Contrast the Differences:
A Christian Neo-Confucian Dialogue

By Contrasting the Anthropological Views of Karl Barth and Shili Xiong
For the Development of Chinese Theological Anthropology

By

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Knox College and the Theological Department
of the Toronto School of Theology, in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Theology awarded by Knox College and the University of Toronto.

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Doctor of Theology, 2012
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Abstract

The thesis employs the method of contrast of a Chinese scholar Vincent Shen to compare and contrast the anthropologies of Karl Barth and Shili Xiong, with the goal of achieving a constructive inner dialogue made explicit for the development of a contextual Chinese theological anthropology. When the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are put side by side for contrast, their views are clearly different from each other. However, in the inner dialogue, it is found that the perspectives of Barth and Xiong are not absolutely contradictory. It appears that Barth and Xiong shared several similarities in their observations of some phenomena of humanity, though they adopted different perspectives to interpret these phenomena. As Barth and Xiong are so different from each other on their cultural and academic backgrounds, it is interesting that they do come to similar observation on the phenomena of humanity, yet it is also argued that parallels should not be easily drawn. Besides, it is found that a state of ‘in-between’ seems to be a significant phenomenon in various aspects of human life and it could also be an important implication of Chinese theological anthropology. Besides, it is suggested that the
method of contrast is a good method to deal with the tension in the study of Chinese theological anthropology; it also draws significant implications for the study of contextual theology and even ecumenical/interfaith dialogue.
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Chapter I

Reviews of Christian Contextualization

Introduction

In the history of Christian mission in China, there was a struggle that lasted more than one and a half centuries over the issue of the Chinese Rites.\(^1\) When the Jesuit missionaries came to China in the 16th century, they had been quite successful in establishing a good relationship with the Chinese dynasty. However, with the arrival of more and more missionaries from other orders like the Dominicans and the Franciscans, the diverse opinions among the missionaries over the issue of Chinese rites opened up the ‘Chinese Rite Controversy’. Despite a great deal of effort by some missionaries to resolve the controversy, Pope Clement XI issued Papal bull \textit{Ex illa die}\(^2\) in 1715, as an official response to the ‘Chinese Rite Controversy’:

\begin{quote}
I. The West calls Deus [God] the creator of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. Since the word Deus does not sound right in the Chinese language, the Westerners in China and Chinese converts to Catholicism have used the term ‘Heavenly Lord’ (Tianzhu) for many years. From now on such terms as ‘Heaven’ and ‘Shangdi’ should not be used: Deus should be addressed as the Lord of Heaven, Earth, and everything in the universe. The tablet that bears the Chinese words ‘Reverence for Heaven’ should not be allowed to hang inside a Catholic church and should be immediately taken down if already there.
\end{quote}

\(^1\) The ‘Chinese Rites controversy’ was a dispute within the Church during the Ching dynasty about whether Chinese folk religion rites and offerings to ancestors and Confucius constituted idol worship or not. Despite an extraordinary policy statement given by the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1659 advising the missionaries not to force people to change their customs as long as these were not opposed to religion or morality, Pope Clement XI finally decided in favor of the Dominicans who argued that Chinese folk religion and offerings to ancestors and Confucius were incompatible with the teachings of the Church, this decision had greatly reduced missionary activities in China. For the details of the controversy, refer to George Minamiki, SJ, \textit{The Chinese Rites Controversy from its beginning to Modern Times} (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985).

\(^2\) The selection of the decree is a translation of the Chinese version of the original that was written in Latin. Refer to Dun Jen Li, \textit{China in Transition 1517-1911} (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1969), 23-24.
II. The spring and autumn worship of the Confucius, together with the worship of ancestors, is not allowed among Catholic converts. It is not allowed even though the converts appear in the ritual as bystanders, because to be a bystander in this ritual is as pagan as to participate in it actively.

III. Chinese officials and successful candidates in the metropolitan, provincial, or prefectural examinations, if they have been converted to Roman Catholicism, are not allowed to worship in Confucian temples on the first and fifteenth days of each month.

IV. No Chinese Catholics are allowed to worship ancestors in their familial temples.

V. Whether at home, in the cemetery, or during the time of a funeral, a Chinese Catholic is not allowed to perform the ritual of ancestor worship. He is not allowed to do so even if he is in company with non-Christians.

As a response to the decree, the emperor Kangxi (康熙, 1662-1722) at that time declared:

Reading this proclamation, I have concluded that the Westerners are petty indeed. It is impossible to reason with them because they do not understand larger issues as we understand them in China. There is not a single Westerner versed in Chinese works, and their remarks are often incredible and ridiculous. To judge from this proclamation, their religion is no different from other small, bigoted sects of Buddhism or Taoism. I have never seen a document which contains so much nonsense. From now on, Westerners should not be allowed to preach in China, to avoid further trouble.

The ‘Chinese Rite Controversy’ is a typical example of the conflicts and tensions between Christianity and Chinese culture in Chinese mission history. As a matter of fact, the complicated relationship between the Christian tradition and cultural systems has been an enduring concern of Christian Missiology.

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3 Dun Jen Li, 22.
God chooses to reveal Godself in specific times and places in human history and cultures. The revelation of God is always embodied in a cultural system; in the period of the formation of the Old Testament, the message of faith was first embodied in the Hebrew culture; then the embodiment of the message was shifted from the Judeo tradition to the Greco-Roman tradition during the time of the New Testament. As Christianity continued to spread to Europe, the Slavic and European culture began to play an important role in the development of Christianity, but at the same time Christianity also became the religious dimension of these European cultures. In other words, Christianity and these cultural systems developed together and these Western cultures have domesticated the Christian gospel within their own culture systems. However tension was still found in the history of European conversion, as shown by the letter of Pope Gregory in 601 A.D., and so it should not be surprising to see severe tensions when the Christian missionaries brought the Gospel to other places with well-established cultural systems like Africa and China. Tension between the Christian tradition developed in a particular milieu and new cultural systems seems to be unavoidable. As it is the belief of the Christian faith that the gospel is universal to all people in the world (for “God so loved the world,” John 3:16), resolving the tension between the Christianity and culture becomes an important task in the

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4 This is the well-known letter concerning the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, it was written by Pope Gregory in 601. The letter was sent to Abbot Mellitus who was on his way to join Saint Augustine of Canterbury in England to aid him in the Anglo-Saxons conversion. The letter is used by many as evidence that after the so called conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, many pre-Christian Heathen traditions and lore were allowed to continue, sometimes as part of the Christianity itself. Refer to “Letter from Pope Gregory,” Anglo-Saxon Heathenism, http://englishheathenism.homestead.com/popesletter.html (accessed January 10, 2010).
study of Christian contextualization.

1. Terms Clarifications: Indigenization, Inculturation and Contextualization

‘Contextualization’, ‘indigenization’ and also ‘inculturation’ (a term that appeared later and became formally employed from 1974-75. It is more commonly used in the official Roman Catholic documents) are the technical terms describing the dynamic interaction between the Christian tradition and cultural systems. There are hundreds and thousands culture systems in the world; people around the world may espouse different worldviews within a context of their knowledge, background and culture. Some religious images may be predominant in a particular cultural system; but they may also be meaningless, or may even have opposite meanings, in another cultural system. Therefore, as Christianity is introduced to a new cultural system, there is often an urgent need to make local people understand the Christian faith without any cultural bias. This is also the major concern of ‘indigenization’.

1.1 Indigenization

In the study of missiology, ‘indigenization’ describes the ‘translatability’ of the Christian faith into the forms and symbols of the particular cultures of the world. The first indigenization process was found in the New Testament, in which the Greek translators of the Hebrew Old Testament took the word *theo* from the Greek culture and used it to describe God.\(^5\) Throughout the centuries, the process of indigenization concerns missionaries greatly, as they are always

eager to preach the Christian faith in non-Christianized places. They try their best to introduce
the Christian gospel in a way that local people can understand. However, ‘indigenization’ tends
to stress the transformation or appropriation of Christian faith to fit into a particular culture
system, but it seldom mentions how the Christian faith exerts influence on the culture system. In
short, it seems to be a one-way appropriation only.

1.2 Inculturation

‘Inculturation’ is another technical term describing the complex relationship between the
Christian tradition and culture systems. ‘Inculturation’ is a new term; its very first recorded use
was found in the work of Fr Joseph Masson SJ. He wrote shortly before the Second Vatican
Council, “today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is inculturated in a variety of
forms.”6 Later, the term was frequently employed in the Congregation of the Society of Jesus in
1974-75. As a response to the decree of the congregation, Fr Pedro Arrupe issued a letter on the
subject of inculturation. A formal definition of inculturation was first found in his letter:

…the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural
context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements
proper to the culture in question but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies
the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a ‘new creation’.7

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6 J. Masson, ‘L’Église ouverte sur le monde’ in NRT, vol 84, 1032-43, quoted by Aylward Shorter, Toward a
7 Pedro Arrupe, “Letter to the Whole Society on Inculturation,” in Other Apostolates Today: Selected Letters
1.3 Contextualization

The term ‘contextualization’ first appeared in 1972 in a publication of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) entitled *Ministry in Context*; it is a term and an approach designed to supersede the indigenization approach that has been dominant in mission theory for a century. Since 1970, there has been a fervent discussion on the need of giving preference to a ‘contextual or experiential’ theology, in contrast to ‘systematic or dogmatic’ theology. Contextual theology, which grows out of the contemporary historical situation and thought, seems to become more and more important; it is even regarded as a new point of departure in theologizing.  

1.4 ‘Indigenization’, ‘inculturation’ and ‘contextualization’

Unlike ‘indigenization’, ‘contextualization’ always stresses a two-way appropriation, or a mutual self-appropriation. On one hand, it seeks for an appropriate expression of Christian faith in a particular context; on the other hand, it aims at elaborating the influence of Christian faith in the cultural system. In addition, ‘indigenization’ has been criticized for its static nature. The Taiwanese theologian, Shoki Coe (1914-1988), one of the directors of the Theological Education Fund (TEF) in 1972, states that, owing to its derivation of a nature metaphor of taking root in the soil, indigenization usually gives an impression of responding the Christian faith in terms of traditional culture and so it is always in danger of being past oriented. Yet culture is

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9 People are more familiar with Shoki Coe in his Japanese name, his Chinese name is Huang, Zhanghui (黃彰輝).
always changing and so a new concept of mission needs to be more dynamic, open to change and future-oriented. In other words, theological reflections need to take the changing contexts seriously without discrimination.

Therefore, the TEF report is advocating for neither ‘contextual theology’ nor ‘contextualized theology’, but ‘contextualizing theology’. That is to say, the focus of theology begins to lay more on praxis within the local world, rather than the exegesis of the scriptures and the world of Old and New Testament. However, it is also the concern of some theologians that contextual theology is in danger of losing the integrity of the Gospel; they are afraid that Christian theology may become chameleon theology, simply changing colours according to the contexts. Therefore, the tension between maintaining the integrity of the Christian tradition and accommodating to the cultural contexts is palpable.

In comparing inculturation and contextualization, inculturation also stresses a two-way appropriation of the Christian tradition and culture systems. Yet, inculturation usually denotes the ‘incarnation’ of Christian faith in cultural systems, while contextualization is often a more general term that deals with the culture systems and specific situations and contexts. Some may

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11 Ibid., 22.
13 In order to avoid losing the integrity of the Christian faith, five criteria have been suggested by Robert Schreiter to evaluate a contextual theology. First, it should have an inner consistency; second, it can be translated into worship; third, it fulfills the criterion of orthopraxis; fourth, it is open to criticism and lastly it can pose a challenge to other theologies. Refer to Robert J. Schreiter, Constructing Local Theologies (New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 117-121.
find the term ‘contextualization’ too general and not precise enough,\textsuperscript{14} yet some may think the term ‘inculturation’ too narrow to include the realities of contemporary secularity, technology and the struggle for human justice.\textsuperscript{15} Nevertheless, inculturation emphasizes that cultural systems are never static, neither is the Christian tradition. Today, the dynamic nature of both cultural systems and the Christian tradition may finally bring about a plurality of cultures and a plurality of theologies; and so inculturation is always an ongoing process, “it refers to the correct way of living and sharing one’s Christian faith in a particular context and culture.”\textsuperscript{16}

Both contextualization and inculturation adopt a very dynamic view on cultural contexts and also of Christian theologies. Therefore, no matter which technical term is adopted, they do aim at reconciling the tensions and differences between the Christian tradition and cultural systems.

2. The Unavoidable Tension in Christian Contextualization: Contextualization in China as Example

2.1 Dual Convictions of Contextual Theology

Studying the differences between Christianity and culture is one of the most important dimensions in contextual theology, especially when the Christian tradition comes into conflict with a new cultural context. The complicated relationship between the Christian tradition and

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} Peter Schineller, \textit{A Handbook on Inculturation} (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 12.
\end{flushleft}
culture has been described by various metaphors, like ‘kernel and husk’\(^{17}\) or ‘seed and plant’\(^{18}\).

Different metaphors have difference emphases on either the Christian tradition or the cultural context. Take the metaphor of ‘kernel and husk’ as an example, the Christian tradition seems to be more important than the cultural context. The metaphor ‘seed and plant’ seems to emphasize the cultural context more, when it stresses the necessity of communicating the Christian gospel and making it take root in a particular cultural form.

As a matter of fact, a good contextual theology should never forsake the Christian tradition, while it takes the present context into consideration. Bevans suggests two primary convictions of contextual theology: 1. faithfulness to past experience (tradition); 2. faithfulness to present experience (context).\(^{19}\) In the process of contextualization, the Christian tradition comes across new values and ideas in the present context. On one hand, this encounter urges people to scrutinize the new ideas of the context; on the other hand, it also leads to a re-examination of the current understandings of the Christian tradition. In the re-examination of the Christian tradition, every change of the understanding of the Christian tradition should be bound up with a limit of diversity, so that the danger of relativism (or the risk of becoming chameleon theology) can be

\(^{17}\) This metaphor can be found in Heinrich Fries, “Katholische Missionswissenschaft in neuer Gestalt,” *Stimmen der Zeit*, vol 111, 760, quoted by David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 449. The Christian faith, as understood in Western church, is considered as the unalloyed ‘kernel’, while other foreign cultural systems are regarded as the expendable husk.

\(^{18}\) An Indian evangelist Mr. Murthi has mentioned this metaphor, he said, “Do not bring us the gospel as a potted plant. Bring us the seed of the gospel and plant it in our soil.” Quoted by Paul Hiebert, “Cultural Differences and the communication of the Gospel,” http://www.uscwm.org/mobilization_division/resources/perspectives_reader_pdfs/C01_Hiebert_Cultural.pdf. (accessed January 10, 2010).

\(^{19}\) Bevans, 3-9.
avoided. Contextual theology advocates for an experimental and contingent nature of theology; yet, as David Bosch argues persuasively, it should never lead to an infinite number of theologies, or even mutually exclusive theologies.\textsuperscript{20} In the process of contextualization, a continuity of meaning must always be traced, no matter how the Christian message is reshaped by the new ideas of the context. If the integrity of Christian tradition is lost in the process of contextualization, it is simply a new religion, not Christianity.\textsuperscript{21}

Notwithstanding the necessity of maintaining Christian integrity and tradition, it is also important to clarify the meaning of the ‘Christian tradition’. Different denominations may have different understandings of ‘tradition’. In the narrow sense, it refers to the ‘church tradition’, that is “the traditional way of interpreting Scripture within the community of faith”.\textsuperscript{22} In the broad sense, the so-called Wesleyan Quadrilateral\textsuperscript{23} may give a hint; the Christian tradition is founded by the Bible, the tradition (in the narrow sense), reason and experience. Under the broad sense of the ‘Christian tradition’, ‘tradition’ should be understood in a dynamic way. It is noticed that tradition is not \textit{a priori}, but \textit{a posteriori} on the basis of different processes of time (diachronization) and cultural contexts (synchronization). In other words, the understanding of

\begin{thebibliography}{999}
\bibitem{20} Bosch, 427.
\bibitem{22} Alister E. McGrath, \textit{Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought} (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1998), 40-41. Although different denominations may have different emphases on their interpretations of the Bible scriptures, the Bible is always the canon and centre of Christianity.
\end{thebibliography}
the Christian tradition is always an ongoing dynamic process\textsuperscript{24} and the Christian tradition should be shaped in connection with the different approaches people are using to deal with theological issues.\textsuperscript{25} Above all, the development of the Christian faith traditions is always under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is always at work in the whole creation, in the achievement of culture and in all relationships.\textsuperscript{26} It is therefore believed that the Christian faith can be understood in different contexts, yet its integrity can always be maintained.

The dynamic concept of the ‘Christian tradition’ as promoted by contextual theologies constitutes an epistemological break with traditional theologies; Christian theologies shifts from the theology \textit{from above} to the theology \textit{from below}. There is also a growing importance of praxis. In particular, there is an emphasis on \textit{doing} theology,\textsuperscript{27} so that theological reflection concentrates on resolving particular issues found in particular cultural contexts.\textsuperscript{28} However, it is my argument that praxis and cultural context alone can never be the sole authority of theological reflection; contextual theology should be faithful not only to the context, but also to the Christian tradition. There are Christian faith traditions which all Christians around the globe


\textsuperscript{25} This dynamic concept of the Christian tradition has been introduced by Friedrich Schleiermacher, he was one of the first theologians suggesting that Christian church is always in the process of becoming and theology is a reflection on the church’s own life and experience. Such dynamic idea of the Christian tradition has also been further developed by contemporary theologians like Rudolf Bultmann. For details, refer to Bosch, 422.

\textsuperscript{26} Bosch emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit in mission; refer to Bosch, 113-115, 516-517. Similar idea can also be found in John V. Taylor, \textit{The Go-between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission} (London: SCM, 1972).

\textsuperscript{27} Bosch, 422-423.

\textsuperscript{28} Apart from resolving particular issue in particular context, missiological theology also moves to a theology focused on the ‘future’. Theology is always in dynamic context as it moves towards the Kingdom of God.
share and respect. In the words of Bosch, “we therefore – along with affirming the essentially contextual nature of all theology – also have to affirm the universal and context-transcending dimensions of theology.”

For this reason, tension is always found in contextual theologies.

Both the Christian tradition and the cultural context are important; hence, whenever the Christian tradition comes into conflict with the cultural context it is important to look into these tensions in earnest, so that the dual convictions, tradition and context, can be upheld.

2.2 The Dialectics of Religious Identity

Contextual theology stresses both the tradition and the context, and as argued above tension always seems to be unavoidable when they are encountered. Contextual theologies are always walking on the knife-edge between ‘tradition’ and ‘context’, and different people may have different degrees of emphasis in responding to the tension. In dealing with these tensions, some tend to emphasize the ‘tradition’, while some privilege the ‘context’.Dadosky adopts a notion of the ‘dialectics of religious identity’ to describe this phenomenon; in particular, people focused on ‘tradition’ stress the ‘specific identity’ in their interpretations of religious identity; while those focused on ‘context’ emphasize on ‘general identity’ in their interpretation of religious identity. According to Dadosky, the former usually “seeks to establish the bounds of Christian

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29 Bosch, 427.
30 Concerning the complicated relationship between the Christian tradition and culture systems, there are lots of other studies. Carl Starkloff suggested a positive syncretic process as the Christian gospel encounters a foreign cultural system; while he advocated for a unity of both the Christian tradition and culture, he is against any distortion of the Christian tradition in the synergetic process. Obviously just like Bevans, he considered the dual convictions of contextual theology seriously. Refers to Carl F. Starkloff, A Theology of the in-Between, ed. Andrew Tallon, Marquette Studies in Theology No. 33 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2002).
identity by emphasizing its distinctness within the cultural matrix,” while the latter “seeks to integrate their own Christian self-understanding with the larger human community or cultural matrix.”

This tension between ‘general identity focused’ and ‘specific identity focused’ approaches has been articulated by various formulations of models and typologies on the study of the relationship between the Christian traditions and cultural systems. People, with different degrees of being ‘general identity focused’ and ‘specific identity focused’, come up with different responses to the encounter of culture systems and the Christian tradition. The five models of Richard Niebuhr is a classic example of typology, while Bevans, Dulles and Frei are all using typologies in construing the tension between the Christian tradition and cultural systems. It shows that many Christian scholars have already identified the tension and tried to employ their own ways to resolve it, depending on their basic orientations of ‘general identity focused’ or ‘specific identity focused’ under the typology of Dadosky.

2.3 Past Attempts of Contextual Theologies

2.3.1 Bevan’s Models of Contextual Theology

Considering the unavoidable tension between the Christian tradition and cultural context, a

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33 Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology.
34 Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doublebay, 1974).
good contextual theology should at least attempt to deal with the tension. However, being
confined by their basic orientations of religious identity, people seldom come up with a
satisfactory resolution to the tension. Just take examples from Bevans’ six models of contextual
theology, namely the anthropological model, counter-cultural model, the praxis model, the
translation model, the synthetic model and lastly the transcendental model.⁶⁶ Among these
models, the anthropological model tends to place too much stress on the cultural context
(general identity focused), yet the counter-cultural model adheres too much to the Christian
tradition (specific identity focused).³⁷ The anthropological model and the counter-cultural
model stand at the two extremes of culture system and the Christian tradition respectively, but
both seem to be unable to deal with the tension successfully. In fact, similar difficulty can also
be found in the praxis model, even though this model stands in the middle of the two extremes.³⁹

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⁶⁶ Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*.
⁶⁷ Bevans suggested that African theologian R. E. Hood’s doctrine of Holy Spirit is a typical illustration of
the model: Hood interpreted the Holy Spirit as the ‘Ministering Spirit’ of God and so it is under the sovereignty of
God. This illustration is highly related to the African traditional religion and it must be easy for the Africans to
understand; but the traditional doctrine of Trinity in the Christian tradition seems to be overlooked. Obviously the
tension between the Christian tradition and the African culture, especially on the views of ‘spirit’, has not been
resolved properly.
³⁸ Hendrik Kraemer is a typical example of the counter-cultural model and he understood all non-Christian
religions as simply human achievements, which are also some unsuccessful human attempts to apprehend the
totality of existence and the ultimate reality. Kraemer tended to minimize the influence of culture and other
non-Christian religions in understanding the Christian faith, while he tried to maintain the integrity of the Christian
tradition. Hence, the tension between the Christian tradition and the culture system is not settled properly either.
However, sometimes it is not a disadvantage of upholding one’s basic standpoint in a dialogue. Similar to Kraemer,
Barth is also a typical example of the counter-cultural model. He even claimed for the ‘abolition of all religion.’ For
Barth, religion is only a human attempt to anticipate the work of God and it could never reveal the truth of God.
Barth himself did not intend to develop any contextual theology; rather it was his concern to uphold the revelation
of Jesus Christ as the integrity of Christianity. In the present thesis, it is believed that the sharp emphasis of Barth in
maintaining the integrity of Christianity will help to achieve a constructive dialogue.
³⁹ Paul Knitter’s liberation theology of religions is a typical example of the praxis model. He claimed that a
tradition’s claim of unique religious value should give way to a common religious goal for all religions in order to
achieve a successful interreligious dialogue. He stated that Christian attitude should evolve from theo-centrism to
2.3.2 Contextual Theologies in China

Due to the existence of very divergent religious cultures in Asia, there are numerous Asian theologies that claim to represent different Asian cultural forms; for example, there are ‘pain of God theology’ in Japan, ‘water buffalo theology’ in Thailand, ‘minjung theology’ in Korea and a score of national theologies like Indian theology, Burmese theology and Sri Lankan theology. All of these Asian theologies are trying to resolve the tensions particularly found in their countries when the Christian message encounters their cultural systems.

