weigui 183). This section places special emphasis on Koselleck's concern for context and pragmatics, and traces it back to Wittgenstein's linguistic philosophy, which also prepares the ground for the further comparison between conceptual history and discourse analysis.

2. What is not conceptual history?

Taking a macro-level and overall perspective, conceptual history is not the only theory that sets language as its object of study following the emergence of the philosophical linguistic turn and the new social and historical methodology of the 20th century. In terms of these new approaches, Lovejoy's history of ideas, Foucault's discourse analysis and archaeology of knowledge, the study of the history of political thought history by the so-called Cambridge School, and Raymond Williams's study of "keywords," all seem to share some common characteristics with conceptual history. Any reader who is interested in the study of the history of thought must have encountered some of the above theories in the process of reading. Unfortunately, the differences between these theories are often overlooked by writers and readers.

The theoretical confusion mentioned above has already caused serious confusion of understanding, which is not only detrimental to the promotion and development of those theories themselves, but also to people who try to learn those approach and apply them to historical research projects. In this book professor Fang has expressed his concern about this grave situation and is determined to do

some work of clarification. The second part of this book aims to solve a problem of methodological and practical significance, i.e., what kind of approach cannot be directly equated with conceptual history and what is the nature of its similarity and relevance to them and to conceptual history. In general, those theories can be classified under two types, the first type shares the same theoretical concerns with conceptual history, but has different methodological assumptions and research paths, namely the discourse analysis of Foucault, and the so-called Cambridge school represented by J.G.A. Pocock, Quintin Skinner, and others.

Foucault and Skinner are mentioned quite often in this book. This is mostly due to Professor Fang's writing arrangement in regards to the use of comparative method. Unlike the intentional use found in the comparisons in this book, many researchers in their analysis of texts unconsciously use these concepts simultaneously and interchangeably, as if they were the same approach. In this regard, the study of Foucault and the Cambridge School is different from the history that the concept has been facing metaphorically and practically, thus to establish distinctions becomes an important aspect of this conceptual history book, as it sets on its task of drawing boundaries between these concepts from its very beginning.

As the most important philosopher of postmodern times, Foucault's theories and research are very complicated and all-encompassing. This book has no intention of becoming a research manual on Foucault, and focuses instead mainly on the part of his theories and thought which are directly related to conceptual history: the genealogy and the archaeology of knowledge. Like the study of conceptual history, Foucault does not believe that the established history is the real history, nor does he agree with the practice of the traditional study of the history of ideas. Foucault is "passionate about anthropological and sociological themes and methods, keen on various non-traditional, non-classical topics and relationships, and redefines the boundaries of history" (Fang Weigui 190-91). Through the archaeology of knowledge and genealogy of knowledge, Foucault has revealed the extremely special normative role of discourse itself, indicating that discourse itself as a material form can produce material effects, therefore connecting the binary gap between words and things. Foucault's genealogical analysis aims to show the relationship between truth and power through the retrospective scrutinizing of dialogue, breaking the myth of continuity of historical ideas, which is a very different goal compared to the focus of conceptual history. Foucault reminds people to pay attention to words, but also speaks bluntly that "the generation processes of concepts cannot be understood as successive forms of the same meaning." From this deconstructed perspective, the conceptual history is criticized as "another trick" of the history of ideas (Fang

Weigui 213-14).

Another research paradigm that interacts more frequently with conceptual history is the so-called Cambridge School of Intellectual History represented by Pocock and Skinner. In China, it is quite common for scholars that lack a high degree of methodological finesse to mix these two in their study of texts, so much so that many ridiculous monographs and papers have been produced. In his past writings, professor Fang has made clear his criticism of these kind of studies, fully tracing the possible causes of this confusion. This book continues this enterprise, showing the relationship between the conceptual history of Koselleck and Pocock's contextualism and Skinner's ideological research through detailed comparisons. In short, the Cambridge School does not believe that conceptual history can be said to exist. Inspired by Kuhn's paradigm theory, linguistic philosophy mainly developed by Wittgenstein and Austin, and Foucault's discourse analysis, the Cambridge School set its research on the basis of restoring context. In terms of understanding the author's intentions and clarifying the concept of history, they do not agree with Koselleck's devotion to the compilation of dictionaries of the history of individual basic concepts. They insist that the concept itself cannot have its own history, "the written conceptual history is only one dimension of the linguistic phenomenon, words and their use." Therefore, conceptual history may be too one-sided to really describe the role of the word in a particular society and its interrelations with other terms in their opinion.

Unlike the positive relationship between discourse analysis, the Cambridge School and conceptual history of critical learning and debating, the other two approaches are present as objects of questioning and criticism, regardless of the similarity of their names with conceptual history.