Just like most of the contextual theologies, Chinese contextual theologies are also attempting to resolve the tension between the Christian tradition and the Chinese culture.

Christianity was introduced to China more than twelve hundreds years ago and many Christian churches are found in China today, but it is still hard to say Christianity has been rooted in China. From the ‘Chinese rites controversy’ in the Qing Dynasty to the modern indigenization movements of Chinese churches, many conflicts and differences between the Christian tradition and the Chinese culture have been identified. Throughout the ages, many soterio-centrism and the focal point of interreligious dialogue should shift to social justice. In other words, Knitter advocated for a primacy of orthopraxis over orthodoxy, as the primary purpose of Christian confession is to call forth a pattern of life, instead of a body of belief. Therefore, as long as a religion is working for social justice and righteousness, there is no need to argue on the truthfulness of its religious claims. Knitter is obviously influenced by the increasing awareness of praxis in theology; however, with a simple focus on social justice, Paul Knitter tended not to pay enough attention to the tensions between the Christian tradition and cultural context either.

41 The first Protestant missionary Robert Morrison went to China in 1807, while the first Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci arrived Canton in 1583. However, it was generally believed that Christianity was first introduced by the Nestorians since 635 A.D. during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), as recorded by the ‘Nestorian Stone’ erected in 781 and unearthed in around 1625. For the history of Christianity in China, please refer to Nicolas Standaert, ed., Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 1, 635-1800 (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2001).
people have attempted to resolve these tensions and conflicts by developing their own Chinese contextual theologies; yet it seems that no satisfactory resolution has yet appeared.

### 2.3.2.1 Models of Chinese Contextual Theology

Among the various kinds of Chinese contextual theologies, some suggested developing Christian contextualization by simply building churches in Chinese architectural style. Although a change in architectural buildings could be a cultural symbol expressing the development of contextualization, obviously just a superficial change of appearance can never help to solve the deep tension between Christianity and Chinese culture. Besides, some suggested developing Chinese Christianity by amalgamating the ‘decent elements’ and removing the ‘corrupted elements’ in both Western Christianity and Chinese culture. This suggestion seems to be too theoretical because it is difficult to define what is ‘corrupted’ and what is ‘decent’, and to decide who decides on these categories. There are many other models of Chinese contextual theologies, which could not be listed here in detail; yet some contextual

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43 Paul Feng (封尚禮) is one of the supporters of this model. His major ideas can be found in *Wen gu zhi xin: Zhongguo wen hua yu Jidu jiao shen xue si xiang* (Chinese culture and Christian theologies) (Hong Kong: Jidu jiao fu qiao chu ban she, 1964).

44 Yijing Zhang (張亦鏡 1871-1931) is one of the examples of this model. He is the chief editor of Chinese newspaper and has edited the book *Da guang po an ji* (Shanghai: Hua mei jin hui shu ju, 1923), which discussed the values of Christianity and Confucianism.

45 There is a lot of research on Chinese contextual theologies and indigenization in the 20th century, most written in Chinese. Yet there is not yet a comprehensive handbook of Chinese contextual theology, which includes all contextualization models. For those who are interested in Chinese publications, they may refer to 林榮洪, 溫偉耀: 《基督教與中國文化的相遇》 (香港: 香港中文大學崇基學院, 2001).
theologies are more influential than the others, and they can also be explained by means of Bevan’s models of contextual theologies. To give a general sense of developments in China, three contemporary theologians, representing the anthropological model, counter-cultural model and also the praxis model respectively, are thus briefly discussed here.

2.3.2.2 The Anthropological Model: Theology of Ting

Ting K.H. (丁光訓 1915-), the present bishop of the ‘three-self churches’ in China, is a good example of the anthropological model. In order to reconcile the fundamental conflicts between the atheist Communist party and Christian church, he always de-emphasized these conflicts deliberately by emphasising strongly the love of God. As God is love and this love includes everyone in the universe, there should not be any differentiation between believers and non-believers. Therefore, whether they are Christians, Buddhists, Muslims or even atheists, there should not be any difference between them. In order to obscure the difference between believers and non-believers, Ting proposed to replace the doctrine of ‘Justification by Faith’ by...
‘Justification by love’ in Chinese contextual theology. \(^{48}\) According to Ting, as God is love, love is the kernel of Christianity; therefore all people could be justified before God, as long as they show ‘love’ in the society. Ting in fact tried to draw everyone in the society together to support the communist government. There is no doubt that Ting tried hard to accommodate Christianity with the communist environment in China. However, as he tried to focus his contextual theology on supporting the communist government, some distinctive doctrines of the Christian tradition, like the salvation by Jesus Christ, were inevitably ignored.

2.3.2.3 The Counter-Cultural Model: Theology of Wang

Wang MingDao (王明道 1900-1991), a well-known pastor of the house churches in China, is a fundamentalist; his theology is a typical example of the counter-cultural model. \(^{49}\) Wang always tried to maintain the distinctiveness and the integrity of the Christian tradition, lest it would be lost under the governance of the communist party. Wang stressed that it is the responsibility of every Christian to be the ‘light’ and the ‘salt’ in the world and so Christians should avoid being ‘contaminated’ by the corrupted culture of the world. Hence, Wang adopted a very critical attitude to culture, for the fear that anything from the world will ‘contaminate’ the church. The critical view of Wang to culture is probably influenced by the missionaries in

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\(^{49}\) The works of Wang are all written in Chinese, it can mainly be found in his seven-volume collected works. Refer to Wang, \textit{Selected Writings of M.D Wang}, 7 vols. (Taipei: CBI Press, 1984). Apart from Wang, Watchman Nee is also an influential fundamentalist in China, his theology can also be classified as counter-cultural model. His major writings have been translated and can now be found in “Living Stream Ministry: Publisher of Watchman Nee and Witness Lee,” http://www.ministrybooks.org/collected-works.cfm (accessed January 10, 2010).
London Missionary Society. In addition, the constant persecutions to the house churches at the time of Wang also fostered confrontations between house churches and the society. However as he stressed too much the distinctiveness of the Christian tradition, he did neglect the importance of culture and also he did not successfully deal with the tension between the Christian tradition and the Chinese culture.

2.3.2.4 The Praxis Model: Theology of Zia

Ting and Wang stood in the two extremes of contextual theologies; the former took his lead from the context, while the latter adhered to his fundamentalist view of the Christian tradition. Just like the Western contextual theology, praxis contextual theology can also be found in Chinese contextual theologies. Zia N.A. (謝扶雅 1892-1991) is a contemporary Chinese Christian scholar, who spent his whole life advocating for the integration of Christianity and Confucian thought. According to Zia, all Chinese Christians should regard themselves as ‘Christian gentlemen’. In Confucian teachings, junzi (君子 gentleman) is an achievable human model; teachings about junzi can easily be found in important Confucian classics like Analects (Lunyu 論語), Mencius (Mengzi 孟子), Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong 中庸), Great Learning (Daxue 大學). A junzi is an introspective person with ‘humanity’ (ren 仁); he is always able to behave himself and to comfort the others. It is obvious that Zia tries to connect Christianity and

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50 The major publications of Zia can be found in the periodical Ching Feng during the 1960-1970 and in the book Xiejuyou Wannian Jijiaojiao sixiang lunji (Collective papers of the late Christian thoughts of Zia N.A.) (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd, 1986).
Chinese Confucian thought by emphasizing social ethics and morality. For Zia, both Christianity and Chinese Confucian thought aim at cultivating morality in the society, and so they should be able to ‘cooperate’ well in this aspect. Nevertheless, although both Christianity and Chinese Confucian thoughts promote moral values, the basic beliefs and principles behind are quite different. Obviously Zia chose not to pay much attention to those dissimilarities.  

In short, Chinese contextual theologies, just like other contextual theologies, face the same challenge concerning the tension of maintaining both the Christian tradition and cultural context at the same time. Some chose to adhere to the Christian tradition (like the counter-cultural model) and some preferred the cultural context (like the anthropological model), but both models seem not helpful in resolving the tensions. Some people may try to de-emphasize the tensions by stressing some common goals or acts only (like the praxis model), yet this does not appear to be an ideal way to deal with the tension either. In order to develop a successful contextual theology, the tensions between the Christian tradition and the context have to be taken seriously.  

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51 One of the most controversial sayings of Zia for Chinese contextual theology is his proposal to revise the Bible. He suggested that the new Bible for Chinese Christianity should be composed of four parts: the whole New Testament, selected writings of the Old Testament, classical writings of Confucius and also selected writings of the Buddhists and Taoists. According to Zia, the whole New Testament should be kept in the new Bible since the good and moral deeds of Jesus Christ and his disciples can all be found there. However, for Zia, the Old Testament is only the classics of the Israelites and so there is nothing related to the Chinese. Refer to “The prospect of Christianity in China (基督教在中國之前途)” Ching Feng, 66 (March, 1981), 10. Zia simply ignored the conflicts and differences between Christianity and Chinese culture. For him, there is no need to deal with the conflicts, as long as these conflicts have nothing related to human morality.
3. Dialogue and Contextualization

3.1 Definitions of Dialogue

It is my argument that dialogue is a superb way to deal with the tension and difference between the Christian tradition and culture systems, since dialogue always recognizes ‘differences’. Wesley Ariarajah, the Director of the World Council of Churches’ Inter-Faith dialogue, describes ‘interfaith dialogue’ as:

… an encounter between people who live by different faith traditions, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and acceptance. Dialogue did not require giving up, hiding or seeking to validate one’s own religious conviction; in fact, the need for being rooted in one’s own tradition to be engaged in a meaningful dialogue was emphasized, as were common humanity and the need to search in a divided world for life in community. Dialogue was seen as a way not only to become informed about the faiths of others but also to rediscover essential dimensions of one’s own faith tradition. The benefits of removing historical prejudices and enmities as well as the new possibilities for working together for common good were recognized and affirmed.⁵²

According to Ariarajah, dialogue never asks people to give up their religious convictions; on the contrary, it stresses “the need for being rooted in one’s own tradition”. Hence, in a setting of dialogue, the uniqueness of both the Christian tradition and Chinese values are to be recognized and the differences of both parties should not be ignored. In this case, tension seems to be inevitable when the distinctiveness of both parties is stressed. Therefore, a simple conceptual dialogue, without looking profoundly into the divergences, may not be helpful for

the development of a successful contextual theology; it is always important to carry out a
detailed study on the differences and tensions between the Christian tradition and the Chinese
culture to enable an authentic dialogue.

Dialogue can be carried out at different levels and with different goals. The ‘Dialogue
working group’ of WCC distinguished three levels of dialogue in 1974, namely, 1. conceptual
dialogue, which aims at clarification of concepts, doctrines and historical relations; 2.
experiential dialogue, which is a sharing of religious experience; 3. socio-political dialogue,
which intends to promote peace and justice in communities.53

Later, Eck systematized these three levels of dialogue by further differentiates six types of
dialogue.54 ‘Parliamentary dialogue’ and ‘institutional dialogue’ refer to those interreligious
dialogue meetings and conferences organized by institutions; most of these dialogues are at the
conceptual level and socio-political level. ‘Theological dialogue’ refers to the systematic
thinking and writings of people from different religious traditions; most of them belong to the
conceptual level, though some may reach the experiential level and socio-political level. ‘The
dialogue in community’, or ‘the dialogue of life’, is no doubt at the experiential level; it is
basically the daily life sharing of people. ‘Spiritual dialogue’ is basically similar to ‘theological
dialogue’, however its main concern is to deepen and nourish inner spiritual life.

53 Refer to Eeuwout Klootwijk, *Commitment and Openness* (Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1992), 119.
3.2 Inner Dialogue

Last but not the least, the last type of dialogue is called ‘inner dialogue’, it is regarded as the most essential one among various types of dialogue. It is the “ongoing dialogue, discussion, and disputation that takes place not only between people, but within ourselves.”55 This ‘inner dialogue’ is not simply an intellectual dialogue, which is essential to the process of thinking; it is also an internal inter-religious dialogue when people encounter other religious faiths. It refers to personal historical dialogues when people come across a conflict between their traditional religious values and new religious experiences. It is vital, as an inner dialogue must first take place within one’s own selves before any dialogues with the others and it requires an integrative function among one’s intellectual and existential experience. This kind of inner dialogue is also advocated by Raimundo Pannikar, but in another term ‘intrareligious dialogue’.56 He made it clear that genuine interreligious dialogue must begin with intrareligious dialogue; that is, people must first question their own selves before accepting any challenge of changes, conversions or the risk of upsetting their original traditions.57 In addition, Redington also suggested another similar term ‘interior dialogue’, which is defined as “the interaction, the testing and with the help of grace, the reconciliation within one’s personal faith of the beliefs, symbols, and values of

57 Ibid., 40.
the different faith system which one is deeply considering.”

Inner dialogue is in fact a process of growth and development. When dialogue partners come to the table of discussion, they can never come to a fruitful and successful dialogue unless they have their own stance. By embracing their own views and positions, people begin to understand their dialogue partners by taking on other’s perspective. In this process of understanding, it is not simply a process of evaluating the views of the other, it is also a process of evaluating one’s own views; that is, people need to understand themselves from the perspective of their dialogue partners. This process of understanding from the perspective of the other usually first happens within people’s own self as an inner dialogue, so it is an intellectual and existential dialogue integral to the process of thinking. Therefore, on the one hand, it enables people to learn about their own selves (or their own tradition); on the other hand, it allows people to glimpse the world through eyes other than their own.

In the past, the importance of inner dialogue was recognized, yet there is not much discussion on the operation of inner dialogue within our own selves. Considering the dual function of inner dialogue, there are in fact three processes happened within the human beings in an inner dialogue. First, there is a process of ‘re-examination’; people will review their own traditions and original viewpoints. Second, there is a process of ‘exploration’; people will

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review the viewpoints of their dialogue partner. As the inner dialogue is in fact an integration of one’s intellectual and existential experiences, the processes of re-examination and exploration may not happen in a necessary order. People may re-examine first and then explore; or they may first explore and then re-examine. After re-examination and exploration, people will go on to the last process of an inner dialogue by comparing and contrasting two viewpoints until they come to a renewed understanding of the discussion topic.

3.3 Inner Dialogue and Contextualization

In the process of contextualization, one of the most important steps, and also the most difficult step, in resolving the tension between the Christian tradition and the cultural context is to understand both sides truly with minimum negative bias. Taking the example of Christian contextualization in China, the Christian faith encounters the Chinese cultural context and it is like two ‘persons’ with different perspectives and values who meet up and get to know each other. The processes of re-examination, exploration, comparison and contrast happen during the encounter. In this aspect, dialogue seems to be a good way for these two ‘persons’ to understand each other.

In this respect, it seems that ‘dialogue’, especially the inner dialogue, can contribute to the process of contextualization. During the process of contextualization, the tension between the Christian faith and the cultural context helps to elicit an inner dialogue within individuals. In the
first place, we may stand with either the Christian faith or the cultural context; yet in our inner
dialogue, we get to know the views of the other and begin to evaluate our own stance. For
example, in the Christian contextualization in China, we may first stand with the Christian faith,
but our attempt to understand Chinese cultural values may broaden our worldview and then we
will have a renewed understanding of the Christian faith. Likewise, we may first stand with the
Chinese culture, yet we may have a transformed comprehension of Chinese cultural values after
an inner dialogue with the Christian faith. Therefore, by the way of inner dialogue, both the
Christian tradition and the Chinese culture are being respected; but at the same time, it also
brings a mutual self-appropriation to both the Christian tradition and the Chinese cultural
context. My argument is that Christian contextualization should follow this path in its
engagement with Chinese culture.

Although inner dialogue usually first happens at an individual level and it may seem to be
subjective and personal, it should be recognized that all intellectual currents in the society first
start at an individual level and that the mutual impact of society and individual formation occurs
in complex mutuality. In society, individual voices always interact with each other, some voices
may be eliminated in the process, but some may also be further developed and finally expanded
to be a strong influence in the society. Whether we recognize it or not, inner dialogue is an
important formative force in the formation of intellectual thought within a culture and within an
individual person.

For the reasons cited above I propose the employment of the concept of inner dialogue as the way to deal with the tension between the Christian tradition and Chinese cultural context.

4. Procedures of the Research

4.1 Research Proposition

In the present thesis, ‘inner dialogue’ is proposed as a way to resolve the tensions and differences between the Christian tradition and the Chinese cultural context. In a setting of ‘inner dialogue’, both the Christian tradition and the context must first be examined carefully in the first place. This thesis intends to look into the tension between the Western Protestant tradition and the Chinese context by examining and contrasting the thoughts of a representative Protestant Christian theologian and a representative Chinese Confucian philosopher.

4.1.1 The Choice of Karl Barth and Shili Xiong

In Christian tradition, even within Western Protestant tradition, there are diverse and even contradictory theologies, not to mention the boarder differences among Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox tradition. Therefore, it is not easy to select anyone as the ‘representative’ of the protestant Christian tradition. A similar problem is also found in Chinese culture. In this thesis, Karl Barth (1886-1968), as the ‘representative’ of the Western Protestant
Christian tradition and Shili Xiong (熊十力 1885-1968), as the ‘representative’ of the Chinese culture tradition, are chosen for study. There are several reasons for this choice. Both Barth and Xiong represent strong currents in their own traditions. Barth represents an important and influential voice in Western Protestantism in the 20th century. His theology has successfully returned to the roots of Protestantism (Calvin and Luther) and he has refined, purified these sources and integrated them with 19th and 20th century scholarship. Xiong is also a prominent figure in contemporary Neo-Confucianism, he is regarded as one of the founders in contemporary Neo-Confucianism; many important Neo-Confucian scholars like Tang Junyi (唐君毅 1909-1978) and Mou Zongsan (牟宗三 1909-1995) are students of Xiong. These two figures thus make excellent candidates as representing influential streams of thought in their respective fields during the 20th century.

Another reason for the choice of Barth and Xiong is that no research has been done particularly on the comparison of these two important contemporary figures. Many Western scholars are not acquainted with Xiong. It is hoped that a study of these two figures may bring new insight to the study of anthropology and contextual theology. Barth (1886-1968) and Xiong

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60 The third stage of Confucianism is generally called Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, as compared to Classical Confucianism (first stage) and Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism (second stage). Yet Liu Shuxian proposed to rename the third stage to New Confucianism. Refer to Liu Shuxian, On the Three Great Epochs of Confucian Philosophy (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press, 2008). As it is still more popular to call the third stage as Contemporary Neo-Confucianism, the present study will still employ this term.

61 The importance of Barth and Xiong in their own traditions will be further elucidated in Chapter III.
(1885-1968) are in fact contemporaries during the late 19th and 20th centuries, yet their perspectives are quite distinct under the influence of two different cultural and educational contexts. Besides, Barth and Xiong both demonstrate different ways of resolving tensions and differences. Barth makes use of dialectics in his theological epistemology, though his dialectic theology differs from other contemporary dialectic theologies like the theologies of Rudolf Bultmann or Paul Tillich. With regard to Xiong, the theme of yin (陰) and yang (陽) as described in Book of Changes (I-Ching 易經) is employed in his writings to explicate differences and contradictions. Hence, these scholars provide us with an excellent way to compare approaches to differences and contradictions. These comparative elements in their thought stimulate the possibility of ‘inner dialogue’ between the present writer and the two scholars. Thus engagement with their works will probably suggest a new way of resolving the tensions and conflicts as found between the Western Protestant Christian tradition and the Chinese context. It is proposed that such dialogue will be constructive and fruitful for the further development of contextual Chinese theology.

4.1.2 The Choice of a Focus on Anthropological Theory

In order to develop a good dialogue, a common focus and concern is essential. Although there are lots of differences between the Western world and the Eastern world, there is still a

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62 In differentiating the dialectic theology of Barth with other alternative conceptions, McCormack employed the phrase ‘critically realistic’ to describe the dialectic theology of Barth; refer to Bruce L. McCormack, Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
common interest between them – people round the globe are all interested in the understanding of their own selves. Therefore humanity, or the study of philosophical and theological anthropology, suggests a good starting point for dialogue. Barth, a theologian, and Xiong, a philosopher, undoubtedly adopt different viewpoints on humanity. A comparison and contrast of their anthropological views can also lead to a fruitful dialogue between theological and philosophical anthropology.

4.1.3 Methodology

The method of contrast, as proposed by Vincent Shen (1949-), is employed in this thesis. Researchers usually perform an important role in the process of dialogue, especially in inner dialogue. In the present thesis, inner dialogue is proposed as a way to resolve the tensions and conflicts found between the Western Protestant tradition and the Chinese context, therefore we need a method which is helpful in facilitating the process of inner dialogue.

The method of contrast originated from the traditional Chinese philosophy found in the Book of Changes. Inspired by the dynamic relationship of yin and yang, a paradigm of contrast is identified in various phenomena of the world. This paradigm of contrast is in fact a basic way of thinking and praxis found in every individual. It will not leave differences in dualistic contradictions, but go further to identify mutual complementarity. This process of looking for mutual complementarity is actually a process of inner dialogue which occurs within every
researcher; therefore the role of researcher is consistently significant. The background, knowledge and also experience of the researcher are all integral to inner dialogue. Different researchers, with different backgrounds and experiences, will have different inner dialogues and may come up with different hypotheses. The tensions and paradoxes between different hypotheses of different researchers may further produce more and more contrasts. However, the assumption is that as long as there are continual dialogues between researchers, an ultimate mutual complementarity would finally come into view.

4.2 Research Statement and Implications

4.2.1 Research Statement

The thesis will employ the method of contrast of a Chinese scholar Vincent Shen to compare and contrast the anthropologies of Karl Barth and Shili Xiong, with the goal of achieving a constructive inner dialogue made explicit for the development of a contextual Chinese theological anthropology.

4.2.2 Implications and Importance

The present research intends to achieve two goals: first, to find the main themes of study for the development of Chinese theological anthropology by contrasting the anthropological views of two significant contemporary scholars, Barth and Xiong, and second, to demonstrate the method of contrast as a helpful method in the development of contextual theology and

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63 The details of the method of contrast can be found in Chapter II.
inter-disciplinary study. The significance of the research can be summarized in the following three elements:

First, it tries to engage both Chinese and Western approaches in the development of Chinese contextual theologies, especially in terms of Chinese theological anthropology. It is intended that a disciplined study on Chinese theological anthropology will help Chinese Christians to develop a renewed understanding of their own humanity, so that they will have a transformed identity as a Chinese person, and at the same time, a Christian person. I hope my own journey of exploration and inner dialogue, made explicit in this thesis, as a researcher who is both Chinese and a Protestant Christian will aid this process.

Second, as the pace of globalization has increased dramatically in recent years, Western Christendom is gradually losing its supremacy while Christian faith is growing at a strong pace in Africa, Asia and Latin America. There is thus a growing need for an understanding of Christianity in particular and new cultural contexts. The present research attempts to use a Chinese method, which is founded by Chinese philosophical ideas, to study Chinese contextual theology. This attempt to develop a methodology that arises out of the Chinese context itself may offer an alternative to Western methodologies that are often employed in engaging cultural challenges.

Third, it is hoped that the present research may not only contribute to the development of
Chinese contextual theology and method, but also shed light to inter-religious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue. Just as within contextual theology, potentially conflictual ideas and differences seem inevitable in interreligious dialogues as well. Therefore, it is proposed that a Chinese methodology for dealing with differences may also be helpful to such dialogues.

4.2.3 The Person of the researcher

The present study can be regarded as my own personal journey of exploration and inner dialogue as a researcher; it may be helpful to have a brief introduction of myself here so that readers may have a better understanding of the present study. I was born and raised in Hong Kong under the British colonial rule. Like many refugees from Mainland China, my parents migrated to Hong Kong after the civil war in China in 1950s. Although they were no longer geographically living in China, they had never forgotten the cultivation of traditional Chinese values, and that is also the value system they adopted to teach their children. Therefore I was also raised with traditional Chinese values. However, unlike my parents, traditional Chinese values are not the only values I came across when I was small. More than 16 years of education in Christian schools had allowed me to encounter Christian values, which become my core life values as a grown-up. As a Chinese Christian, it is always my vision and intention to integrate Chinese culture and Christianity. I believe that my background of being a Chinese indigenous would contribute a better understanding of Christianity; likewise, my conviction of the Christian
values would also give a new insight to traditional Chinese values.

4.3 Outline of the Research

Chapter I: Reviews of Christian Contextualization (the present chapter)

In this introduction we have discussed contextualization and its related concepts. Focus was given to the situation of China. Some contextual theologies, especially Chinese contextual theologies, were reviewed, with the purpose of demonstrating the inevitability of tensions in contextual theologies. In addition, there was a brief review of the development of religious dialogue. I have argued that inner dialogue is an excellent way of dealing with differences and tensions.

Chapter II

Chapter II will introduce the methodology of the present dissertation, which is the method of contrast based on the work of Shen. This section will also discuss how this method of contrast may help us to deal with the tensions found between the Christian tradition and Chinese culture.

Chapter III

In Chapter III, there will be a brief introduction to the biographies of Barth and Xiong highlighting their background and historical context.

Chapters IV, V, VI

The core of the research will be found in chapters IV, V and VI. The anthropologies of
Barth and Xiong will be described in chapter IV and V respectively. Their basic presuppositions will first be examined and then their anthropological views will be explicated in three dimensions, namely, human origin (in terms of the nature of human being), human existence (in terms of the relationship to other fellows and the issue of body and soul) and lastly human destiny (in terms of human transcendence). Afterwards, in Chapter VI, the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong will be explored according to Shen’s method of contrast, in terms of structural contrast and dynamic contrast. In this chapter, three major areas of anthropological study, that is, human nature, human existence and human transcendence will be more fully engaged.

Chapter VII

The final chapter will discuss the implications of the research for Chinese theological anthropology, Chinese contextual theology, and the application of the method of contrast in contextual theology and intra- and inter-religious dialogues.
Chapter II

Methodology

1. Differences and Contrasts

Differences are always found when the Christian tradition encounters other cultural systems. If differences seem to be inevitable, how can we deal with them constructively? This question is not simply the concern of Christian theology, but also other disciplines like philosophy. Nicholas Rescher, a modern philosopher, attempted to address this issue of ‘differences’ in a philosophical way. In his *The Strife of Systems: An Essay on the Grounds and Implications of Philosophical Diversity*, he introduced a term ‘orientational pluralism’, in which he argued that “we can only pursue the truth by cultivating our truth”, even though there are numerous perspectives of cultivation. Human beings have limitations, we can never act on two different orientations simultaneously, even if we understand that both can be defensible.

Heim related this philosophical idea ‘orientational pluralism’ to his study of theology of religions. He affirmed that there is only one reality, but it is multifaceted. Therefore we, as human beings, will probably depend upon an evaluation of priorities when we need to deal with the various appearances of the multifaceted reality, just like various religions in different parts of

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64 This concept is introduced by Mark Heim in his book Mark Heim, *Salvations: Truth and Difference in Religion* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004), 133.
65 Ibid.,138.
66 Ibid.
the world adopting different ways to understand religious matters.  

Both Rescher and Heim are correct that we can never put ourselves completely in others’ shoes and experience what they experienced; we always have our own evaluations of priorities to assess other’s experiences. However, it does not mean that our experiences would never change. Engaging other’s experiences can always help us to enrich our experience and get a renewed evaluation of priorities. Other people’s experience can contribute to our new experience and it always helps to broaden our horizon.

We can always expand our own horizon by contrasting the differences between our old and new experience; likewise we can increase our understanding of God by contrasting the differences between our Christian tradition and cultural values. The revelation of God is in fact revealed progressively and mediated by various devices.  

I follow Colin Gunton here who addressed this issue of mediation in his lectures on ‘revelation’. He stated that revelation in Christian theology is mediated; it can be mediated through creeds and confessions, or by nature and environment. These devices of revelation are not, in themselves, the revelation but mediators of it only. Nevertheless, Gunton argued that although there are varieties of mediation, there is one Lord. The revelation of the only Lord is carried out by the Holy Spirit. For Gunton, the place of the Holy Spirit in mediating revelation should not be neglected. The Holy Spirit acts

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67 Ibid., 137.
distinctively in revelation to make known the grace of God through Jesus Christ.\(^{69}\) Therefore, with the presence of the Holy Spirit, we can be assured that new experiences in different cultural systems and at different times may contribute to our further understanding of God. With a belief in the critical role of the Holy Spirit in revelation, the true reality will be revealed sooner or later, even though differences or ambiguities are still found at the present moment. Thus, whenever there are conflicts and differences between our past experience of the Christian tradition and our present experience of the cultural context, we should not avoid dealing with these conflicts and differences. By employing the method of contrast, careful examinations and assessments of the contrasts and differences will prove helpful in the process of understanding the truth.

The study of difference is also found in other academic disciplines. In social science, there are two types of comparative process; these are ‘close comparison’ and ‘distant comparison’.\(^{70}\) The former refers to the comparison of those views existing closely in time and space; given that their similar cultural contiguity will probably bring out likeness, this type of comparison usually focus more on the differences, rather than similarities, in the process of comparison and contrast. For the same reason, the latter type of comparison, that is the ‘distant comparison’ which refers to the comparison of views remote in time or space, usually focus more on the similarities, instead of differences.

\(^{69}\) Ibid., 122-123.
Bernard Lonergan also contributed to the study of differences. In his *Method of Theology*, he stated that we, as human beings, are always confined by our own horizons, we could never see the objects beyond our fields of vision. Therefore, the scope of our knowledge, the range of our interests is all bounded by our social backgrounds and milieu, our education and academic training.\(^{71}\) This means that people may have different or even contradicted views among themselves, since they are bounded by their own horizons and cannot see things beyond their fields of vision. This is similar to different professions in a society, like doctors, lawyers, engineers, workers. Despite their different interests and concerns, they recognize that they are not self-sufficient, and they need each other’s perspective for a good functioning of the society. Differences in this case are complementary, though they may appear contradictory.\(^{72}\) Apart from complementary differences, horizons may also differ genetically according to Lonergan. Things may develop in successive stages, each later stage presupposes earlier stages; it may include some characteristics of previous stages, and it may also transform them. The differences are simply parts of a single history.\(^{73}\)

Lonergan suggested that differences could be complementary or genetic; these differences can usually be resolved by uncovering more data. Yet there are still some fundamental differences that may not be resolved. According to Lonergan, this kind of difference, namely


\(^{72}\) Ibid, 236.

\(^{73}\) Ibid.
dialectic difference, could only be overcome by an intellectual, moral and religious conversion.\textsuperscript{74} In other words, people have to make a choice if the difference they are facing that could not easily be resolved by given data. Nevertheless, as people make choices, Lonergan stated that they have to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible. As people are attentive, they cut through the peripheral phenomenon to the phenomenon of central focus. In their intelligence, they deal with the phenomenon authentically and objectively. In their reasonability and responsibility, they are able to make an authentic and fair judgement on the phenomenon, without any harsh and immature denunciation. To be responsible is to ‘respond’, rather than ‘react’.\textsuperscript{75} For Lonergan, the process of making decisions can always help to enlarge one’s horizon and have further understanding of the world. Therefore encounter with the other is good, even though it may lead to dialectical perspectives and conflicts. He stated:

\begin{quote}
It is meeting persons, appreciating the values they represent, criticizing their defects, and allowing one’s living to be challenged at its very roots by their words and by their deeds. Moreover, such an encounter is not just an optional addition to interpretation and to history. Interpretation depends on one’s self-understanding; the history one writes depends on one’s horizon; and encounter is the one way in which self-understanding and horizon can be put to the test.\textsuperscript{76}
\end{quote}

In the process of understanding various phenomena in the universe, we are unavoidably confined by our own traditions and horizons; but new experience challenging our tradition may

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 235.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Starkloff, 62-63.
\item \textsuperscript{76} Lonergan, 247.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
generate a discontinuity and form a contrast. This contrast would induce us to strive for a renewed understanding of the phenomenon and stimulate the process of dynamic growth and development. ‘Encounter’ is an important precept for both the methodology of Lonergan and the method of contrast. It encourages people to explore the thoughts of the other and enlarge their horizons and fields of vision.

It is therefore always worth-while to engage in-depth study on differences. For this reason I propose a contextual method of contrast, born out of Chinese philosophy and culture, to aid the process of examining the differences between the Christian tradition and Chinese culture. By employing a contextual method I hope that the project will prove helpful in developing a Chinese contextual theology. The method of contrast I employ here is developed by the eminent Chinese Philosopher and Scholar Vincent Shen of the University of Toronto which I believe offers promise for further inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.

2. Shen’s Method of Contrast

Following the argument developed in Chapter I, I believe a thorough examination and assessment of the conflicts and differences between the Christian tradition and Chinese culture is necessary. The method of contrast of Shen originates from traditional Chinese philosophy; in particular, the philosophy of Book of Changes. It is my argument that this traditional Chinese
wisdom will be helpful in addressing the contrasts found in contextualization, especially in the Chinese contextualization of the Christian thoughts.

2.1 The Paradigm of Contrast

It is the basic premise of Shen that contrast is inevitable in human life, especially for philosophers who are concerned with the destiny of the universe and humankind. On the one hand, philosophers find themselves belonging to the same universe, which is under a process of development, just like other human beings and this universe contains a myriad of things. On the other hand, philosophers need to distance or ‘bracket’ themselves from the environment in their research or enquiry process, so as to see the reality clearly and to be in a better position to participate in the process of development of the universe.

For Shen, contrasts can be practised at a micro level (by an individual researcher) and at a macro level (in communities and cultural contexts). At the micro level, researchers’ experience is constituted by contrasting components (with complementarities and differences) and it is moved by contrasts (with continuity and discontinuity). In the process of understanding the universe, we, as human beings, are inevitably confined by our own traditions; yet any new experience refuting our tradition would generate a discontinuity and form a contrast. This contrast would induce us to strive for a renewed understanding of the universe. In this process of

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developing further understanding, one has to be familiar with his/her own tradition in the first place. Without an affiliated tradition, we cannot even tell if the new experience is supporting or refuting our original understanding of the universe. In addition, as we acknowledge our own tradition, we also recognize that our own tradition is not the only tradition in the world; we must be open and admit the existence of other traditions. The co-existence of different traditions forms contrasts at macro level.  

2.2 The Method of Contrast

2.2.1 Definition

What is a ‘contrast’? Shen states that ‘contrast’ means “an interplay between difference and complementarity, continuity and discontinuity, distantiation and co-belongingness, which constitutes the structure as well as the dynamism of object under investigation, including science and human society.” According to Shen, the paradigm of contrast is a basic way of thinking and praxis, which attempts to discover mutual similarities in respecting all differences and to discover continuity in respecting the discontinuities and vice versa. Therefore, ‘contrast’ itself is a method. As the objects under investigation are put side by side for comparison, the researchers are then able to recognize the similarities and differences. In this process, on one hand, it enriches people’s understanding of the ideas and phenomena of different objects; on the

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78 Ibid., I-2.
80 Shen, Confucianism, Taoism and Constructive Realism, 109.
other hand, it also helps people to recognize the contrasting complementarities and the
continuities within discontinuities, existing among different phenomena. For Shen, employing
the paradigm of contrast as the lens of study can stimulate the process of dynamic growth and
development in understanding.

2.2.2 Types of Contrast

According to Shen, there are two types of ‘contrast’, namely, the structural contrast and the
dynamic contrast. The former refers to the structural variations and relations among the
components of a phenomenon that appear in our experience; while the latter denotes the process
of how the previous phase of a phenomenon or a moment of experience related to the
subsequent phase of the phenomenon or the moment of experience. Structural contrast is
basically synchronic; it describes the configuration and coordination of all elements found in a
phenomenon at a particular point of time. It is believed that a phenomenon is constituted by
interacting elements which are different but related, opposite yet complementary with another.
Unlike structural contrast, dynamic contrast is diachronic. Researchers, embracing their own
past experiences and traditions, are challenged by new phenomena and a renewed understanding
of a phenomenon may result, researchers always contribute to the construction and
interpretation of the process of changes. Thus, dynamic contrast unfolds the researchers
themselves in the process of time, with continuity and discontinuity. From interval to interval, in
any historical development of the phenomenon, it always keeps something from the precedent moment, but at the same time it is also under the challenge of new moment and brings novelty with it. In addition, researchers can always exert influence on the phenomenon and bring a new perspective to it.81

2.2.3 Presuppositions of the Method of Contrast

There are two basic presuppositions in this method of contrast. First, the paradigm of contrast, no matter whether it is at the micro or macro level, is based on the assumption that there is an ontological contrast in the original and the ultimate ‘Being’.82 The ‘Being’ is the origin of all creative powers, but its creativity has to be revealed by ‘creative beings’ throughout cosmic history. There is always a state of contrast between the ‘Being’ and ‘beings’, while the dynamic interactions of ‘beings’ can always lead to the further manifestation of the ‘Being’.83

As a matter of fact, the wisdom of contrast owns its origin to Chinese philosophy, especially to Book of Changes. It is said that “the rhythmic interaction between yin and yang constitutes the Dao (道 Way)”. Dao represents, in Chinese philosophy, the ‘Being’ of the universe. In general, three characteristics of the paradigm of contrast are derived from the Dao. First, there is bipolarity in the paradigm, just like yin and yang found in Dao, though they are not exclusive to

81 Ibid.,109-110.
82 The ‘Being’ here is understood in a philosophical and ontological sense; it is singular and refers to the ultimate basis of all beings, while ‘being’ is a plural term denoting the material or ideal existences found in the world, or any events happening on these existences. Refer to Shen, Xian Dai Zhe Xue Lun He, 19.
83 Ibid.,23.
the other. Second, there is also complementarity; *yin* and *yang* are not only opposed to one another, they are also complementary in forming a connected whole. Lastly, there is an open totality; the opposed yet complementary relationship of *yin* and *yang* forms a dynamic and opens itself to further development.\(^8^4\) Thus, the paradigm of contrast is always dynamic.

The second presupposition of the method of contrast is related to its basic methodology. Unlike the usual idea of ‘method’, the method of contrast is not simply an ‘objective’ exercise; rather researchers have decisive subjective involvements in the process. ‘Method’ is usually conceived as a normative pattern of operations; as long as people employ it according to certain procedures, they should be able to yield the same result. However, in the method of contrast, researchers have decisive influence upon the result of the study. Since different people with their different past experiences and traditions may have different interpretations of the multifaceted realities, different researchers may come up with different, yet complementary, understandings of the reality.

### 2.2.4 The Operations of Contrast

Owing to the decisive role of researchers, dynamic contrast operates at two levels, the micro level and the macro level. Dynamic contrast at the micro level is in fact a process of personal growth and self-appropriation. As researchers come across a new object, this object

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appears to the researchers in a first person perspective and thus is a ‘phenomenon’ appearing to them. At this time, an inner dialogue will happen within the researchers. As argued in the previous chapter, an inner dialogue is an ongoing dialogue, which includes discussion and disputation that take place within people’s own selves.\textsuperscript{85} Researchers will first employ their original ‘theory’ to evaluate this new ‘phenomenon’, but a new experience will be gained when the original ‘theory’ and the new ‘phenomenon’ contrast with each other. Researchers will look for the similarities and differences and also the continuity and discontinuity between ‘theory’ and ‘phenomenon’, the inner dialogue will continue until they come up with a more elaborative form of theory to understand the phenomenon. This indeed is a growth and advancement of personal experience. In this dynamic contrast, researchers will usually insert their own subjective perceptions in the interpretations of the phenomenon. Although this kind of subjective interpretation is essential for personal growth, researchers also need to aware of their subjective interpretation and make an effort to correct it as a function of the review of reality, so that the basic structural contrast found in the phenomenon is well respected.\textsuperscript{86}

Contrast can also be found at a macro level. The core values of every cultural system can be identified in the legacy of the historical tradition, which has usually undergone severe tests of time. Historical tradition is the synthesis of collective experiences and the wisdom of previous

\textsuperscript{85} Eck, “What Do We Mean by ‘Dialogue’? ”: 14.
\textsuperscript{86} Shen, \textit{Xian Dai Zhe Xue Lun Heng}, 5-8.
generations in dealing with the ‘contrasting situations’ in their daily life. However, creative and brand new ideas will not appear unless a critical attitude is adopted towards the existing tradition. This critical attitude will help to bring about a contrast upon the existing tradition and it will also become a force of propulsion for further understanding of the present culture and society. Therefore, it can be said that contrast at macro level is the guiding principle of the historical development and advancement of a particular cultural tradition. Nevertheless, when it comes to contrasts at macro level, Shen stated that the appropriation of languages or discourses of many others is critical for a successful operation of contrast. Language appropriation is always essential to the understanding of the *raison d’être* of the others, in contrast to one’s own *raison d’être*. Without good language appropriation, no one can understand the others well. Language appropriation is the prerequisite of all dialogues; it is also a basic requirement for the method of contrast.

3. The Application of The Method of Contrast

3.1 Inner Dialogue and Contrast

Contrasts and differences are inevitable when several components of a phenomenon or several phenomena are presented in our experience. Whenever a contrast happens in our

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87 Ibid.,11-12.
88 Ibid.,13-15.
experience (that is a contrast at micro level), an inner dialogue will unavoidably occur within our own selves. This inner dialogue, as stimulated by the contrast, is in fact essential for the development of contextual theology. As argued in the first chapter, tension seems to be unavoidable. This tension is in fact a ‘contrast’ when the Christian tradition and cultural values are presented in one’s experience at the same time. Whenever such a contrast is presented in people’s experience, an inner dialogue will happen within their own selves, so as to reach a renewed understanding of the phenomenon.

In an inner dialogue, researchers usually put different components of a phenomenon or different phenomena side by side for examination and comparison. They recognize the similarities and differences of various phenomena, and finally raise a new theoretical hypothesis to understand the relationship among the phenomena. When contrasts with discontinuity happen within researchers’ experience, three processes are to be undertaken in the inner dialogue of the researchers. First, researchers re-examine their affiliated tradition. This process of re-examination will help to enrich the researchers’ understanding of their affiliated tradition and values. Second, researchers explore the new component(s) of the phenomenon or the new phenomena, and try to figure out the similarity and difference between these new components and their affiliated traditions. This process of exploration helps to expand researchers’ horizons on the understanding of those phenomena. Lastly, after the processes of re-examination and
exploration, the process of comparison and contrast will go on until a renewed understanding of
the phenomena is reached

3.2 The Employment of The Method of Contrast in This Research

In the present thesis, it is proposed that the method of contrast is helpful in dealing with the
differences and tensions that occur when a particular Christian tradition encounters Chinese
culture. Barth, as a representative of the Western Protestant Christian tradition and Xiong, as a
representative of Chinese culture, hold very different anthropological positions; but they do have
common concerns like the pursuit of a good understanding of human nature, which is in fact a
common phenomenon for Barth and Xiong. Owing to the entirely different cultural, theological
and philosophical backgrounds of Xiong and Barth, it is not difficult to identify the
discrepancies when their anthropological views are presented within the researcher’s experience
at the same time. In this project, by working on the contrast (in particular, contrast at micro level)
of the anthropological positions of Barth and Xiong, the method of contrast may aid in
developing a renewed and dynamic understanding of humanity.

In the process of contrasting the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong, I will examine
the contrast from the side of someone with a Christian commitment. Re-examination (the first
process of inner dialogue) is carried out by looking at the anthropological views of Barth, with
reference to his contexts and background. The main purpose of re-examination is to develop a
retrospective understanding of the anthropological views of Barth. As I come to the research as someone with a Christian commitment I will approach Xiong’s perspective as a new component to my experience. This new component will lead to inner dialogue by means of the process of ‘exploration’, by scrutinizing the anthropological views of Xiong with reference to his context and background. After the processes of re-examination and exploration, a dialogue on the anthropological perspectives of Barth and Xiong will be carried out by analyzing the differences of their anthropological positions. In this way the method of contrast will be employed to bring a renewed understanding of humanity and this renewed understanding will have the potential of giving insight for the development of contextual theology in the Chinese context.