Despites its emphasis on language and text, Arthur Lovejoy's history of ideas adheres to the eternity of unit-ideas and the continuity of the ideas in history, which in fact is opposed by conceptual history, discourse analysis and the Cambridge School. The book also mentions Skinner's harsh criticism of Lovejoy's work (Fang Weigui 223, 232-37). Williams' study on keywords is written in the form of manuals similar to dictionaries, which may be one reason why many people confuse those two. However, conceptual history and the study of keywords need to be strictly separated, both because of their methodological precepts, theoretical positions, and because of the specific practice of research and writing. Not to mention that the keywords study approach has very obvious tendencies of politics and partisan positions, while historical semantics as a historical research method presupposes objectivity as its basic requirement.

3. What is the future of conceptual history?

The first two parts of the book aim to outline the gist of conceptual history from both internal and external perspectives, and to supply readers with the general background, academic context, key assumptions, research methods, and practices of the field, which can be regarded as the past and present of conceptual history. Still, if we take Koselleck's theory into consideration, the past, present and future are the three dimensions which constitute a complete time structure, and conceptual history thus needs to examine the continuity, change, and novelty of the concept (Fang Weigui 36). It follows then that what would naturally remain for this book to do if professor Fang wants to complete his review of conceptual history, would be an examination of the change from its present state and its potential and location in the future.

The book repeatedly points out that since the 20th century, many theoretical schools have in fact re-examined the overall process of human history and political and social development from linguistic and textual perspectives. The highlighted interest on the influence of non-traditional elements such as ideas, thoughts, mentality or discourse on history and practice, as well as the complex interrelations between them, is not the unique discovery of conceptual historians or of Koselleck. In this regard, the difference between conceptual history and other research methods, as well as the research space that could be developed under the precepts of conceptual history, have become the key for conceptual history to transcend itself and its present and future.

Chapter VII of this book sets as its priority answering this question at the outset. This part does not only discuss the metaphorical theory, the new direction of German conceptual history, religious conceptual history, interdisciplinary knowledge and the study of the history of science, but also mentions the new updated version of Koselleck's four standards of conceptualization, that is, "Verwissenschaftlichung," which means scientification, "Popularisierung," which means popularization, "Verräumlichung," which means integration and "Verflüssigung," which means hybridization, in order to show that conceptual history has not yet meet its end. On the other hand, since the end of the last century, the research method of conceptual history has shown a very obvious momentum for internationalization. In many countries, specialized research institutions and groups of conceptual history have emerged. They have organized various academic forums and discussions, and since the beginning of the 21st century, Koselleck's works have been widely translated into multi-language publications, which have elicited a wide range of academic interest.

It is worth mentioning that, in terms of the international spread and development of conceptual history, the study of it in East Asia, especially in China, has not only kept pace with the world in both time and rhythm (happening maybe even earlier that in other parts of the world), but Chinese scholars have also been committed to exploring the scope and boundaries of conceptual history. The end of Chapter VII includes an overview of works of conceptual history in China, with historians such as Jin Guantao, Liu Qingfeng, Sun Jiang, Huang Xingtao and Zheng Wenhui etc. being all on the list. Together with professor Fang Weigui, those insightful and energetic historians have promoted and contributed to the development of conceptual history studies regarding East Asia.

Just as this review has repeatedly pointed out, professor Fang Weigui is one of the earliest promoters of conceptual history in China, and the Chinese academic circle's discussions and discourses surrounding conceptual history studies have more or less used his methodological essays as reference. In addition, professor Fang has published monographs and papers on conceptual history in German, English, and Chinese, examining the historical situation of many basic concepts in modern China, including the concepts of civilization and culture, the spread of Western knowledge in China, the evolution of the word "intellectuals," etc., and made a wonderful demonstration of how to apply conceptual history as a method in historical research on China. Of course, the prosperity of a research paradigm requires not only the dedication and practice of individual scholars, but also the exchange and cooperation of aspiring colleagues, as is the case in this regard in the form of the academic forum collection *Thoughts and Methods* edited by professor Fang, or the *New Historiography* (volumes 2 and 3), compiled by professors Sun Jiang and Huang Xingtao respectively, or the *Study of the History of Asian Concepts*, which has been promoted by the Institute of Xueheng of Nanjing University.

At this point, I feel it's sufficient to conclude that the author of *What is Conceptual History* has delivered his promise of articulating the basics of conceptual history with a high-quality narrative. But after finishing the book and closing it up, it is true that, as professor Fang says, we may feel that we perhaps haven't see through many of the basic problems involved, which are "much more complex than we suppose" (Fang Weigui 36).