In this thesis, contrast, in the form of inner dialogue occurs at the micro level only. However, contrast can also happen at the macro level when many other researchers become involved in the discussion. For example, different researchers will have their own inner dialogues when the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong are presented in their experience, and they may come up with different yet renewed understandings of humanity. When all these renewed understandings are put side by side, they are actually constituting contrasts at the macro level. The present dissertation intends to offer a renewed understanding of humanity, which is an outcome of contrast at the micro level only; yet it is believed that as contrasts continue, at both the micro and the macro level, a true complementarity will emerge.
In short, it is believed that this method of contrast is helpful not only in dealing with the differences between Barth and Xiong, but also in the development of Chinese theological anthropology, which offers a renewed understanding of humanity including both the Christian faith and Chinese cultural values. As this method of contrast is founded on traditional Chinese philosophy and wisdom; it is my argument that it is able to give new insights for the future development of Chinese contextual theology.
Chapter III

Introducing The Background and Historical Context of Karl Barth and Shili Xiong

1. Karl Barth (1886-1968)

1.1 Background

Barth, a Swiss Reformed theologian, was Professor of theology in Göttingen, Münster and Bonn. He was first educated under scholars in the liberal 19th century tradition like Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm Herrmann; but later he made a significant change in his theological path from liberal theology to what became known as dialectic theology, especially after seeing his liberal teachers showing enthusiastic support for the German war aims during the First World War. His theology is mainly represented in his immense publication *Church Dogmatics*.

1.2 Historical Context

Barth felt that he was situated in a context of human pride and arrogance within the European intellectual world of his time. For him, the outbreak of the two world wars give clear evidence of this. He believed that there was a shift in philosophical anthropology since the Enlightenment. Instead of asking the critical question ‘what is the human person’, scholars turned to a more dynamic concept of humankind by preferring to ask questions like ‘how human beings act and react’. Thus the nature of human beings became defined by recognizing the meaning of events and experiences as perceived by human senses. Human beings became more
clearly distinguished from other creatures in the world. Questions like human origin, human
destiny and human relationships, became the focus of various branches of anthropological
studies, like theological anthropology, cultural anthropology and philosophical anthropology.

Human beings became more and more confident in their ability to transcend nature. The
emphasis on human reason also caused the Western people and nations to become egocentric
and self-reliant. Barth called this trend of human egocentrism the rise of ‘absolute man’; for

Barth this trend had also significant influence on the development of theology in the 19th century,
as shown by the theology of Schleiermacher. In Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century,

Barth made a detailed analysis on the rise of ‘absolute man’ in Europe, he stated,

‘Absolutism’ in general can obviously mean a system of life based upon the belief in the
omnipotence of human powers. Man, who discovers his own power and ability, the
potentiality dormant in his humanity, that is, his human being as such, and looks upon it as
the final, the real and absolute, that is something detached, self-justifying, with its own
authority and power, which he can therefore set in motion in all directions and without any
restraint, this man is absolute man.89

In other words, according to Barth, humans believed that they are the centre of the world
and they can always discover and get hold of the truth by their own resources. In Barth’s words,
the world has turned from geocentric to anthropocentric.90 Barth further delineated several

factors accounting for the rise of the Enlightenment and the ‘absolute man’. From this analysis,

89 Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, trans. Brian Cozens and John Bowden
90 Ibid.,23-24.
Barth’s conception of his own European context in his time becomes apparent.

1.2.1 Social Factors

In the 18th century, human beings began to be conscious of the power of science and also the power they gain through science. The belief developed that human beings were able to get hold of the truth by means of science and they would be able to transform the world for the better through scientific knowledge.  

This scientific positivism brought about the idea of all conquering absolute humans. Moreover, the growth of general education and economic prosperity contributed to this rise of belief in ‘absolute man’ as well. Comprehensive education had introduced young people to their potential in life; it raised their self-esteem and even taught them to challenge existing rules and doctrines. Barth stated that people in the 18th century had a strong conviction that they were superior to other things and different from them. The result was that they became convinced that they can trust completely in their own resources and take care of themselves triumphantly.

1.2.2 Political Factors

Apart from the rise of ‘absolute man’ in the social and economic spheres, Barth argued further that it also arose in the political arena. Political absolutism took the shape of various social and political reforms and brought significant changes to the society. Furthermore,

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91 Ibid., 25.
92 Ibid., 60.
technical advance of civilization in agriculture, industry and economic spheres, together with the improvement of health measures and policies benefited the population as a whole. At the same time revolutions from below (like the French Revolution) brought not only radical political and social changes to the society, it also led to a new understanding of human dignity – all humans are equal, these equal rights are by their very nature, inalienable, sacred and endowed by the Creator; humans thus have every right to protect their own prosperity and security.

The close connection of the church and the state also contributed to the rise of ‘absolute man’ in the 18th century. Christianity as represented by church became an instrument of state sovereignty and then state interest became the major concern of the church. The ‘absolute man’ in the 18th century simply took this state of affair as a given and allowed the principle of absolutism to have sway. Theological issues like the transcendence and the eternity of God, the extraordinary character of revelation, the foundational nature of church, the authority of Holy Scriptures, the spiritual dignity of preaching and even the administration of sacraments were all made subject to this process of human arrogance symbolized by Barth’s term ‘absolute man’. The active interests of the church were dominated by the middle class ideology, leaving aside some of the fundamental Christian content. People generally believed that it was within their power to experience a new and better life; therefore the church and Christian beliefs was assumed to be able to improve life as well. As a result, the 18th century church became
increasingly bourgeois and moralistic in character.

1.2.3 Pietism and Individualism

Pietism was a movement within the Lutheran tradition from late 17th century to mid 18th century. It advocated for a revival of church life by practical experience of spirituality. It was suggested that the laity should share in the spiritual government of the church and the knowledge of Christianity must be expressed in practice. A different style of preaching was proposed with more emphasis on the inculcation of Christianity in the inner person. The focus thus shifted to the experience of faith and the fruits of faith in life. Pietists maintained that regeneration must be preceded by agonies of repentance and they even proposed that Christians should abstain from all worldly entertainment like dancing, theatre or public games. Therefore, they were often criticized for promoting a new form of justification by works. Under the influence of Pietism, especially in the theological world in Europe, Barth argued that Christianity became more and more individualistic, Christian faith became focused on inner experience. According to Barth, pietism gave humans the authority to be the judges of their own behaviours; it turned spiritual experience inward, and created the expectation that religion is particularly something experienced within the person. In short, for Barth, external authority was de-emphasized in favour of the inner and personal authority of humans.93

93 Ibid., 99-103. Barth’s early aversion to ‘Pietism’ was shown clearly in his Protestant Theology in the 18th Century, though he showed a more balanced view later. Barth’s critical views on Pietism can especially be found in his criticism to the works of Ernst Troeltsch, like The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, which was written
In the 18th and 19th century, human beings always perceived themselves as superior to other creatures in the world, they are the masters and other creatures in the world became objectified. Although it was believed that God is the Lord of both humans and the world, the sphere of the human being thus became increasingly important. Humans believed that they are in a special place of status in relation to God; as God is Spirit, humans are also considered spirit; as God is mighty, so are humans. Belief in God became a justification of human superiority over all things. The rise of ‘absolute man’ had particular implications for epistemology. In this way of thinking the understanding of the human condition and of the world is gained by means of natural and subjective human reason and experience and reductionist scientific research.

As Barth made the above analysis in Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century, he did feel compelled to counteract this trend of elevated human consciousness and self-confidence. For Barth, the excessive self-confidence of human consciousness developed in the 18th and 19th century never subsided in the 20th century, but even became more pervasive as demonstrated by the outbreak of the two world wars. The outbreak of the two world wars had a critical and

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within the context of the pre-Great War (WWI) positivism. In the 20th century theological parlance, especially in America, Pietism was always identified negatively as emotionalism, subjectivism, legalism, separatism, individualism, otherworldliness, etc. However, protagonists considered Pietism with very different connotations: like integrity, goodness, tolerance, holiness, etc. Historians also credited Pietism with fostering good ingredients for German Enlightenment, German Idealism, Romanticism, Great Awakening and also the worldwide missionary movement of the 19th century. There are in fact lots of positive and negative comments on this movement of Pietism. Brown stated that we should never neglect the great impact of the movement on theology, culture and history, yet we have to be aware that there is a variety of ‘pietistic’ currents which added to the misunderstanding of the movement. Therefore, for those who hold a negative critique of pietistic manifestations, should also consider the nuanced nature of the historical data for a fair assessment of the movement. For a good analysis see Brown’s discussion of Pietism in Dale W. Brown, Understanding Pietism (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978). For a more positive view of Pietism, one may also consult F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965).
fundamental influence on the theology of Barth. Yet Barth already noted the destructive influence of the anthropocentric approach in theology earlier during his ten-year pastorate (1911-1921) in Safenwil, Switzerland. At that time Barth encountered the miserable living conditions of working classes and he started to involve himself actively in the socialist movement. For this reason, Barth started to break with his early liberal theology and individualistic conception of religion. In response Barth stressed the objective reality of God. Barth is basically a realist in this respect; yet, as a European theologian living in the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} century, he also maintained elements of German idealism and existentialism as developed by Kant, Hegel and Kierkegaard. As a result of these influences it can be argued that the theology of Barth is basically dialectical;\textsuperscript{94} on the one hand, he was living in a world of existentialism and strong human consciousness; on the other hand, he was also trying to counteract the anthropocentricity and privatization of religion by stressing the sovereignty and otherness of God.

\textsuperscript{94} The theology of Barth is dialectical, but it has to be noted that the dialectic of Barth is different from that of Hegel. For Hegel, existence is first posited as pure ‘being’, but upon examination it is then found to be indistinguishable from ‘nothing’. However, both ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ are united as ‘becoming’ when it is realized that what is ‘being’ can also return to ‘nothing’. This triad ‘thesis’, ‘antithesis’ and ‘synthesis’ is common in Hegelian dialectic, it is believed that tensions will ultimately be resolved. However, for Barth, the tension will remain unsolved. It is likely that Barth inherited the dialectic thinking from his teacher Wilhelm Herrmann. For Herrmann, the understanding of God could not be done by only one word, but at least two words, or two opposing statement like the Yes and the No, the veiling and the unveiling. Unlike Hegel, the point of this dialectic is not to find a middle way or a neutral synthesis, but to “leave a space free in the middle with hope that God will intervene.” Later, after a ‘theological farewell to Hermann’, Barth reversed the dialectic of the Gospel and the law as suggested by Hermann and advocated that the Yes of the Gospel must precede the No of the law. Therefore Barth’s theology remain dialectic, though his work bears more similarity to the philosophy of Kierkegaard, who believed that tension can only be overcome by an existential act of commitment. For further details on the dialectic of Barth, refer to Christophe Chalamet, \textit{Dialectic Theologians: Wilhelm Herrmann, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann} (Zürich: TVZ, Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2005).
2. The Importance of Barth in The Western Protestant Tradition

Barth is an important figure in the development of the Western Protestant tradition, as he emphasized the heritage of the Reformers, yet at the same time opened up a new direction in the Protestant tradition in response to his own context.

With the accelerating influence of liberalism and strong human self-reliance in the 18th and 19th century, Protestantism underwent dramatic changes. The theology of Schleiermacher brought a new direction to the Protestant tradition, based in German pietism, which emphasized feeling and experiences as the basis of knowing God. Facing this strong current of liberal thought, Barth chose to return to the root source of Protestantism. Just like the Reformers, he returned to the prophetic teachings of the Bible and sought inspiration from the scriptures. Instead of relying on human consciousness and experience as sources of revelation, Barth re-asserted the importance of the scriptures and the proclamation of the church in protestant theology. For Barth, the only source of Christian theology became the Word of God. The scriptures and the proclamation of church are only two subordinate forms of the Word of God, while the primary form of the Word of God can only be found in the risen Jesus Christ. Barth in fact opened up a new page in Protestant theology with this thoroughly Christocentric perspective. For Barth, the knowledge of God never simply arises out of subjective human experience, but is revealed to humans in the light of God’s act in Jesus Christ. The event of
Jesus Christ, that is his life, his death, his resurrection and exaltation, is the centre of all theological doctrines. The christocentric structure provides the coherence and unity that makes the massive theology of Barth a system.\textsuperscript{95}

In order to develop a fruitful dialogue for this project, dialogue partners should have a solid place in the tradition they represent. A firm understanding of one’s tradition is also helpful for others to understand the essence of his/her tradition. There is no doubt that Barth serves well in this role as he has a firm emphasis on the scriptures and the Word of God and he does continue the \textit{Sola Scriptura} heritage and other elements of the theology of the Protestant Reformers. Moreover, his Christocentric perspective also opens up a new theological method in the Protestant theology while drawing on the \textit{Solus Christus} tradition of the Reformation. A strong standing in the Protestant tradition will surely be helpful for researcher to grasp the essence of the tradition and then bring them to the dialogue with other parties like Chinese philosopher Xiong in the present study.

3. Shili Xiong (1885-1968)

3.1 Background

Xiong, a Chinese philosopher, was a native of Huanggang in Hubei province in the

\textsuperscript{95} Stanley J. Grenz, \textit{20\textsuperscript{th} Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age} (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 72.
northeast of China. After the 1911 Revolution, he worked for the Republican army and government. However, having been disappointed by the corrupted government, Xiong affirmed that the country could never be saved by political revolution, but by spiritual revolution only. He then started to study Buddhism in the Institute for Inner Learning in Nanjing in 1920. In 1922, he was appointed as a lecturer of Buddhist philosophy in the University of Beijing, with a special focus on the teaching of the Doctrine of Consciousness-only. However, as he further studied the Buddhist doctrines, he was not satisfied with some Buddhist thoughts, and thus began to employ the idea of Book of Changes in his study of ontology and cosmology. Xiong is regarded as one of the founders of contemporary Neo-Confucianism. Important contemporary Neo-Confucians like Tang, Junyi and Mou, Zongsan are all the disciples of Xiong.

3.2 Historical Context

Xiong was born in an age of reformation. In the early 20th century, Chinese society experienced dramatic changes with the downfall of the feudalist Qing dynasty and the rise of the Republic of China. The 1911 revolution began with an uprising in Wuchang and finally ended with the abdication of the last emperor of the Qing dynasty; a new government was then set up by the revolutionary army. The end of the monarchy in China brought not only a political impact on society, but also ideological influences, as Western ideas like science and democracy had actually played a role in the downfall of the old dynasty. Before the 19th century, the Chinese
government used to view itself as a self sufficient, superior and civilized country, and so the emperor at that time never saw the importance of the European trade, and he had even refused to have any commercial activities with Western merchants. However, after several defeats in the wars in the end of the 19th century, China was forced open by the Western imperialists; several main harbours had to be open to the Western forces. Lots of disturbances developed in the society.

Just like most of the youth at that time, Xiong had actively participated in the republican army and worked for the republican government. However, filled with the disappointment because of the corruption and the power struggles among the revolutionaries, Xiong concluded that true reform could never be accomplished by political action, but by means of thought and ideology. As a consequence of this conviction Xiong then decided to immerse himself in academic studies. In 1920, he was admitted to the Institute for Inner Learning in Nanjing, which was organized by Ouyang Jingwu (歐陽竟無, 1871-1943), a modern figure who revived the Buddhist Doctrine of Consciousness-Only (weishi 唯識). In 1922, he was appointed as a teacher in the University of Beijing, with special focus on the teaching of the Doctrine of Consciousness-Only. However, after identifying what he considered some fallacies of the Buddhist doctrines, he finally turned his way from Buddhism to Confucianism. Xiong’s change in direction was in fact highly related to his life context. Xiong was living in an age of
revolution and conflict; all his life he was striving for new ideological ways to solve the problems of society. He believed that a revolution of the heart/mind (*xin* 心) will be helpful to improve society. Therefore, it was the political and social concern of Xiong that motivated him to look for the truth of the universe. Just as the original purpose of Confucian teaching was to revive the declining culture of the Zhou dynasty, Xiong also intended to revive the declining culture of the country by means of Confucian teaching.

The social context of Xiong also had great influence on his thought. Facing the challenges of Western ideologies, he had been trying to reconstruct the image and identity of the Chinese people by going back to the traditional Confucian thought. Xiong intended to show his fellow Chinese that they are always capable of developing their potential in their own way, following the Confucius’ teaching that “A person can promote and develop the Way, while the Way cannot develop human.”96 The soul within every human being, with tremendous creative power, is real humanity. The force of life in humans, which shows the dynamic power of humanity, can always open up new ways. Therefore, what humans should do is to manifest and extend this real humanity through constant inventions and creations. Obviously Xiong did not simply try to develop some academic frameworks in a metaphysical sense; he was in fact attempting to initiate an ideological revolution among the Chinese people.

96 Original text: 「人能弘道，非道弘人。」 The English translation here is done by the present writer.
political and social change. At that time, people suffered from various internal revolts and external invasions; their lives were always under threat and so they were generally overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness. Hence, having seen how the society suffered under Western imperialism, world wars and civil wars, Xiong was eager to re-establish the supremacy of human dignity and consciousness. Besides, traditional Chinese philosophies were under strong challenge of Western thought and philosophy at that time. Xiong thus resolved to restore Chinese philosophy against Western influences.

The philosophy of Xiong was deeply influenced by *Book of Changes*. In this book, *yin* and *yang* describe two opposing, though complementary, aspects of a phenomenon, or they describe a comparison of two phenomena. *Yin* and *yang* are mutually transformed. When either aspect of a phenomenon reaches its maximum effect, it is always followed by a transition toward the opposing aspect. In other words, *yin* and *yang* are opposing, but at the same time complementary.

Xiong was deeply inspired by the idea of *yin* and *yang*, and he always employed it in his resolution of differences and contradictions.

4. The Importance of Xiong in The Neo-Confucianist Tradition

Similar to the importance of Barth to 20th Century Protestant tradition, Xiong also has a significant position in the development of Neo-Confucianism by carrying on the past heritage
Confucianism has a long-standing history in China, its origin can be traced back to a sage, Confucius, in the Dong Zhou Dynasty (772-221 BC). It is generally agreed that there are three stages of Confucianism. The teachings of Confucius, as mainly contained in the book *Analects of Confucius*, together with the teachings of his disciples like Mencius (孟子) and Xunzi (荀子), are regarded as the primary stage of Confucianism. Later on, Confucianism had undergone many ups and downs and its importance had once been threatened by the arrival of Buddhism, especially during the Tang dynasty (618-907). However, there was a revival of Confucian thought in the Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. Representatives of the Song-Ming Neo-Confucianists included Cheng Hao (程顥 1032-1085), Cheng Yi (程頤 1033-1107), Zhu Xi (朱熹 1130-1200) from the School of Reason and Lu Jiuyuan (陸九淵 1139-1193), Wang Yangming (王陽明 1472-1529) from the School of Mind; on one hand, they restored the general moral teachings of Confucius; on the other hand, they also gave Confucianism new vigour by combining some Taoist and Buddhist ideas with existing Confucian thought. Since then, Confucianism did not reach a new stage of development until the mid 20th century in China. After experiencing the tragedy of external invasions and internal wars, there was a general concern among the Chinese intellectuals that the national identity of Chinese people had to be re-established, so some of them advocated that the teachings of Confucianism,
especially the teachings of morality, would be helpful to perform the task. Contemporary Neo-Confucianism is often associated with an essay “A Manifesto on Chinese Culture to the World,” which was published in 1958 by Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan, Xu Fuguan (徐復觀 1904-1982) and Zhang Junmai (張君勵 1887-1968); yet it is generally agreed that the first generation of the Contemporary Neo-Confucianism can be traced back to the time before 1949, as represented by Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming (梁漱溟 1893-1988) and Feng Youlan (馮友蘭 1895-1990).

The importance of Xiong in contemporary Neo-Confucianism is found in his inheritance of Neo-Confucianism, especially the School of Mind. He is the first Confucian after Wang Yangming to promote moral spirituality. Morality is in fact the traditional heritage of Confucian thought. The teachings of Confucius can be summarized by ‘cultivation of inner sagehood and outer kingship’ (neisheng waiwang 内聖外王) and ‘regulating oneself for the goodness of the others’ (xiuji anren 修己安人). Nevertheless, Xiong was especially interested in onto-cosmology and so he not only revived the moral spirituality of Wang, but also established a moral metaphysical system. Based on Book of Changes, he first advocated for the non-separability of reality and appearance, which has many implications for the nature of humanity and moral spirituality and metaphysics.

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97 Liu Shuxian has proposed to rename the third stage of Confucianism from ‘Contemporary Neo-Confucianism’ to ‘New Confucianism’. For details, please refer to footnote 60.
Just like the Western Protestant tradition, there are also several streams of thought found in Confucianism. The School of Reason and the School of Mind are two distinctive streams found in Neo-Confucianism. The distinction between two schools continues in the contemporary Neo-Confucians. While Xiong tried to reconstruct idealistic Neo-Confucianism, Fung Yulan also attempted to reconstruct rationalistic Neo-Confucianism. However, the position of Xiong among the contemporary Neo-Confucians is unique, especially in terms of his influence on the generations afterwards. The second generation of contemporary Neo-Confucians like Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan and Xu Fuguan are all indebted to Xiong for their philosophical views and life orientations. Therefore, Xiong is commonly regarded as one of the founders of the contemporary Neo-Confucianism. Just like Barth, Xiong also has a strong standing in his Neo-Confucian tradition and will thus be an excellent scholar to engage in the dialogue of this research.

5. The Anthropologies of Barth and Xiong

Common interest is essential in the process of developing a fruitful dialogue, so the first task of developing a dialogue is to recognize a common interest. From the above examination of the backgrounds and contexts of Barth and Xiong, it is clear that anthropological study holds a

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vital position in both the Western and Eastern intellectual worlds. No one can deny the significant differences between the Western and Eastern worldviews, yet there is in fact an indisputable common ground between them – both Western and Eastern people are keen to understand the nature of humanity. Certainly all of us hold the human condition in common. For this reason, anthropology makes a good starting point for the development of a constructive dialogue between the Western and Eastern world, and also between Barth and Xiong.

5.1 Anthropological Studies in General

Human beings are objects of study in many disciplines and this has given rise to a variety of anthropological perspectives. For example these include natural, social, philosophical and theological anthropologies. Natural and social (or cultural) anthropologies usually adopt a scientific and descriptive way of study. Even though some philosophical elements may still be evident, these approaches tend to be reductionistic in its approach to the study of humanity.

Under this kind of anthropological reductionism, the human person is usually described as a physical-chemical mechanism (sociological structural approach) or a knot of drives and forces (Freudian psychoanalytic approach). These depersonalized conceptions of human person usually have a tendency to underestimate the inner spiritual life of human beings; in other words, the human being is regarded as a product of nature only.

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100 Ibid., 8-11.
5.2 Philosophical Anthropology – The Anthropology of Xiong

Unlike the natural or social anthropologies, philosophical anthropology employs a variety of subjects and methods derived from both sciences and metaphysics. This means that philosophical anthropology is a synthesis of both ‘objective’ natural science and ‘subjective’ existential study. However, it usually lays more emphasis on the personalistic dimension and existential phenomenon of a human being. Human consciousness, love, freedom, morality and religious experience are part of the field of philosophical anthropology. In addition, philosophical anthropologists are also interested in examining the metaphysics of human being, like the origin and the destiny of human beings. Nevertheless, as philosophical anthropology employs both the methodologies of natural science and existential philosophy, the tension of the human being as both a product of nature and a transcendent spiritual being becomes one of the major issues in philosophical anthropology. As humans try to explore their own stature, virtue and place in the cosmos, they are often confronted with contradictions. On the one hand, humans find themselves part of the natural world and cosmos, but on the other hand, they often believe in their unique and distinctive place as compared with other creatures in the cosmos. As a Chinese philosopher, Xiong’s anthropological approach belongs to philosophical anthropology. He made an in-depth study on the ontological origin of human beings and also advocated for the dynamic and perpetual nature of the human being.
5.3 Theological Anthropology – The Anthropology of Barth

Theological anthropology is another variety of anthropology; it is also a branch of theology which is concerned with the study of human beings. Theological anthropology is characterized by its emphasis on the involvement of God (or the Word of God) in the study of the human being. In the study of theological anthropology, the tension of a human being as a child of nature and a transcendent spiritual being is also one of its major concerns. Reinhold Niebuhr has argued in his book *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, that there is always a paradox in human nature: the human being is a child of nature, subject to its vicissitudes, compelled by its necessities, driven by its impulses; but at the same time, the human being is also a spirit who stands outside of nature, life, reason and the world. In other words, humans are always confronted with a paradox between human limitation and human transcendence. In a theological perspective, this paradox originates from the fact that human beings are the creatures of God the Creator, but at the same time they are also created in the image of God. Barth also identified this paradox of human beings and commented on this in his explanations of theological anthropology, especially in *Church Dogmatics* book three, part two.

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101 Ray Anderson has defined ‘theological anthropology’ in his book, Ray S. Anderson, *On Being Human: Essays in Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 16. He stated that “while a theological anthropology must begin with humanity itself, it must take into account that the Word of God has come to that humanity and, in the midst of that humanity, however distorted and perverse it may be, revealed the true form of that which is human.”

The tension of human limitation and human transcendence has been the focus of both philosophical anthropology and theological anthropology. Yet, depending on different historical contexts, people may have different emphases on either human limitation or human transcendence. For example, in a world of human pride and arrogance, like the contexts of Barth, human transcendence is always exalted, and so a counteracting voice emphasizing human limitation may be needed. On the contrary, in a world of tribulation, like the context of Xiong, there is always a feeling of helplessness among human beings and so humans may need to be encouraged by stressing human power and transcendence.

6. The Differences Between Barth and Xiong

6.1 Differences

Although Barth (1886–1968) and Xiong (1885-1968) are contemporaries in the same era, their entirely different cultural traditions, social environments, historical contexts and also academic trainings contribute to the dissimilarities in their anthropological perspectives. In this project, the anthropological view of Barth will be explained and examined in detail in chapter IV, while that of Xiong will be dealt with in chapter V.

In general, the views of Barth and Xiong differ mainly in two ways. They differ first their approaches to the origin or the nature of human beings and second in their understanding of the
destiny or potential of human beings. Barth is consistently Christocentric. In his theological
anthropology, Barth insisted upon the absolute transcendent sovereignty of God and the utter
dependence of human beings. This is especially true after the Fall of human beings. In this state
human beings can realize their true existence only in Jesus Christ. However, unlike Barth, Xiong
consistently insisted that there is no God; for him, any belief in God is only a primitive illusion
of human beings. For Xiong, the nature of human beings is not dependent on any extrinsic factor;
rather he believed in the power of human autonomy and creativity with its relation to the
dynamics of the ultimate reality.

The views of Barth and Xiong are also dissimilar with regards to human destiny. For Barth, human life is finite, time will have ended and humanity will forever stand completed with final redemption. Yet no one knows that day or hour, only God the Father knows. Besides, it is always the work of Jesus Christ that brings human salvation and the work of the Holy Spirit that brings the final redemption of humanity. Thus all salvation and redemption come from God and do not originate from humans themselves. Hence, Barth did not encourage any pursuit of human self-transcendence. For him, humans should be satisfied with their finitude as creatures; it is only by faith human beings are able to set themselves to the ideal, Jesus Christ, and only in faith that human beings can ‘transcend’ to a new self, which is able to hear the Word of God.\footnote{Harold B. Kuhn, “The Problem of Human Self-Transcendence in the Dialectic Theology,” \textit{Harvard Theological Review} 40, no. 1 (1947): 64.} In
contrast to Barth, Xiong regarded human life as infinite. He claimed that as the ultimate reality is dynamic and perpetually transformed, humanity, in the unity with the ultimate reality, are empowered with strong inner creativity and thus human self-transcendence is always possible.

6.2 The Paradigm of Contrast

Although the anthropological theories of Barth and Xiong seem to be contradictory, it does not mean that a dialogue is impossible. As a matter of fact, the ‘paradigm of contrast’, as suggested by the method employed in this project, can be uncovered in the anthropological approaches of Barth and Xiong.

Generally speaking, Barth and Xiong are on polar opposites on the themes of human limitation and human transcendence. Barth tended to stress human limitation while Xiong consistently advocated human transcendence. However, it is also true that Xiong never ignored the dark side of humanity. For him human limitation originates in the blind focus of human beings on their ‘small self’ (which means human individuals) and the darkness of human nature would be dealt with if humans can fix their eyes on their ‘big self’ (human beings as a community). On the other hand, Barth did not completely negate human potential even though he insisted that human potential has to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Although Barth resisted any pursuit of human self-transcendence, he did not reject human autonomy. This is apparent in his emphasis on human responsibility and response to the grace of God. Hence, it can be argued that
the anthropological perspectives of Barth and Xiong are not as contradictory as they appear at first glance.

Furthermore, the complexity of the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong are not only located in their differences, but also their similarities. In spite of some major differences, Barth and Xiong do share some surprising similarities in thought. Although there is no doubt that their basic presuppositions are very different, they do share similar perspectives on the relationship among human beings by advocating for a world of co-humanity. They also share a similar assumption on the human soul which they both believe has supremacy over the body. In addition to these anthropological similarities, both of them adopt a very critical stance on ‘religion’.

However, a close examination of these apparent similarities also exposes new differences and which in turn stimulates insight into new contrasts.

I will therefore argue here that the anthropological theories of Barth and Xiong are not as simple and straightforward as they appear. Differences become clear as dilemmas and tensions inevitably arise in the examination of human transcendence and human limitation. However, as we employ the method of contrast and the process of dialogue engaged in this thesis, a closer examination of these tensions can be made and consequently a renewed understanding of human nature will emerge. In addition the attempted resolution of these differences will demonstrate a fresh way of engaging Chinese contextual theology. Before we proceed to a close examination
of contrast (Chapter VI), the anthropological theories of Barth and Xiong will be examined individually in chapters IV and V.
Chapter IV

The Theological Anthropology of Karl Barth

After a thorough understanding of the context of Barth and Xiong, it is time to start the journey of inner dialogue, as approached by the method of contrast. The anthropological views of Barth will first be examined, with reference to his contexts and background. This is actually a process of re-examination, which is the first process of inner dialogue; the main purpose of this process of re-examination is to make a retrospective on the anthropological theory of Barth.

1. Karl Barth’s Basic Presuppositions Related to Theological Anthropology

1.1 “World remains world, God is God”104

The historical context of Barth, as explained in the previous chapter, shows that Barth had been concerned by the problem of human nature in the light of the two World Wars. Facing the arrogance of what he called the ‘absolute man’; Barth critiqued human superiority and egotism by emphasising the sovereignty of God. He also insisted on the importance of Jesus Christ as the only basis of revelation and the sole source of the knowledge of God. For Barth, knowledge of God is impossible to attain for human beings on their own.105 This does not mean that human beings

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104 This quotation of Barth came from an early lecture of Barth called “Kriegszeit und Gottesreich” in Basle in 1915 and was cited by H. Anzinger, Glaube und kommunikative Praxis: eine Studie zur vordialektischen Theologie Karl Barths (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1991), 120-2. It was also cited in McCormack, 21.

105 Barth described the revelation of God is a ‘mystery’, or a ‘miracle’, in which he emphasized that it is totally impossible for human beings to know God by their own efforts. Refer to Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics I/1, trans. G. W. Bromiley (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1960), 165 and also refer to Trevor Hart, “Revelation,” in The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 42.
could never know God; however, they can only do so through the particular God-given medium, that is Jesus Christ. In fact, Barth continually struggled with how to preach the Word of God without imposing his own human ideas. For Barth, God always takes the initiative in revelation; the sovereignty of God has to be respected in the process of knowing God.

On his journey away from the liberal thought, it is always a question for Barth if human experience is a credible basis in the journey of knowing God; or perhaps his question is whether the ability to know God is an *a priori* found in human beings. While Barth was still under the influence of his liberal teacher Wilhelm Herrmann, it was his belief that human beings could be a good ‘representation’ of the Kingdom of God. However, this conviction was gradually shaken when he witnessed the devastating living situations of the working class during the time he served as a Reformed pastor in Safenwil, Switzerland. Later, the outbreak of the two World Wars further disappointed him. He began to wonder, “is it self-evident that ‘we’ (human beings) ‘represent’ the Kingdom of God?”

In his book *The Epistle to the Romans*, which he repeatedly edited, Barth intended to deal with several dialectics, like the dialectic of time and eternity and the dialectic of Divine God and human beings. For Barth, ‘eternity’ is in a dialectic relationship with ‘time’; this dialectic relationship applies to the Divine world of God and the earthly world of human beings as well.

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106 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/2, 172; Hart, 51-52.
107 McCormack., 124.
His well known statement “World remains world, God is God” can be identified as the conviction of Barth since 1915. It becomes the chief concern of Barth in the first edition of *The Epistle to the Romans* to show how these two realities - world and God - could be related to each other, while at the same time maintaining an absolutely fundamental difference between them.  

In the second edition of *The Epistle to the Romans*, Barth even came up with an apparent conclusion that the dialectic between the Divine God and human beings is so distinctive that the revelation of God could not come into contact with human history. Yet Barth still maintained that the revelation of God is able to ‘encounter’ human history in Jesus Christ, through the grace, freedom and eternal sovereignty of God.

Facing the dialectic between the Divine God and human beings, Barth tried to reconcile it in Jesus Christ: the Only God, the Only Man and the Only God-man. Following the Chalcedonian formula, Barth argued that Jesus Christ - the truly God and truly human being who is complete in the Godhead and complete in humanity - is the only revelation of God and so the only source of the knowledge of God. “World remains world, God is God”, but the difference between God and human beings can be mediated in Jesus Christ. For this reason, Barth employed the doctrine of Christology as a methodological rule to explicate all other

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108 Ibid., 141
109 Ibid., 233-234. In the preface of the second edition of *The Epistles to the Romans*, Barth employed Kierkegaard’s notion of ‘infinite qualitative distinction’ between time and eternity to describe the relationship between God and human beings: “God is in heaven, and thou art on earth” and he claimed that the relation between such a God and such a human being should be the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy. Refer to Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, sixth ed., trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 10.
Christian doctrines. He asserted that human knowledge of God is *a posteriori*, founded on the Word of God (that is Jesus Christ) as witnessed by the evangelists, apostles and prophets in the Bible.\(^{110}\) No one could really understand the revelation of God unless God first reveals God-self. As Jesus Christ is the only objective revelation found in history, so the knowledge of God can only be attained in the Word of God, that is Jesus Christ. Barth attempted to resolve the dialectic between God and the humankind in the person of Jesus Christ, but he maintained that there is always an insoluble dialectic between theology (human pursuit of knowing God) and the self-proclamation of God, and so the gift of ‘faith’ in human beings is always needed in theological understanding. Unlike the ‘faith’ suggested by existentialists like Bultmann,\(^{111}\) for Barth, ‘faith’ is expressed in the willingness of human beings to acknowledge the self-proclamation of God, as revealed by the chosen witnesses that God authenticates God-self.\(^{112}\) However, it has to be noted that, for Barth, faith and obedience are gifts or capacities granted by God; they are the form of all true human knowing of God working through God’s self-giving.\(^{113}\) In other words, Barth asserted that it is always God who takes the initiative in revealing God-self; human beings can only receive what God has revealed in the Word of God (Jesus Christ) with faith, obedience and gratitude.

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\(^{112}\) Barth, *Evangelical Theology*, 7.

\(^{113}\) Hart, 44.
1.2 The Main Features of Barth’s Theology

Although Hunsinger has warned that it is impossible to discover a single overriding conception in understanding the complex argument of Barth in *Church Dogmatics*,\(^{114}\) he did try to propose several motifs as the guiding principles in reading the gigantic scope of Barth’s work. These motifs include ‘actualism’, ‘particularism’, ‘objectivism’, ‘personalism’, ‘realism’ and ‘rationalism’.\(^{115}\) This proposal of Hunsinger obviously is indebted to the work of Hartwell, who first suggested reading the works of Barth under the motif of ‘particularism’, ‘objectivism/historicism’ and ‘actualism’.\(^{116}\)

According to Hartwell, unlike the usual movement of thought from general to particular, Barth’s theological argument started from a particular event - that is the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ - to the general revelation of God. In other words, Barth made the reality of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ the sole basis of his theological system and so, for Barth, all theological interpretations are wholly and exclusively determined by the particular event of God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.\(^ {117}\) In addition, in the theology of Barth, ‘objectivism’ indicates that the revelation of God is an objective fact, whether human beings accept it or not. The justification, sanctification and vocation of human beings are firstly and concretely taking place


\(^{115}\) Ibid, 3-4.


\(^{117}\) Ibid., 23.
in the person of Jesus Christ. History also has a special meaning in the theology of Barth. It especially refers to *Heliggeschichte* (the history of salvation), which starts in eternity before the creation of the universe. Therefore, for Barth, this history of salvation, or this history of the covenant of grace, is the only true history by which all other histories are determined. Above all, the history of salvation shows that the grace and the work of God never stop; it is first fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ and then continues among human beings through the work of the Holy Spirit. As argued by Hartwell, Barth intended to stress this initiation and continuation of God’s action in his theology (as shown by the motif ‘actualism’). Through this emphasis on God’s initiative, Barth highlighted the sovereignty and grace of God.

Hartwell also argued that the later theology of Barth is characterized by objectivism. Barth made the Word of God, which is for him the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the basic presupposition of his theology. In the dialectic between God and human beings, Barth gave preference to the divine sovereignty. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Barth did not attempt to prove the credibility of the revelation of God or the life of Jesus Christ; rather he took the revelation of God in Jesus Christ as an objective reality and also the basic presupposition of his whole theology.

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118 Ibid., 31-32.
119 Ibid., 36. Barth especially stressed God’s initiative in the plan of salvation in his restatement of the doctrine of ‘double predestination’. For Barth, Jesus Christ is the electing God, he is also the elected man. Predestination, in the office of Christ, involves twofold election, 1. God elects himself to fellowship with humans; 2. God elects humans to fellowship with Godself. That is what Barth mean of ‘double predestination’. Refer to Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2, 161-162.
1.3 Christocentric Anthropology

As a result of this basic presupposition, Barth’s theology is strongly christocentric and this presupposition is in fact clearly shown in his anthropology. Barth’s concern was to remind human beings that they are not self-sufficient and independent entities, rather they have to rely on their Creator and the Word of God. Barth thus argued that it is utterly by the grace of God that human beings have a true understanding of their own nature. He made it clear that the ontological determination and destination of humanity\textsuperscript{120} is grounded on the fact that one man among all others is the man Jesus;\textsuperscript{121} this man Jesus is the revealing Word of God and so He is also the sole source of knowledge of the nature of human beings as created by God.\textsuperscript{122} For this reason, Barth set out his interpretation of theological anthropology within the doctrine of election. In the man Jesus, the eternal Triune God elects all human beings as covenant partners in a free act of the overflowing of God’s love.\textsuperscript{123} Barth stated that the election of human beings as the covenant partners of God is primarily due to the freedom and grace of God. However

\textsuperscript{120} In the English translation of \textit{Church Dogmatics}, Bromiley translated the German word \textit{Bestimmung} as ‘determination’, but in fact this German word has another meaning of ‘destination’. In the discussion of his theological anthropology, as Barth used the word \textit{Bestimmung}, he may be making a word play by meaning both. When Barth came to the question of real human being, he claimed that a true understanding of the ontological structure of human being can only be made from the man Jesus; as such, the word \textit{Bestimmung} gets the meaning of ‘determination’. Barth argued that the fundamental determination (\textit{Grundbestimmung}) of human beings is grounded on their communion with Jesus Christ and therefore with God, who is the origin of human beings. Therefore, being with God is not only the \textit{Grundbestimmung} of human beings, but also the \textit{Ursprungsbestimmung} of human beings. The origin constitutes the future, when human beings know where they come from, they will get the direction and foundation to the future. As such, the word \textit{Bestimmung} also has the connotation of ‘destination’. Refer to \textit{Kirchliche Dogmatik, Band III/2}, 161-162. William Stacy Johnson also picked up on the dual meaning of \textit{Bestimmung}. Refer to \textit{The Mystery of God: Karl Barth and the Foundations of Post-Modern Theology} (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 1997, 59.

\textsuperscript{121} Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics} III/2, 132.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 41.

\textsuperscript{123} Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics} II/1, 206
human beings, as the covenant partners of God, are also created to be able to respond to this election in free human partnership. Unfortunately after the fall of human beings, they are deprived of this ability. Therefore, their election must be actualized in Jesus Christ; otherwise human beings are unable to respond to the election of God. This is why Barth insisted that the understanding of the nature of human beings has to be derived from Jesus Christ.

In order to avoid any ‘creaturely insight’ in the investigation of human nature, Barth would rather claim his theological enquiry of human nature as ‘the founding of anthropology on Christology’, instead of theological anthropology.\(^{124}\) In the explanations of the relationship between God and humans, Barth stated that the man Jesus is the man for God. Jesus is the Bearer of an office and the real humanity of Jesus is found and realized in his work and history as the Saviour.\(^{125}\) As the salvific work of the man Jesus is enacted in the name of God, He is the man for God. Likewise, human beings can never determine what their own nature is apart from God; the purpose of human existence is to recognize the lordship of God and to participate in what God does. As Jesus is the man for God, all humans are also for God.\(^{126}\) Besides, Jesus is not only the man for God; He is also the man for other fellow people. The works, the mission and the identity of the man Jesus are all related to His salvific work and so “he is immediately

\(^{124}\) Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 44.

\(^{125}\) Ibid., 58.

\(^{126}\) Barth had made a detailed explanation of the distinctive characteristics of human beings among other creatures, by applying his christological basis of anthropology in *Church Dogmatics* III/2, section 44. For details, refer to Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 68-71.
and directly affected by the existence of His fellows.”127 As the man Jesus is the man for his fellow human beings, human beings also exist for their fellows; and the most fundamental form of humanity is its fellow humanity, which is best shown by the difference in the relationship of male and female.128

As Barth examined the constitution of human beings as the soul and body, he looked at the man Jesus in the first place. The man Jesus in the New Testament is a whole man, with an embodied soul and a besouled body. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the man Jesus is a whole man in a meaningfully ordered unity of soul and body. Likewise, all human beings are whole with soul and body, in which the soul takes precedence over the body.129 Lastly, we must note that in his discussion of “Man in His Time”, Barth basically intended to elaborate the limitations of humans as creatures and the boundaries set by God the Creator. In this section Barth again refers to Jesus Christ. He argued that Jesus Christ, like all human beings, lives in His time and he is also confined by time and space when he lives as a real man. However, in the history of the ‘forty days’ between his resurrection and ascension, Jesus Christ concretely demonstrated His authority over human life and death. He also demonstrated that He is the Lord of time; he thus has a different relationship to time from that of humans. As Lord of time, He is also the

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127 Ibid., 211.
128 Ibid., 286-289. More detailed discussion on the difference of male and female in relationship can be found on p.27. It is interesting that similar idea is also found in Eastern philosophical concept of yin and yang. In Chinese philosophy, yin and yang may denote female and male respectively; however it should be noted that the relationship and dynamic of yin and yang is very complicated, it involves deeper implications than what Barth meant for male and female.
129 Ibid., 424-428.
guarantee that time as the form of human existence is given by God and thus is real.\textsuperscript{130}

In short, Barth resolved the dialectic between God and human beings by means of Jesus Christ as the Word of God. Unlike the Christological tendency of his contemporaries like Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf von Harnack who concentrated on the historical Jesus, or his teacher Wilhelm Herrmann who stressed the inner life of Jesus which can only be understood by faith, Barth took the doctrine of Christology as a central methodological rule, which shed light on all understandings of the revelation of God. On the one hand, Barth maintained the objectivity of God, on which he insisted as a response to the rise of subjectivism in his age; on the other hand, Barth did not deny the responsibility of human beings in responding to the grace of God. For Barth, the sovereignty of God prevails, as no one is really able to understand God unless God reveals the Godself in the person of Jesus Christ. Yet being the covenant partner of God, human beings have their basic existential responsibility. The man Jesus has shown how human beings can be the real human beings by fulfilling the lordship of God. In this respect, Barth did not deny the responsibility of human beings, while he tried to maintain the sovereignty and objectivity of God.