A book with an interrogative sentence for its title is clearly intended to inspire readers to think more about the broader issues associated with it. If we follow this path, there may be questions of three levels that need to be further answered in terms of the book itself and its possible impact on academia. First of all, it seems

that until now, conceptual history has mainly been a way to examine political and social history. Despite its dependence on text and language, it shares the same concerns of all other paradigms of history. If this is true, then to what extent, conceptual history and ideological history, discourse history or mental history can be distinguished from each other? Can conceptual history get out of its self-limitation? This book did manage to offer a succinct framework to distinguish conceptual history, the history of ideas, the Cambridge School of intellectual history, keywords study and other theories. However, as the book repeatedly mentions, in terms of the development of historical semantics, Germany, Britain and France have for a long time been lacking in communication with each other. Thus, the translation and acceptance of related works is quite limited, so there seems to be a lot of mutual misunderstanding and misreading due to this situation. Besides, in explaining the theoretical shortfalls of Lovejoy and Williams, the criticism is mainly borrowed from Cambridge School. I'm pointing this out because if this is indeed a book exclusively aiming to describe conceptual history, it productive to offer some academic scrutinization from within the discipline itself?

Second, given that this book can perhaps be seen as a result of a conscious reflection and clarification by the Chinese academics towards the methodology of conceptual history, which gains in importance every day, how should we assess its value and contribution to researchers of China? In answer to this question, the author repeatedly points out in the book, first of all, that Chinese academic circles still lacks a monograph that introduces the theory. Thus, the publication of *What is Conceptual History* serves to fill this gap in knowledge, provides researchers with more theoretical resources, and can facilitate the continuing development of conceptual history as a rigorous discipline in China.

The third question is a one linked to world literature. As a method of analyzing concepts, conceptual history is inevitably returning to the text in practice. However, is this text merely a socio-political and historical text in a narrow range, or can we expect more? The answer to this question, of course, seems to be in the positive at the moment. For one thing, the formulation of the history of conceptual history in this book is anchored in the more general process of the occurrence, development, and transformation of modern thought. Therefore, although the book takes conceptual history as the narrative spindle, in fact it can also be read as a manual of the evolution of modern Western thought. The author not only takes into account German idealism, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and other philosophical theories, but also brings sociology, ideological research, genealogy, and history of political thought research into scope, thus offering us a general background to understand

the emergence of modern humanism and critical theory of certain areas.

Actually, professor Fang's field of interest is mainly literary criticism, and it is quite obvious that he has intentionally explored the applicability of conceptual history to literary criticism and literary theory. In addition to studies such as "On the Transformation of Concepts of Civilization and Culture in Modern China," "The Concept of Civilization and Culture in Modern China," and others that are mentioned in this book (Fang Weigui 302), "A Short Study on the Western Concept of Literature and Some Rectifications" can be regarded as a masterpiece and exemplary work in its use of conceptual history methods to examine the literary issues in China's modern history. Besides these, his studies on concepts including "world literature," W. Benjamin's *Aura* and "hybrid, hybridity, hybridization," and the examination on Thomas Mann, both deepen and advance related literary theory (Fang Weigui *Illness* 57-66). Meanwhile, they also reveal the author's ambition of exploring various cultural and literary concepts that have been gradually formed and stereotyped in communication and criticism, misunderstanding and misuse, inheritance and eventuality since modern times.

Finally, in a broad sense the book makes a solid contribution to the development of inquiries on thought history. Although conceptual history originated in Germany—which is where most of its theoretical sources and representative figures are from—as far as this book is concerned, goes we can confirm that it constitutes a global historical theory. Nowadays, contributors and researchers in this field are not entirely limited to the German language. Taking this book as an example, it represents a very high level of conceptual historical study not only within Chinese scholarship, but also on a global scope. In an essay tracing the history of the concept of "world literature," professor Fang once stated that although Goethe is regarded as the coiner of this concept, it is an invention neither original nor exclusive to him. In fact, the concept itself "rejects theorization of a fixed boundary" (Fang Weigui *What Is World Literature* 15). As this entails, if a theory wants to be dynamic and persistent and possesses explanatory power, the essential condition of achieving that status would first of all be giving up the fantasy of being a fixed and rigid operating manual. It needs to have an independent thought, and the courage to break boundaries and a critical consciousness in order to explore the potential space. To borrow Gadamer's remark on Koselleck from this monograph, which stated that Koselleck was a historian with a genuine thought, this book by professor Fang Weigui successfully demonstrates that conceptual history is a historical method of profound intelligence and intellectual resources, while the book itself conveys a way of thinking on modern life, historical developments, and academic research that is

far beyond that of an introduction manual.

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