2. Karl Barth’s Theological Anthropology

Dialectic played an important role in Barth’s theological method, especially in his early

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 630-633.
theology. Although some scholars argue that Barth turned from dialectics to analogy, others claim that dialectics is still present in his mature theology - *Church Dogmatics*. We can find this dialectic structure in Barth’s anthropology. Examples are the dialectic between the Divine God and human beings, the dialectic between man and woman, the dialectic between soul and body and even the dialectic between time and eternity. Barth made it clear that the main thesis of his discussion in theological anthropology is to reconcile the dilemma of human determination and destination as God’s covenant partner and at the same time, as a cosmic and creaturely being. Barth described human nature as a ‘mystery’, or in particular a ‘mystery of faith’, language which has obvious Eucharistic-sacramental overtones, which can only be disclosed by referring to God’s revelation. Therefore, the right way to deal with this mystery of faith is neither by looking at human being’s own self, nor by starting from empirical science, but rather by looking to Jesus Christ. Only on this basis can one inquire about human nature. Barth concentrated his discussion of theological anthropology in *Church Dogmatics*, volume three, part two; however other important publications also contribute to the discussion including *Christ and Adam: Man and Humanity in Roman 5*, and *The Humanity of God*. In *Church Dogmatics*, volume three, part two, Barth organized his anthropology into four sets of relationships, namely,

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131 Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth*.
132 Refer to McCormack, *Karl Barth’s Critically Realistic Dialectic Theology*.
133 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 203-204.
134 In Barth's original words, it is Glaubensgeheimnis. Refer to *Kirchliche Dogmatik, Band III/2*, 246.
135 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 206.
136 Ibid., 207.
relation to God, relation to the fellows, relation within human being (i.e. body soul relationship) and lastly relation to time. In order to facilitate the comparison and contrast work later, these four sets of relationship will be discussed in terms of three dimensions, that is, the origin of human beings (relation to God), the existence of human beings (relation to the fellows and relation within human being) and lastly the destiny of human beings (relation to time).

2.1 The Origin of Human Beings – Human Nature

2.1.1 Being in Relationship

2.1.1.1 A Relationship-Based Concept of Humanity

One of the most controversial issues in human anthropology is whether human beings are good or evil in nature. It is a common impression that Christianity, especially the Protestant Christianity, adopts a negative view of human nature due to the doctrine of original sin the Calvinist doctrine of ‘total depravity’. Some may assume that Barth, as a follower of Calvin, adopted a negative view of human nature as well. However, a close examination of his theological anthropology refutes this suspicion about Barth. This does not mean that Barth rejected Calvin’s perspective completely by considering all human beings as good; rather he adopted a different approach to the understanding of human nature in the light of his study of the man Jesus Christ.

Human nature is usually perceived in a dualistic way (either good or evil), in which it is
like a static entity, as if it was originally created and destined as good or evil. In contrast to this is Barth’s insight that human nature is determined and destined by dynamic relationships; in particular by the intimate covenant relationship with God. “Real man,” Barth said, “is the being determined by God for life with God and existing in the history of the covenant which God has established with him.”¹³⁷ Barth argued that human beings are living with an actual antithesis; on the one hand, they are the covenant partners of God, but at the same time they are cosmic creaturely beings. The divine determination and destiny and the creaturely form are very different, yet there is in fact an inner connexion and correspondence between them within human beings. As God created human beings with the divine determination and destiny, the cosmic creaturely humanity should then be able to correspond to their divine determination and destiny. Therefore, as human beings fail to correspond to their divine determination and destiny, they in fact put themselves in a destructive contradiction by tearing apart their divine determination, destiny, and their creaturely form. This is what Barth meant by the ‘incomprehensible possibility of sin’.¹³⁸

With his christocentric focus, Barth understood human nature from the point of view of the man Jesus. Barth connected the insight that Jesus is the being determined by God to human beings as determined by God.¹³⁹ The person of Jesus Christ could not be apart from his saving

¹³⁷ Ibid., 204.
¹³⁸ Ibid., 204-206.
¹³⁹ Ibid., 73-74.
mission. Likewise the nature of human beings could not be apart from the goal of being created for the covenant with God and one another. Therefore, the creation of human beings is distinct from the creation of other non-human beings in the cosmos. Human beings are different in that they are created with the ability to respond to the divine words of their Creator, and are chosen as God’s covenant partners. As illuminated by the real man Jesus Christ, the nature of human beings is fundamentally grounded in their covenant relationship with God.

In addition, Barth insisted that the actuality of humanity could never be realized by humans’ autonomous attempts at self-understanding or self-enactment; rather it has to be realized in their encounter with others. Human beings must be understood from beyond the human realm; in particular the only source of understanding is from God. For Barth, the reality of human beings is established only by the free initiative of God; human beings can never understand their own selves unless God has revealed it in the first place. However, in the actualization of humanity, there is reciprocity. God first reveals to human beings, and in return human beings need to respond to the revelation of God. Therefore, to be a human being is to be responsive. This response of human beings needs to be realized in action. In Barth’s words:

As human life is a being in responsibility before God, it has the character of knowledge of God. We have stated that the being of man as responsibility is response, being in the act of response to the Word of God… Man knows God because God declares to him His Word, and therefore first knows him. For this reason it takes place as a spontaneous act of

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140 Ibid., 122.
For Barth, to be a real human being is to be responsive to the election of God as the covenant partner of God. The actuality of human beings is realized in this covenant relationship with God. This divine determination and destiny of human beings is especially revealed by the divinity of the man Jesus. Yet, the man Jesus is not only man for God, he is also man for human beings. The humanity of the man Jesus reveals that the actuality of human nature is also enacted in the relationship between human beings. In other words, human nature is realized by the encounter of human beings with one another. Yet Barth stated clearly that this existential view of humanity speaks of a potentiality only, but not the actuality of human beings. Although Barth did not refute the value of existential philosophy in his theological anthropology, he did emphasize that the studies of science and philosophy on humanity described the phenomenon of real humanity only, but not the actuality. For Barth, human nature is determined and destined by encounters and interpersonal relationships, but real humanity is only founded on the relationship with God. The true description of humanity is profoundly revealed by the Word of God, who is grateful.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 176.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 208, 222.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 128. For Barth, the encounters of human beings to one another allow them to know the actuality of their existences. As people come into contact with each other, they can think and respond to each other in the mutual relationship; the rationality and responsibility of human beings constitute the freedom of human beings. However, Barth stated that the actuality of a human being is still undetermined if he/she is not in relation to a concrete and specific object. Therefore he claimed that the actuality of human beings can only be realized in the relationship with God; in the encounter with the others, it speaks only a possibility or potentiality of human existence, but not the actuality. For further details, refer to Ibid., 127-128.
\textsuperscript{144} Price stated that Kierkegaard has cast influence on Barth, especially on his early theology in \textit{The Epistle to the Romans}. Yet, Barth has critically rejected the philosophy of Kierkegaard for its overemphasis on individualism. Refer to Daniel J. Price, \textit{Karl Barth's Anthropology in Light of Modern Thought} (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 84-96.
the person Jesus Christ who is the Head of humanity. In short, the fundamental determination of
human beings is never separated from God the Creator. In the words of Barth, “to be man is to
be with God.”\(^\text{145}\)

2.1.1.2 Relationship and ‘History’

In the theological anthropology of Barth, the relationship-based concept of humanity was
further explained by a term ‘history’. Barth gave a technical meaning to ‘history’ in his
theological anthropology. ‘History’ is not a motionless state, but it occurs only when something
new and other than its own nature befalls it. Barth stated,

The history of a being begins, continues and is completed when something other than itself
and transcending its own nature encounters it, approaches it and determines its being in the
nature proper to it, so that it is compelled and enabled to transcend itself in response and in
relation to this new factor.\(^\text{146}\)

Therefore, ‘history’ occurs only when people break the circle of their own life sphere and allow
the others to cast influence on them. In the use of this technical term ‘history’, once again Barth
referred back to his basic presupposition on the primacy of the Word of God in revelation. He
argued that this concept of being as ‘history’ is generated from the existence of the man Jesus,
whose life is regarded as the ‘primal history’. The man Jesus Christ is the only one who has a
reciprocal relationship with God and with other human beings at the same time. The ‘history’ of

\(^{145}\) Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 135.
\(^{146}\) Ibid., 158.
Jesus Christ alone is “originally and immediately the history of the covenant of salvation and revelation inaugurated by God”. However the man Jesus Christ also dwells among human beings. Jesus Christ alone is the one God elected and he is also the only one who elects God in return. This ‘history’ of the man Jesus Christ is prior to the existence of all human beings and so the nature of all human beings can only be realized through their relationship to this man Jesus Christ, the only Elected One. Therefore, the being of all humanity is ‘history’ only when they are engaged in the relationship with the ‘primal history’. In other words, human beings are utterly determined and destined by their relationship with Jesus Christ.

2.1.2 Relationship and ‘Sin’

In the theological anthropology of Barth, human nature is not a static state, whether it is good or evil. Rather the ontological determination and destination of human beings are grounded in their covenant relationship with God. To be a human person is to be with God; as human beings turn against God, they are turning against their own nature. Therefore, sin, for Barth, is an ontological impossibility for the human being. Sin is the antithesis of what it is to be a human being, on one hand the nature of human beings is grounded and destined by their covenant relationship with God; on the other hand, an impossible possibility exists that they could deny and obscure the covenant. For Barth, it is impossible for human beings to deny their

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147 Ibid., 160.
148 Ibid., 160-161.
149 Ibid., 136.
own origin; it is a dreadful fact that human beings actually did it. Therefore, for Barth, sin is a mad, sorry and incomprehensible fact.\textsuperscript{150}

For Barth, it is an objective fact that human beings are created as the covenant partners of God, although human beings may not know it subjectively when they are confined by their self-contradictions (human sin). Under the presupposition that being a human person is being with God, Barth stated that a human being is a being dependent on God. Although the being of a human is never identical with the being of God, she/he is wholly and exclusively determined and conditioned by the latter. As revealed by the Word of God, the absolute determination and destination of human beings are founded on the grace of election of God, as all human beings are elected with and in the man Jesus. From the beginning of creation, human beings have been preserved from sin and nothingness; this is the promise given to human beings from the outset. Under the grace of election, human beings are created to be with God. Therefore, as human beings decide to go against God, it is not done on the basis of a possibility rooted in their own being. This demonstrates Barth’s characterization of sin as ‘ontological impossibility’.\textsuperscript{151}

For Barth, the Word of God is the most fundamental principle in the study of theology, and so it is also the basic criterion in theological anthropology. The Word of God shows that human beings are granted the grace of election. This is the objective fact that has been accomplished

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 205.  
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 145-147.
since the beginning of the created world. The Word of God, as made known by the man Jesus Christ, also shows the proper response for human beings to divine grace - the hearing of the Word of God and to be with God in thankfulness. This is the subjective response that should be found among human beings. Therefore, as human beings go against God, they are going into self-contradiction. It is this self-contradiction that prevents human beings from a genuine understanding of themselves.\textsuperscript{152} This same self-contradiction plunges humans “like a meteor into the abyss, into empty space”.\textsuperscript{153} However, the Word of God does not only expose the self-contradiction of the human beings, it also reveals the grace of God.\textsuperscript{154} The broken relationship between God and the human beings has been reconciled by the man Jesus Christ. This theme of reconciliation is a central theme in Barth’s \textit{Church Dogmatics} to which he devotes a whole volume.\textsuperscript{155}

2.1.3 Restoring The Broken Relationship

Owing to the self-contradiction of human beings, it is impossible for them to have the capacity to know their own nature. Therefore, with regards to Barth’s understanding of reconciliation the familiar christocentric theme continues. Real humanity, in particular the proper relationship with God the Creator, can only be made known through the man Jesus Christ:

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\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 20-30.  
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 205.  
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 40.  
\textsuperscript{155} After the discussion of the doctrine of creation, Barth went on to the doctrine of reconciliation, which is explicated in detail in \textit{Church Dogmatics} IV/1.
\end{flushright}
It is either through Him that we know what we truly are as men, or we do not know it at all… These are the limits which theological anthropology exceed, it must first look away from man in general and concentrate on the one man Jesus, and only then look back from Him to man in general.\textsuperscript{156}

Thus Barth argued that human beings must first look at the man Jesus Christ if they want to have a true understanding of their humanity. In the light of the man Jesus Christ, human beings come to realize that their human nature is in fact determined by their relationship with God, which is identified by Barth as ‘covenant relationship’.

This covenant relationship is the basic determining factor of human existence; it accounts for the ability of the human beings to be aware of their covenant partner - God the Creator and the grace of God. In addition, apart from this awareness, the covenant relationship also reveals the proper response and actions of human beings to their covenant partner. Barth stated that human beings should live ‘as a being in gratitude’\textsuperscript{157} and ‘under the concept of responsibility’\textsuperscript{158} when they come to God, their covenant partner. In short, this covenant relationship gives not only a good description of the origin of human beings, it also provides a blueprint for human life and destiny; human beings can actualize their real humanity as the covenant partner of God.

Barth’s perspective on human origin and nature can be summarised by the following:

\textsuperscript{156} Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics} III/2, 53.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 166-174.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 174-198.
quotation, “basically and comprehensively, therefore, to be a man is to be with God.

Godlessness is not, therefore a possibility, but an ontological impossibility for man.”\textsuperscript{159}

2.2 The Existence of Human Beings – The Relationship among Human Beings

In his discussion of theological anthropology, Barth did not reject the value of natural science, idealistic ethics, existential philosophy and even theistic anthropology in their studies of anthropology; these studies can be helpful in providing enlightened views of humanity.\textsuperscript{160} However, according to Barth, these studies reveal the phenomena of human beings only, but not the real nature of human beings. This is because these studies only provide the general knowledge which human beings derived from a consideration of themselves, yet Barth contended that real nature of human beings can only be derived from the Creator of human beings. As we argued above, for Barth, human beings are beings in relationship; but human beings are not merely determined by the relationship with others, but also destined by the relationship with a transcendent God, who is the only origin and goal of all human beings. In other words, human beings have to be understood as theonomously rather than being autonomously determined and destined.\textsuperscript{161} Even though human beings are ontologically destined by the divine relationship with God, relationships among human beings are also essential to human nature. Barth described this indispensable relationship among human beings

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 135.
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 200-202.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 201.
the ‘co-humanity’ of the human beings.\textsuperscript{162} This co-humanity is connected to the relational life of the Trinitarian God.

2.2.1 The Inner Divine Being of the Triune God

Human beings are beings in relationship, this notion is founded on the fact that God is a Triune God. In the inner divine being (immanent life) of the Triune God, there is ‘relationship’. God repeats this ‘relationship’ \textit{ad extra} in the relationship with human beings (economic life). God in God-self is not a simple being; God is in threefold, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the divine essence of God, there is co-existence, co-inherence and reciprocity.

Therefore, it can be said that the Triune God is the origin and the source of all relationships, including the relationship between God and human beings, and also the relationship between human beings. ‘Co-humanity’ as mentioned by Barth, is based on the Trinitarian nature of God.\textsuperscript{163}

The co-humanity of human beings originates from the inner communal relationship of the Triune God, yet Barth made it clear that the co-humanity of human beings is never identical with this inner communal relationship; it is only a repetition or a reflection.\textsuperscript{164} For Barth, this is what he meant for \textit{Imago Dei}. Human beings are created in the image of God. Although there

\textsuperscript{162} Barth used the word \textit{Mitmenschlichkeit} to denote ‘co-humanity’. Bromiley translated this word as ‘fellow-humanity’, refer to \textit{Church Dogmatics} III/2, 285. This German word also carries an element of compassion and care for the other. It is thus a co-humanity filled with compassion and care.

\textsuperscript{163} Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics} III/2, 218, 323-324.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 219.
are numerous interpretations of the biblical expression *Imago Dei* (Gen 1:27) throughout the history of Christian doctrine, Barth argued that *Imago Dei* refers to the special relationship between God the Creator and humans as God’s creatures. As God creates human beings in the *Imago Dei*, God establishes a covenant relationship between God the Creator and humans. In this covenant relationship, God allows human beings to be able to respond to God and also to have a reciprocal relationship with the Creator. This interpretation of the ‘image’ of God, on one hand, helps Barth to establish his ‘relational’ view of human beings; on the other hand, it also helps Barth to stress the disparity between God and human beings. Although the relationship among human beings is similar to the inner communal relationship of the Triune God, there is in fact a real and profound difference. Between God and God, there is unity of essence, which is self-grounded, self-originated and also self-renewed. However, this unity of essence would never be found between God and human beings, since, for Barth, there is a complete disparity between God and human beings. Therefore for Barth, instead of *analogia entis*, the *Imago Dei* is better illustrated by *analogia relationis*.

2.2.2 Christocentric Co-Humanity

In what way can human beings understand their own nature as “co-humanity”? The theology

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165 Barth made a detailed exposition on the various interpretations of Genesis 1:26f in *Church Dogmatics* III/1, 191-201, in which he established his own understanding of the ‘image’ of God.

166 Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 219. This claim of Barth is consistent to Barth’s early belief “World remains world, God is God.”

167 Ibid., 220.
of Barth is christocentric; therefore, for him, the ‘co-humany’ of human beings should also be understood in the light of the relationship between Jesus Christ and human beings. Jesus Christ is the ‘man for God’ and also the ‘man for human beings’. While the role of Jesus Christ as the ‘man for God’ illuminates the divine determination of human nature, his role as the ‘man for human beings’ also sheds light on the nature of human beings as co-humidity. For Barth, human nature should be understood from a source beyond human beings themselves, and so the basic form of humanity is found in an ‘I-Thou relationship’, just like the reciprocal relationship found within the inner being of God. The inseparable relationship between human beings (human-human relationship) originates from the intact inner being of the Triune God (the I-Thou relationship with the Godhead, that is a God-God relationship), which takes the form ad extra in the humanity of Jesus (God-humans relationship). The correspondence and similarity of the ‘God-God relationship’, ‘God-humans relationship’ and then ‘human-human relationship’ consists in the fact that the man Jesus, on one hand, truly reflects the inner essence of God, and on the other hand, is a being for His fellow people. Therefore, the understanding of ‘co-humany’ is based on the fact that the man Jesus is ‘for humans’. Owing to the similarity between the ‘Jesus-human’ and ‘human-human’ relationship, human beings are also basically ‘human for humans’. Thus Barth

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168 Ibid., 122.
169 Ibid., 218.
170 Ibid., 218.
171 Ibid.
172 Ibid., 219.
argued that if a person denies his/her fellow, he/she is actually denying the man Jesus - the Deliverer and Saviour of sinful person; he is acting “as though he had no God and no neighbour, and therefore showing himself (herself) to be supremely non-human.”\(^{173}\)

2.2.3 The Basic Form of Humanity

As the basic form of humanity is founded on an ‘I-thou relationship’; human beings are basically ‘beings in encounter’ in history. In Barth’s words, “to say man is to say history”, it is ‘I’ and ‘thou’ encounter each other as two histories.\(^{174}\) In the formula ‘I am as Thou art’, Barth explained that both ‘I’ and ‘thou’ are dynamic beings; both move out from themselves and encounter each other in their own existence.\(^{175}\) In the explanation of this encounter, Barth listed basic characteristic form of humanity:\(^{176}\)

(i) Being in encounter is a being in which one looks the other in the eye.

(ii) Being in encounter is the fact that there is mutual speech and hearing.

(iii) Being in encounter is the fact that people render mutual assistance in the act of being.

(iv) Being in encounter is the fact that all this is done on both sides with gladness.

The first characteristic demonstrates that ‘being in encounter’ is actually a being in openness. When one looks at another in the eye, one is letting the other reciprocate. Only when there is a two-sided openness that one human being can really encounter another. As people look

\(^{173}\) Ibid., 227.
\(^{174}\) Ibid., 248.
\(^{175}\) Ibid.
\(^{176}\) Ibid., 250-274.
each other in the eyes, they no longer focus on their own selves, but are aware of the existence of the other fellows. This openness of encounter is indispensable as a first step of human interaction; it is the first necessary step.\textsuperscript{177}

However openness alone is not enough, a person can never truly interact with another by simply looking others in the eyes. Therefore, secondly, people have to make themselves knowable to the others. Mutual communication with another is also essential for I-thou interaction. In reciprocity of speech and hearing,\textsuperscript{178} expression and reception, address reception, all become possible.\textsuperscript{179} When people express themselves, they are not merely speaking to the air, but are expressing themselves to others; likewise, as they hear from others, they are also receiving the address of others. Hence, according to these basic forms of communication among humanity, people are open to each other, and then they are also willing to speak to and hear each other.

As a further step, being in encounter involves not only words, but also deeds. The interaction between human beings has to be actualised in actions and mutual assistance. In an ‘I-Thou relationship’, human beings no longer solely focus on their own beings and actions, but participate and show concern in the life of the others.\textsuperscript{180} However, for Barth, even though

\textsuperscript{177} Ibid., 250-252.
\textsuperscript{178} For eye contact, speech and hearing mentioned here, Barth would probably mean metaphorically, there is surely many other ways of communication. It would be especially true for visual, hearing and speech impaired people.
\textsuperscript{179} Barth, \textit{Church Dogmatics} III/2, 252-260.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 260-265.
human beings look each other in the eye, listen and speak to each other and even lend a helping hand to each other, they are still inhuman if these are not done with gladness. It is the last and final step of humanity; it is also the secret of the whole and the conditio sine qua non of humanity.\textsuperscript{181} It implies that human beings are beings with free wills. As they act with gladness, they are happy to choose to do so.

2.2.4 Human Beings are Created as Male and Female

In addition, Barth also stated that the fundamental reciprocal relational basis of the human beings could also be illustrated by the fact that human beings are created as male and female. As God creates human beings in the image of God, God creates them as male and female (Gen. 1:27), the distinctiveness and the complementarity of two sexes are in fact reflecting the inner essence of the Godhead. The particularity and the unity of male and female have to be emphasized and the existence of males is depended on females, vice versa. Therefore, sexual difference is a good illustration of the co-humainty of human beings.\textsuperscript{182} In addition, it should be noted that the understanding of the male/female relationship should not only be narrowly confined to our usual understanding of sexual love in marriage, but also the relationship of fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, brothers and sisters, or other similar relationships.\textsuperscript{183}

Human beings are created as male and female and there is no way human beings could escape

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 265.
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 286-288.
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 288
from this determination. The existence of human beings is realized in the encounter of I and thou, a man cannot be a man until he meets a woman, who is different from him; likewise, a woman cannot be a woman until she meets a man. The duality of male and female can never be resolved in a higher synthesis, and all that human beings can do is to live it out.\textsuperscript{184} In short, co-humanity is the basic form of human being; a human being could never be a real person without encountering others.

2.2.5 Trinitarian Image in Co-Humanity

Although there are various approaches taken in modern anthropological studies, a common element could still be recognized: humanity is understood in a relational structure.\textsuperscript{185} Human beings can never come into full existence until they engage in an ‘I-thou’ relationship, as suggested by Martin Buber in his \textit{I and Thou}.\textsuperscript{186} In his account of the co-humanity of human beings, Barth agreed with most modern anthropological studies that ‘being in relationship’ is a dominant feature of human beings in the determination of the structure and destiny of human existence. However, unlike most contemporary arguments, Barth made it clear that the human being, as a relational being, is rooted in her/his relationship with God the creator who is their covenant partner. The humanity of Jesus is the key to the understandings of all human relational beings. The humanity of Jesus Christ reveals the humanity of God, which is included in the

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 289.
deity of God. This christocentric view brings important theological implications. It not only highlights the unique position of human beings as distinct from other creatures, but also the special grace of God for human beings that enables them to respond. Therefore, the human being is destined for a responsible and spontaneous decision in response to God.

2.2.6 Co-Humanity and Community

Human nature is based on ‘I-thou relationship’, the co-humanity of human beings has an important implication for the foundation of human community.\(^{187}\) Different from modern existential philosophers like Kierkegaard, Barth’s theological anthropology does not promote individualistic subjectivity, but a consolidated community. Barth stated that it is important for human beings not to lose their own selves in others; human beings are bound to their fellows, but they cannot belong to them.\(^{188}\) At the same time, human beings should not make use of their encounter with the others as a way to extend and secure their own self-interest.\(^{189}\) For Barth, the relationship between human beings is based on the fact that God is the Triune God. The Trinitarian *imago* and analogy captured in co-humanity formulated the co-humanity of human beings. On one hand, it builds up the ties between human beings; on the other hand, it maintains the individuality of human beings.

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\(^{188}\) Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 269.

\(^{189}\) Ibid., 270.
2.3 The Existence of Human Beings – Soul and Body

Having discussed the particularity and complementarity between human beings, Barth went on to discuss the particularity and complementarity within a human being; that is the relationship between soul and body.

2.3.1 The Man Jesus Christ

Barth argued that human life is a life of soul and body. Barth made a clear summary of the relationship of soul and body in the beginning of the section 46 in *Church Dogmatics*, “through the Spirit of God, man is the subject, form and life of a substantial organism, the soul of his body – wholly and simultaneously both, in ineffaceable difference, inseparable unity and indestructible order.”¹⁹⁰ For Barth, a human being exists, and is therefore a soul; it exists in a certain form, and so is a body. This is the simplest description of soul and body, and also their relationship.¹⁹¹ Again Barth continued his christocentric understanding of the human beings, he suggested looking at the man Jesus when we try to understand the relationship of soul and body. The man Jesus in the New Testament is a whole man with both body and soul. In Barth’s words, he is ‘an embodied soul and also a besouled body’. He fulfilled His office and works without any separation of His outer form and inner form. His inner and spiritual plane is revealed in an

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¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 325. In the original writing of Barth, he used the word ‘Gestalt’, which denotes more than ‘form’ in that it indicates the totality in which something is perceived.
¹⁹¹ Ibid.
outer and bodily form\textsuperscript{192} and so it can be concluded that soul and body are in oneness and wholeness.\textsuperscript{193} Moreover, in the man Jesus, it is also found that the Holy Spirit plays an important role in maintaining the ordered unity of soul and body. In other words, it is the power of the Holy Spirit resting upon the man Jesus and so, in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, that the man Jesus is a whole man with meaningfully ordered unity of soul and body.\textsuperscript{194}

2.3.2 The Spirit of God

Therefore, from the man Jesus, it can be deduced that a human being is also an embodied soul and at the same time a besouled body. The Spirit of God is the basis of the human being as the soul of the body. In other words, the oneness and order of soul and body found in a human being is actually constituted and always maintained by God through the Spirit. For Barth, the Spirit is never a part, nor the whole of human nature. That is the reason why Barth always stressed that a human being has the Spirit, instead of saying that “human being is Spirit”.\textsuperscript{195} The Spirit is something superior that comes to and constitutes the human being. It is not ‘natural’ to the human constitution, but a transcendental determination of human nature, an action and operation of God who is free in relation to human beings. This action of the Spirit is an incessant event that is willed, decided and affected by God.\textsuperscript{196} The distinctiveness and the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 327.
\item Ibid., 332.
\item Ibid., 341.
\item Ibid., 354.
\item Ibid., 348.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
complementarity of soul and body in human beings are maintained by the Spirit, who is solely from God. The human being simply has no power over the Spirit. Without the Spirit of God, a human being could only be a material body without any connection with the soul. That is the reason why humans could never exist without God.  

2.3.3 The Particularity and Complementarities of Soul and Body

Human beings are grounded, constituted and maintained as the soul of their bodies by the Spirit which is the free act of God. However, the soul and body of a human being have their own particularities and complementarities. The soul of a human being can never exist without the body; the body of a human being also has absolute dependence on the soul. The soul is ‘inner’, it could never exist without an ‘outer’. Likewise, the body also cannot exist without the soul, or it would only be a material body. In other words, there is inseparable interconnexion between soul and body. To repeat Barth’s assertion, a human being is an embodied soul and also a besouled body. This anthropological view of Barth is set against the dualistic Greek conception of human being. It refuted the monistic materialism and spiritualism as well. Besides, although Barth admitted the different roles of the Spirit, soul and body in the constitution of a human being, he disagreed with trichotomy. For Barth, the Spirit comes from God; it is never a part of human nature, but an action and attitude of the Creator in relation to

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197 Ibid., 357-359.
198 Ibid., 350.
199 Ibid., 380-391.
the creation. Therefore, a human being is not a composite of spirit, soul and body, but a constitution of the soul and body under the commission of the Spirit.²⁰⁰

The soul and body of human beings are in inseparable interconnection yet they also have their own particularities. As a human being is soul, he/she is the subject and centre of specific engagements, opinions, and views. As a human being is body, he/she is also on the periphery of that centre; he/she can take action appropriate to those specific engagements or views. For Barth, it is important theologically for a human being to be the soul and at the same time the body. In the relationship between God and human beings, on one hand, as a human being is soul, it means that a human being is always capable of perceiving and understanding the revelation of God and also the order subsisted between himself/herself and God.²⁰¹ On the other hand, as a human being is body, human beings are also provided with the ability to respond to God with concrete actions.²⁰² Both the souls and bodies of human beings have their own importance and particularities in the constitution of human nature. However, although soul and body are both important in the constitution of human beings, the soul always enjoys precedence over the body. The soul always precedes in the perception as awareness and thought of an activity, and as desire and volition as well. The soul always comes first and then the body follows.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 345.
²⁰¹ The original word Barth used for ‘perceiving’ is *vernehmen*, which literally means ‘hear’, ‘learn’ and ‘understand’. Unlike an animal, the human being is a percipient being, who is able to be aware and think of another, and also to receive and accept another into his/her self-consciousness. Refer to *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 399.
²⁰² Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 406
²⁰³ Ibid., 418.
beings are rational beings, so they always exist with order, rationality and logic. In the unity of the soul and body, there is always an order; it is the unity of a ruling soul and a serving body.\footnote{Ibid., 427.} According to this orderliness and unity of human nature, Barth stated that human beings have to understand themselves in relation to God. When human beings receive the Spirit, they live spiritually in a specific sphere and activity and then fulfill the human act of living by their body. In this sense, they treat their bodies as their own domain, they control and rule over it.

In the explanation of the relationship between soul and body, Barth reaffirmed his basic presupposition in theological anthropology. For him, the understanding of humanity has to be based on the Word of God and in relation to God. In studies of theological and philosophical anthropology, the dialectic relationship between soul and body of human nature is a controversial issue. Different philosophical approaches produce various perspectives such as monistic materialism, monistic spiritualism, dualism or even trichotomy. Barth tried to resolve this dialectic in the light of his basic christocentric presupposition. For him, the Word of God always sheds light on the understanding of all mysteries of human nature. From the man Jesus Christ, the complexity of human nature, as an embodied soul and a besouled body, is made known; the particularity and the complementarity of the soul and body of humanity can also be understood in an inner orderliness.
2.4 Human Destiny and Transcendence

Barth argued that dialectic can be found in many aspects of the human condition. The relationship between God the Creator and the human being as creature is a dialectic. The relationship between human beings, as best illustrated by male and female, is also in dialectic. Dialectic is even found within a human being, as shown by the dialectic between the soul and body. Finally, as the discussion comes to the destiny of the human beings, dialectic is identified between time and eternity.

2.4.1 The Fixed Span of Time

For Barth, the Spirit is a God-given essential in the constitution of human existence and ‘time’ is also a necessary God-given dimension of human life. In the theological anthropology of Barth, God the Creator and the human being as a creature are distinctively different from each other, just like the dialectic between time and eternity. Human beings live in a fixed span of time. In other words, human life presupposes a temporality. The temporality of human beings is in a dialectic relationship with the eternity of God. As God creates the world, time begins; it is the form of the created world by which the world is ordained to be the field for the acts of God and for the corresponding reactions of the creatures.\(^{205}\) Therefore, time is the sphere given to human beings, so that they are able to act as the creatures of God. In the words of Barth, time is the

\(^{205}\) Ibid., 438.
conditio sine qua non of human life;\textsuperscript{206} it also exemplifies that a human being is a form of reality absolutely distinct from God. God in eternity is transcendent, while a human being, who is living in a fixed span of time, is limited.

2.4.2 Human Transcendence

As we outlined in the discussion of Barth in his context, he was concerned with the arrogance and self-reliance of human beings in light of the events of the World Wars and philosophy of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Therefore, he consistently emphasized that human beings are finite, as compared to the transcendence of God the creator. As he examined the relationship between the human being and time, Barth supported a strong understanding of the finitude of human beings, yet he never denied the desire of human beings for self-transcendence. He agreed that human transcendence is a way of searching for the true self. In the process of searching, human beings step out, go beyond themselves and interact with the others. They reach their limit, transcend over it, and they begin to understand themselves as a self-contained and complete reality. This process of self-realization is especially actualized in human interactions and relationships. Thus, Barth did not deny that self-transcendence is one of the important dimensions in the understanding of human existence, but for Barth, it is only a phenomenon, instead of the actuality of a human being.\textsuperscript{207} Barth insisted that real human beings in all

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid., 437.
\textsuperscript{207} Ibid., 113-120. As a response to existential philosopher like Karl Jaspers, Barth argued that self-transcendence is hardly helpful in the understanding life’s meaning. He doubted whether self-transcendence
circumstances belong to God, “beings exist under the lordship of God and is set in the service of God.”

Concerning the word ‘transcendence’, it originates from Latin with the literal meaning of climbing above or going beyond, ignoring the normal limits and boundaries. Yet it has an original meaning with reference to God’s relation to the world. On one hand God is manifested in the world, but in fact God is completely outside of the world. This shows the transcendence of God. However, for human transcendence, it usually entails a meaning of going beyond normal human limits or boundaries. It also refers to going beyond one’s own boundary and reaching to other people. For Barth, human beings can never exist without the confrontation and interaction with the others; in this regard he did not deny transcendence in the sense of ‘co-humanity’. However Barth stressed that the human beings are limited, as compared with the transcendence of God, they can never break the boundary between God and the creatures.

would be a good guarantee of human existence, because the power or the ability of human beings is sometimes over-estimated.

208 Ibid., 121.
209 However, later in modern philosophy, Kant brought a new meaning to the word. For Kant, ‘transcendental’ refers to the knowledge in respect to human subject’s faculty of cognition. He differentiated two kinds of knowledge, ordinary knowledge and transcendental knowledge; the former is the knowledge of objects, while the latter is the knowledge of how it is possible to know those objects as objects.
210 Human transcendent experience could be an ecstatic state involving an awareness of transcendental unity or knowledge of higher truth. Yet there are still some differences between the Western and Eastern world on the understanding of ‘transcendence’. In the Western world, transcendence means going beyond normal limits; but in the Eastern world, transcendence usually refers to the unification and harmonization with the world. This divergence of the basic understanding of ‘transcendence’ is also evident in the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong.
2.4.3 Human Finitude

We have seen that for Barth, human beings are utterly dependant on God the Creator; therefore instead of striving for any transcendence over the boundary between God and the created state, human beings should be content with their finitude. On this theme in Barth, Kerr noted that, “at a very deep level, Barth’s work strives to liberate us from our inclination to regard our limitedness as an affliction.”\(^1\) Barth elaborated on the finitude of human beings in a discussion of humanity and time. Humans are living within the boundaries set by God the Creator; they live in the allotted span of their present, past and future life. The eternal God, who is not confined by time, fixes the boundaries for human beings. God is also the only hope in which human beings live in their time. Thus, human beings are temporal; they are living within the boundary of time. Consistent with his christocentric understanding of human nature, Barth asserted that the understanding of human beings in time must also be based in true humanity revealed in Jesus Christ. The man Jesus, like other human beings, also lived in His time; He was confined by His history, His particularity, His finitude and His being in time. The man Jesus, living in temporality, reveals the true being of humanity in the time created by God and given to human beings.\(^2\) Barth even claimed that the man Jesus has to be able to die; His being in time

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\(^2\) Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2, 518.
must have this finitude so that He may take this end upon Himself. However, what makes Jesus Christ different from other human beings is that He was resurrected from death after three days. The history of the forty days between his resurrection and ascension clearly demonstrates for Barth that Jesus Christ is the Lord of Time.

The anthropological truth of humanity is revealed by Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of time. He is the guarantee that time, as the form of human existence, is given by God and consequently is real. Time is the form of existence of humans, but human beings have no control over time and also their being in time. Time is the sphere of human life, one day it will be over as there is an allotted time span of human beings. However, there is always a tendency on behalf of human beings to demand perfection and they may protest against this allotted span of time. Even though human beings may want to transcend their limitations, for Barth, life in an allotted span is actually appropriate to human beings, since they are fundamentally different from God, the unlimited One. Most important of all, it is not a disadvantage for human beings to live in a definite plan, on the contrary Barth argued that it would be a disaster for the human beings to live indefinitely. Therefore, Barth asserted that humans should be content with this finitude and welcome the allotment of time with gratitude and joy; “It is far more likely that we shall

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213 Ibid., 630
214 Ibid., 441.
215 Ibid., 520.
216 Ibid., 524.
217 Ibid., 562.
finally and basically shake our heads, and bite our lips and simply make the best of the fact that we have no option but to take what we are given – a limited life in an allotted span of time.” 218

2.4.4 Death and Human Finitude

We have seen that human beings are living in a limited life in an allotted span of time that begins at a certain point of time and it also ends at a certain point of time. As the time of human beings is finite, it will finally come to end; no one can escape from the shadow of death, which is always regarded as a negation and termination of human existence. People often have a negative response to death. People may feel anxious and restless when they realize that they may finally turn into non-being. Moreover, death also leads people to the final judgement of God. In death, human beings are not only threatened by the negation of their existence, but also the confrontation with God on what they have done against God. It is God who is to be feared. 219 Therefore, for Barth, it is important for human beings to accept the fact that they are indeed limited; they could never transcend the boundary between God and the human beings. Facing the finitude of human beings, they could only live their lives as the covenant partners of God; in particular to live ‘as a being in gratitude’ and ‘under the concept of responsibility’. 220

For Barth, human beings have no natural beyond. They do not need their own beyond as

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218 Ibid., 564.
219 Ibid., 608.
220 Ibid., 548.
The only reference point of human destiny is God, who is the Creator, the Covenant partner, the only Judge and Saviour. In the process of self-realization, human beings step out and interact with the others; yet human beings will never find their true self until they encounter and respond to the Creator, that is their divine Covenant partner. The process of approaching the destiny of humanity is also a process of conquering the fear and anxiety of death and negations. For Barth, human beings will not be able to get through death as limitation unless they accept their finitude with the grace of God.

3. The Dilemma Between Human Transcendence and Limitation

Human beings are always confronted by the dilemma of human transcendence and human finitude. Barth described this dilemma as the dilemma of human determination and destination as the covenant partner of God and at the same time, as a cosmic creaturely being. Resolving this dilemma is also his main concern in the explanation of his theological anthropology.

Barth attempted to deal with this dilemma by means of his christocentric presupposition. He tried to resolve the issue by looking at the man Jesus Christ. Barth argued that this human dilemma could not be sorted out unless human beings return to their origin, God the Creator. For Barth, everything is created by God and the world is actually a concrete place created by God for the community of God with human beings. Therefore, human beings always enjoy a special

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221 Ibid., 632.
position as the covenant partner of God. This is also the main difference between human beings and other creatures in the cosmos. Human beings are not only one of the cosmic creatures; they are also the honourable covenant partners of God. However, on the other hand, human beings also need to realize their finitude as creatures. There is a divine boundary that human beings can never go beyond. For Barth, if human beings could come to understand their transcendence as the covenant partner of God and, at the same time, their finitude as creatures, it would be easier for them to get through the dilemma and, with divine grace, to live as a being in gratitude and responsibility.

In conclusion, we have seen that the theological anthropology of Barth is resolutely christocentric, just as it is in his larger theological perspective. For Barth, human beings are determined and destined by their covenant partner, God the Creator. Like John Calvin, Barth argued that human beings could not have a proper understanding of themselves, unless they know their Creator in the first place. Through this development of a theological anthropology, Barth intended to bring people back to their covenant partner, God the Creator. As we will see in the following chapter, Shili Xiong, instead of bringing people to the Wholly Other, attempts to turn people internally to their own selves. These anthropological perspectives of Xiong will now be explored in detail.

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Chapter V
Shili Xiong’s Philosophical Anthropology

After a detailed examination of the anthropology of Barth, the anthropology of Xiong will be explored in this chapter. With a Christian commitment, the anthropological view of Xiong can be regarded as a new component to the experience of the present writer. By scrutinizing the anthropological views of Xiong, with reference to his context and background, the inner dialogue is going on to the second process ‘exploration’.

1. Shili Xiong’s Basic Presuppositions Related to Philosophical Anthropology

In Chapter III, we discussed the historical context of Xiong. We learned that he used to be a revolutionary who was eager to rescue the Chinese people from their miserable lives. However, in middle age, Xiong concluded that neither political revolution nor scientific advancement could improve people’s lives sufficiently and argued that a spiritual revolution would be more promising. He initially attempted to start what he called a spiritual advancement from Buddhism, especially the ‘Doctrine of the Consciousness-Only’ (*weishi*) of the Yogacara, but soon found himself dissatisfied with it. With a strong interest in the study of ontology and cosmology, He turned to scrutinize traditional Chinese philosophical classic *Book of Changes*, on which he

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223 In this dissertation I have translated the original writings of Xiong and the original texts are cited accordingly as footnotes. In addition, key Chinese terms are written in italic and expressed by *Hanyu pinyin* (漢語拼音).
based his academic presuppositions. Throughout his life, Xiong intended to look for an epistemological method to comprehend the universe. However, for Xiong, it is never simply a cognitive exercise, but always entails practical moral implications for an abundant life. The works of Xiong, on one hand, shows the traditional primacy of morality in Chinese philosophy; on the other hand, it opens up a new page in the development of Neo-Confucianism and Xiong is regarded as one of the founders of contemporary Neo-Confucianism.

The basic premises of Xiong can be summarized by three notions: (1) ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’ (tiyong buer 體用不二); (2) ‘forces of materialization [closing] and creative unfolding [opening] constitute the process of change’ (xipi chengbian翕辟成變); and (3) ‘turning inward and examining one’s own self’ (fanqiu chuji反求諸己). The epistemology and methodology of Xiong is clearly shown by the last notion; for him, the way to know the universe and the path to know human nature is found within human beings.

1.1 Translations

The term ti and yong are firstly introduced by Laozi (老子) in Dao de jing (道德經). There are several translations on the word ti (體) and yong (用). Yong is often translated literally as ‘function’. The translation of ti are varied, most scholars like Ng, Liu and Chan translated ti as ‘substance’ and yong as ‘function’; Ng and Chan further tried to clarify the meaning of ti by translating it as ‘original substance’ or ‘ontological substance’. Apart from these translations, Yu translated ti as ‘original reality’ in order to avoid unnecessary confusion with the Aristotelian conceptual framework. For the notion tiyong buer (體用不二), there are also different translations, like ‘the ultimate reality and phenomenon are non-separable’, ‘the ultimate reality and phenomenon are non-dual’, ‘the ultimate reality and phenomenon are one, they cannot be regarded as two separate realms’, or simply ‘the unity of ultimate reality and phenomenon’. Refer to Wingtsit Chan, “The New Idealistic Confucianism: Hsiung Shih-Li”, in A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 286; Shiuhsien Liu, “The Spiritual World of Hsiung Shih Li,” in Essentials of Contemporary Neo-Confucian Philosophy (Westport: Praeger, 2003); Yu-kwan Ng, “Xiong Shili’s Metaphysical Theory About the Non-Separability of Substance and Function,” in New Confucianism: A Critical Examination, ed. John Makeham (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
$T_i$ (體) and $yong$ (用) are the most significant concepts in the philosophy of Xiong.

However, it is not easy to find a satisfactory and accurate English translation to the words $ti$ and $yong$. $Ti$ and $yong$ are usually translated as ‘substance’ and ‘function’ respectively, though $ti$ and $yong$ involve other meanings. $Ti$ literally means physical body, or the concrete and corporeal human body in which human life is maintained. However, in Chinese metaphysics, $ti$ entails a deeper meaning of $benti$ (本體), which refers to the original and fundamental reality. $Benti$ is the source of all realities; it is always in an open process of formation and transformation. In Chinese philosophy, $benti$ is also represented by the concept of $Dao$ in $Laozi$ (老子) or the concept of $Taiji$ (太極) in $Book of Changes$. In the works of Xiong, especially in his later works, he consistently intended $benti$ when he mentioned $ti$, which referred to the ultimate reality of the world. Therefore, if the word $ti$ is simply translated as ‘substance’, it might not be sufficient to express its meaning as $benti$. Moreover, it may easily be mixed up with the Aristotelian concept of ‘substance’, which, first, usually refers to a concrete individual being that is able to exist on its own; and second, that by which a being is a being that is an essence; and third, which is also used to contrast with the multiple qualities and relations of beings (i.e. the attributes of beings). As Xiong talked about $ti$ and $yong$, the concepts of Aristotle like ‘substance’ and ‘attribute’ may be helpful to express the meaning of a concrete being and its manifestation. Yet, Xiong’s writing, the meaning of $ti$ is not as simple as ‘substance’. $T_i$ also refers to $benti$, which means the
ultimate reality of the universe. Moreover, in Chinese philosophy, the words \( ti \) and \( yong \) are often relative and context-dependant in meaning. We should thus adopt a dynamic methodology in the understanding of these words.\(^{225} \) It is particularly the dynamic meanings of the word \( ti \) in Chinese philosophy that cannot be fully expressed by the word ‘substance’. Here the word \( ti \) is usually translated as ‘ultimate reality’, instead of the usual translation ‘substance’, however, sometimes the word \( ti \) will still be translated as ‘substance’ when in its particular and original context it refers to the concrete, essential and independent existence of beings.

The concept \( yong \), literally means the manifestations of the Being and the function or the operation of beings. Zhu Xi (朱熹) has briefly illustrated the relationship of \( ti \) and \( yong \) with simple examples. Suppose that ear is \( ti \), its \( yong \) is hearing; likewise if the eye is \( ti \), its \( yong \) is seeing. When \( ti \) pertains to the intrinsic nature of a being, \( yong \) refers to its extrinsic manifestation. In Book of Changes, \( yong \) also refers to the action or the activity that people use to reach a goal. \( Yong \) can never be separated from \( ti \); but according to Xiong, \( ti \) cannot be separated from \( yong \) either. \( Yong \) and \( ti \) are in fact interdependent.\(^{226} \) Substance can never be

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\(^{225} \) A. S. Cua, Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy, s.v. “Zhu Xi”, 721,

\(^{226} \) The intact relationship between \( ti \) and \( yong \) can be summarized in the following quotation: “\( Ti \) is the abbreviation of the ultimate reality, \( yong \) (function) is the manifestations of all materials and spirits. The ultimate reality and its appearance are corresponding to each other; if there were only the ultimate reality, but no appearance, the ultimate reality would become empty and meaningless. There was no way to determine the existence of the ultimate reality. If there were only appearance, but no ultimate reality, it would mean that appearance appears suddenly without any origin, there is also no way to determine the existence of appearance.” Shili Xiong, Ti Yong lun (On the Ultimate Reality and Appearance) (Beijing: Renmin daixue chubanshe, 2006), 78. Original text: 「體，即實體之省詞；用者，功用，即心物萬象之目。體用二名，相待而立，假如說，有體而無用，敗體便空洞無所有。若爾，體之名何立？假如說，有用而無體，則用乃無原而憑空突現。…… 無體則用之名亦無由立。」 (《體用論》, 78)
found apart from its appearance, it has to be manifested by appearance. Therefore, although the
word ‘function’ seems to be a good literal translation of the word yong, yong is usually
translated as ‘appearance’ or ‘phenomenon’ in this dissertation, with an emphasis on its
metaphysical sense as the manifestation of ti. Xiong’s detailed interpretation of the words ti and
yong will be further discussed in the following section.

1.2 The Ultimate Reality and Appearance are Non-Dual

Generally speaking for Xiong ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’ and by this
he meant that substance (ti) and appearance (yong) are inseparable. This does not mean that
substance and appearance are identical, but they are united and cannot exist independent from
each other. For Xiong, substance denotes the ultimate reality (benti), which is the origin of all
substances. Appearance, literally known as ‘function’, is the manifestation of the ultimate reality.
Xiong’s view on the relationship between the ultimate reality (also substance) and appearance
can be summarized in the following quotation: “The ultimate reality is the internal foundational
origin of all beings; it cannot be mistakenly assumed that the ultimate reality exists independent
from myriad things in the world.”

In the early works of Xiong like Sin Weishilun (新唯識論 New Doctrine of
Consciousness-Only), when he mentioned ti, he was more likely to mean ‘substance’. For

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instance, he employed an example of hemp rope to illustrate the notion ‘substance and appearance are non-dual’. He stated that we usually perceive a hemp rope as a rope, without any awareness that it is actually hemp. Here, when Xiong described hemp as $ti$, he meant the ‘substance’ of hemp rope. However, in his later works, when he mentioned $ti$, he shifted to the meaning of benti (or shiti 實體), that is the ultimate reality. In his later publication Ti Yong Lun (體用論 On the Ultimate Reality and Appearance), he made a few illustrations of $ti$, where $ti$ actually meant the ultimate reality. Moreover, according to those illustrations, ultimate reality is not simple and monistic, but complex and dynamic. It involves not only materials, but also mind $(xin 心)$. Owing to the multiplicity of the ultimate reality, the contradictory forces of material and mind interact with each other and generate transformation. The ultimate reality then turns into various appearances, and so all materials and minds found in the universe are the different manifestations of the ultimate reality.

In the preface of his Sin Weishilun (New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only), Xiong stated that his main purpose in writing is to demonstrate that the ultimate reality of the universe can never be found unrelated to human mind, nor can it be understood by any cognitive knowledge of human beings. Rather, the truth of the universe can only be discovered by means of human

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228 Xiong, Sin Weishilun, 56.
229 In the present thesis, ‘mind’ is adopted as the translation of the Chinese word $xin$. In the original writing of Xiong, $xin (心)$ or $xinling (心靈) usually means ‘mind’, ‘will’ and ‘consciousness’.
beings’ self-realization and reflection. For Xiong, the ultimate reality of the universe is not something extrinsic, but exists as various phenomena and appearances. A metaphor was regularly employed by Xiong to illustrate the relationship between substance and appearance.

The substance (ti) of ocean is seawater; however one can never perceive seawater on its own, it can only be seen as different forms of foam and wave. Therefore foam and waves, just like different appearances in the universe, manifest the substance or the original nature of the ocean. Xiong made it clear that the substance of the ocean is sea water, not the perceivable foam and waves; but seawater (substance) can only be displayed by various foam and waves. Therefore, for Xiong, it can be deduced that the ultimate reality of the universe cannot be separated from various appearances found in the universe. In describing the special relationship between ti and yong, Xiong found support from one of the most important Neo-Confucians in the School of Mind, Wang, Yangming. He said, “when we speak of substance (the ultimate reality) as substance (the ultimate reality), function (appearance) is already involved in it, and when we speak of function (appearance) as function (appearance), substance (the ultimate

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230 Xiong, Sin Weishilan, 22-23.
231 This metaphor does not originate from Xiong. It first appeared in Buddhist Huayan school (華嚴宗). The early founders of Huayan School, like Dushun (杜順 557-640), Fazang (法藏 643-712), Chengguan (澄觀 737-838), were fond of using the metaphor of ocean and foam to illustrate the harmonious relationship of ‘principle’ and ‘phenomenon’ (lishi yuanrong 理事圓融), or the issue of ‘one and many’. In addition, a similar metaphor can also be found in the writings of Zhang zai (張載 1020-1077), an early Neo-Confucian, and Zhu xi (朱熹), a latter Neo-Confucian; the metaphor of ocean, ice and foam was used to discuss the issue of life and death. However, Jing stated that neither the founders of Huayan School, nor the Neo-Confucians could realize the principle of ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’ when they employed the metaphor of ocean and foam, and so Xiong had in fact offered a new insight on the use of this familiar metaphor. For detail please refer to, Jing Haifeng, Xiong Shili (Taipei: Dongda Tushu, 1991), 175-179. [Book written in Chinese]
reality) is already involved in it.”

In short, ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’ is one of the major premises for Xiong. For him, the ultimate reality is dynamic and always changing. This same reality is also the origin of all beings in the universe; various appearances in the universe are in fact the manifestations of this dynamic ultimate reality. Therefore, the understanding of ultimate reality can never be discovered apart from appearance.’

1.3 Forces of Materialisation/Concentration [closing] and Creative Unfolding [opening] form Processes of Change

Xiong believed that all beings in the universe originate from ultimate reality, which is a complex and dynamic reality with two opposite forces. These opposite forces interact with each other and lead to various changes, and then all things in the universe come into being. For Xiong, people must get hold of this mechanism of changes for a good understanding of the universe.

The cosmological view of Xiong is deeply influenced by Book of Changes. For Xiong, ‘constant change’ (hengzhuan 恆轉) characterizes the basic dynamics of the ultimate reality; there is not a moment that it does not change. It is the changes within the ultimate reality that triggers off the formation and development of all beings in the universe, and so the origin of all

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232 Xiong, Ti Yong Lun (the Ultimate Reality and Appearance), 44. Original text: 「即體而言，用在體；即用而言，體在用。」This quotation comes from the section 108 of Chuan Xi Lu of Wang, Yangming (〈傳習錄下〉, 《王陽明全集》). The translation of Chan is partially adopted here. Chan translated the word ti as ‘substance’ and yong as ‘function’; but in the present study, the word ti is basically translated as ‘the ultimate reality’ and yong as ‘phenomenon’. Refer to Wingtsit Chan, Instructions for Practical Living and other Neo-Confucian Writings (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 69.
beings is also found in the ‘constant-change’ of the ultimate reality. For Xiong, it is impossible for any being to start from nothing, therefore there must be some changes occurring in the ultimate reality in the first place for being to appear. As all changes of the ultimate reality are manifested by different appearances, it is impossible for the ultimate reality to be independent from its appearance. In the words of Xiong, “there is not a moment that the ultimate reality (\textit{shiti} 實體) does not change; that is to say, there is not a moment it does not manifest itself as function or appearance.”

Xiong proposed that the appearance of all beings is basically formed by the interaction of the forces of materialisation/concentration (\textit{xi} 翕) and creative unfolding (\textit{pi} 辟). Deeply influenced by \textit{Book of Changes}, Xiong believed in the golden principle of “things that oppose each other also complement each other” (\textit{xiangfan xiangcheng 相反相成}). The ultimate reality, as manifested by various appearances, is not stagnant but always under perpetual change. The perpetual change is triggered by two contradictory forces. On the one hand, there is a tendency to materialize (\textit{xi}), which leads to the formation of materials; on the other hand, there is a counter force of unfolding (\textit{pi}), which is basically a spiritualising tendency. The materializing tendency (\textit{xi}) leads to the formation of a myriad of phenomenal objects; however at the same time, its opposing and spiritualising tendency (\textit{pi}), is also at work and it does not allow the

\footnote{Xiong, \textit{Qian Kun Yan}, 237. Original text: 「實體無有不變動時，即無有不成為功用或現象之時。」 (《乾坤衍》，237)}
materializing tendency ($x_i$) to be overly dominant. Since the spiritualising tendency ($p_i$) can
always override the materializing tendency ($x_i$), the force of materialization ($x_i$) is finally
reversed. By the continual interaction of these two forces, a creative universe is formed. From
time to time, it leaves the past behind and creates anew; no single moment remains unchanged.
This is what Xiong meant by ‘forces of materialisation and creative unfolding lead to changes’
($x_i p_i$ chengpian 翕辟成變).

Concerning the changes of the ultimate reality, Xiong employed a trigram with three lines
to illustrate, which is derived from the sayings of Laozi, “one gives birth to two, and two gives
birth to three.” The first line is ‘constant change’, which signifies a tendency of integration, and
leads to the second line (characterized by $x_i$, the force of materialization); this is what he meant
‘one gives birth to two’. However, at the same time, another opposing force of opening and
unfolding ($p_i$) appears and acts as the third line; this is what he called “two gives birth to three”.
It should be noted that all these three lines actually occur simultaneously; there is no sequence
or any time lag between them.\textsuperscript{234}

This dynamic concept of ultimate reality has an important position in the philosophy of
Xiong. In the early works of Xiong, he consistently stressed the importance of the ultimate
reality; appearances are only the various manifestations of the ultimate reality. However, in his
later work, Xiong turned to focus on ‘appearance’, instead of the ultimate reality; he even

\textsuperscript{234} Xiong, Ti Yong Lun, 15-16.
claimed that it is “only when we focus on the various perceivable appearance that we can have a real and rich life.” Xiong’s change of focus does not mean that he had become a phenomenist, but for him, under the notion ‘forces of materialisation/concentration and creative unfolding form change’, the ultimate reality has already turned into various appearances in the universe and therefore, as we look at appearance, we are also looking at the ultimate reality. Ultimate reality is always changing as manifested by various appearances. Obviously Xiong intended to stress the dynamism of the ultimate reality.

The concepts of $xi$ and $pi$ and how their interaction generated changes are not solely developed by Xiong; rather these concepts have already been mentioned by the School of Reason of the Neo-Confucianism during the Song and Ming dynasties. Representatives of Neo-Confucius in Song dynasty like Zhang Zai (張載 1020-1077) and Cheng Yi (程頤 1033-1107) provided good explanations on these concepts and Wang Chuanshan (王船山 1619-1692), a Neo-Confucius in late Ming dynasty, also developed a precise and organized exposition on $xi$ and $pi$. $Xi$ and $pi$, claimed Wang Chuanshan, could be understood by the concepts of $yin$ and $yang$ respectively; they are manifested during the process of interaction and transformation. Besides, $xi$ and $pi$ are not separate. Whenever there is $xi$, $pi$ is also present; thus they should never be treated individually. The philosophical idea of Xiong, especially on the concepts of $xi$ and $pi$ originates from Book of Changes; but the interpretations of these concepts

235 Ibid.,308.
made by later generations also have significant bearing on Xiong’s philosophy. Even though the ideas of \(xi\) and \(pi\) are further developed and elaborated by Xiong in the modern era, people would probably not find Xiong’s interpretations unfamiliar.

1.4 Turning Inward and Examining One’s Own Self

Under the notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, Xiong believed that human beings, together with all other beings in the universe, actually share the same origin (that is the ultimate reality). Therefore, human beings and the universe are one and exist as a whole. However, Xiong also stated that human beings are superior to other creatures in the universe, since human beings are endowed with a stronger force of life and mind (\(pi\)). Therefore, when human beings strive to know the origin of the universe, what they need to do is simply to turn inward and examine their own selves. Xiong claimed that the knowledge of the universe could be acquired by ‘observing things from far away and making analogy closely within one’s person’ (\(yuanguan zhuwu, jinpi yushen\) 遠觀諸物，近譬於身).\(^{236}\) Xiong appeared to be influenced by the School of Mind of Neo-Confucianism, especially the thought of Wang Yangming, as he revised this quotation from Book of Changes. For Wang Yangming, as differentiated from the School of Reason, the mind/heart (\(xin\)) is the nature and also the

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\(^{236}\) This claim of Xiong is inspired from Book of Changes. The original text in Book of Changes is ‘consider things near at hand and also consider things at a distance’ (\(jinqu zhushen, yuanqu zhuwu\) 近取諸生，遠取諸物). It describes the method of the ancient emperor Fuxi (伏羲) how to devise the eight trigrams, which is commonly used later in the understanding of the virtues of the divine and the qualities of myriad of things. Refer to “Xi Ci II”, ch.2.
principle. It contains all principles in the universe and one can find everything inside the mind/heart. Wang Yangming believed that, in the road of acquiring sagehood, human nature is self-sufficient and there is no need to seek any help from any external forces or principles. Wang Yangming revived the concept of ‘intuitive knowledge’ (or innate knowledge) as suggested by Mencius. This idea of ‘intuitive knowledge’ refers to human’s inborn capacity to know the good. Wang Yangming stated that the illustrious virtue in the original mind of a human being is usually known as the intuitive knowledge. As human beings extend their intuitive knowledge and sweep away all barriers and obstructions caused by their selfish desires, their lost original mind can be restored and they can then become sages. Just like Wang Yangming, Xiong deeply believed that the truth of the universe and human life is to be grasped by means of existential reflection. Thus, the notion of ‘turning inward and examining one’s own self’ and its moral implications clearly owes credit to the ideas of Wang Yangming.  

According to Xiong, the ultimate reality can only be known by the force of life and mind (pi), therefore only human beings are able to do so. Plants and animals cannot do it, since they are not endowed with sufficient force of life and mind.  

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237 The anthropocentric epistemologies of Xiong and also Wang Yangming are not free from critique. The limitations and biases of human beings in acquiring information and making decisions are recognized in science and philosophy. Anthropic reasoning, which seeks to detect and improve these human biases, is always an important philosophical concern. Although the term ‘anthropic principle’ has been used to label many different things in the past few decades, it is originally coined to convey some guidelines to minimize human biases and limitations in scientific and philosophical research. Concerning the ‘anthropic principle’, one may refer to Nick Bostrom, *Anthropic Bias: Observation Selection Effects in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

238 Xiong, *Qian Kun Yan*, 410.
understand this fact without turning inward and examining their own selves by internal reflection and existential realization. Xiong was so strongly convinced of this claim that human mind/heart (xin) is consistently prominent in his writing. For example, from his early book *Sin Weishilun* (New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only) to his mature publication *Ti Yong Lun* (On the Ultimate Reality and Appearance), even though Xiong had made lots of changes and amendments, he concluded both these books by a chapter called “Understanding the mind/heart”.

Xiong always stressed that he concurred with neither idealism, nor the materialism, for both of them neglect the fact that ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, yet it can be argued that he had a bias towards idealism.239

Xiong’s preference for idealism probably originates from the traditional Doctrine of Consciousness-Only. In the explanation of his revised doctrine of Consciousness-Only in *Sin Weishilun* (New Doctrine of Consciousness-Only), Xiong stated that there is no appearance that exists unrelated to human mind/heart.240 However, it does not mean that external appearances are epistemologically insignificant; rather neither the external appearances nor human mind/heart should be neglected. These are considered to be two different aspects of the ultimate reality. Xiong’s illustration is as follows: as someone comes into contact with a white vase, what

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239 Xiong gave preference to idealism, yet this is not Platonic idealism, but rather a kind of Berkeley idealism; or it can also be described as subjective idealism. Subjective idealists believe that existence is tied to experience and objects exist as perception only. For further details, one may refer to one of the classics of George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge* ed. Colin M. Turbayne (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957).

240 Original text in Chinese: 「境不離心獨在。」
can be seen is its white colour and what can be touched is its firm and smooth surface. Therefore the external appearances of this white vase are ‘white in colour’ and ‘hard and smooth surface’, but these external appearances would not be meaningful unless they are interpreted by human mind/heart. In this human mind/heart is epistemologically significant for Xiong.

Moreover, Xiong’s preference for idealism can also be detected in his statement, ‘forces of materialization and creative unfolding form changes’. According to Xiong, the force of creative unfolding (force of mind, pi) can always override the force of materialization (force of material, xi); material (kun 坤) is always subordinate to mind (qian 乾). Mind always has determinant power over material. On the account of the formation of the universe, Xiong stated although material appears earlier than life/mind, it never means that material is superior to life/mind. On the contrary, life/mind is only hidden within the material of organisms in the first place and it soon transforms the material of organisms. For Xiong, material is closed and fixed but life/mind is lively and dynamic; therefore life/mind is always able to override material. Xiong’s fondness for life/mind, and subtle idealism, is thus demonstrated and it is therefore not surprise that he would come to an epistemological concept like ‘turning inward and examining one’s own self’.

As he further interpreted the notion of ‘turning inward and examining one’s own self’,

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241 Xiong, Qian Kun Yan, 286.
242 Ibid.
Xiong made a distinction between intuition (xingzhì 性智) and cognition (liangzhì 量智).

Intuition (xingzhì) refers to the attentiveness and awareness of the true self. This awareness arises directly and instinctively from oneself, without relying on any external medium. In contrast to intuition (xingzhì), cognition (liangzhì) comes as a result of the interactions between human senses and the external environment. In other words, the focal point of intuition is on the human’s own self, while the focus of cognition is on the external environment. Apart from intuition and cognition, Xiong also made a distinction between original mind (benxin 本心) and habitual mind (xixin 習心). According to Xiong, the original mind is quiescent, which has never been agitated or polluted, and so it is always illuminating. In order to know the true nature of the universe, people have to use their original mind, instead of the habitual mind. Nevertheless, this original mind can easily be disturbed and contaminated by cognitive knowledge; this will then turn the original mind into a habitual mind. Under the influence of cognitive knowledge, people using the habitual mind will understand their own self and other beings at the level of phenomena only and they tend to take the ‘small self’ as the only true self. Thus, Xiong claimed that ultimate reality is impossible to get a hold of if people employ their habitual mind, instead of the original mind. Xiong suggested that quiet meditation and reflection, as demonstrated in the teaching of Confucius, is very important for human beings as these practices allow human beings to be enlightened by their original mind. If people fail to do so, they will simply be
controlled by their material bodies and immerse themselves into evil desires and perplexity.

Therefore human beings should always turn inward and examine themselves since quiet
meditation and reflections have significant moral impact on human lives.

For Xiong, intuition and existential self-reflection is not only important for morality, but
also for academic pursuit. Perhaps, his emphasis on personal and subjective experience caused a
major weakness of his academic work. It can be argued that due to his emphasis on intuition,
Xiong relied on his subjective perspective in the study of ancient classics, without paying much
attention to the more objective findings of historical textual studies. For example, in the study of
Book of Changes, Xiong recognized that many original texts in Book of Changes had been
edited and revised since the Chou dynasty, and he tried hard to separate the authentic writings of
Confucius. Nevertheless he still relied on his own subjective criterion in the process of
textual analysis. He insisted that Book of Changes, including Ten Commentaries, was written by
Confucius. As a matter of fact, Xiong missed much historical evidence that a mature ontological
and cosmological system of thought, as described in Book of Changes (especially in Ten
Commentaries), had not been well established at the time of Confucius. Research has shown that
these onto-cosmological ideas were not well developed until the early Han Dynasty (at least
three hundred years later than the time of Confucius). This is obviously a major weakness of

\[243\] Almost half of the book Qian Kun Yan (The Explications of Creativity and Procreativity) is devoted to the
work of textual criticism.

\[244\] On the subject of the authorship of Ten Commentaries, it must be noted that it was Sima Qian (司馬遷
Xiong’s work.

2. The Philosophical Anthropology of Xiong

It will now become clear, in the light of the discussion of the previous chapter, that with completely different presuppositions, the anthropological approaches of Xiong and Barth are dramatically dissimilar. However, we must also note that, just like Barth, Xiong adopted a dynamic view of humanity, though it is in a very different sense from that of Barth. Based on the notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, Xiong believed that, just like the dynamic ultimate reality, humanity is also dynamic and can be manifested by various appearances. For Xiong, human nature is dynamic, for it is always able to make changes and be manifested in various ways. This is very different from Barth’s dynamic view of humanity, which is determined and destined by an extrinsic relationship with the ‘Wholly Other’ (God).

Rather, Xiong’s dynamic view of humanity is founded on an intrinsic relationship with human beings’ inner mind/heart, which allows them to get hold of the ultimate reality.

2.1 The Origin of Human Beings – Human Nature

145 B.C.- 86 B.C.?), the author of Records of Grand Historians (Shiji 史記), who first suggested that Confucius was the author of Ten Commentaries (Shiyi 十翼), however, this position was strongly criticized by Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修 1007-1072) in the Song dynasty. Ouyang Xiu stated that the content and the style of The Analects and Ten Commentaries were very different from each other and it was impossible for them to come from the same author. Besides, in some books of Ten Commentaries like “Shuo Guo Chuan”(說卦傳), the commentaries of the hexagrams involved the cosmological concepts like the principle of heaven, principle of earth and principle of human beings, these concepts were not fully established until late era of Warring States (~403BC - 221BC) or early Han dynasty (202BC - 220 AD). Presently, it is generally agreed that Ten Commentaries were written after Confucius.
Xiong denied the existence of a transcendent personal God, who creates human beings and the whole universe. For Xiong, human beings, together with all beings in the universe, originate from the ultimate reality. Consistent with his general cosmology, he believed that all beings in the world are formed as a result of the perpetual transformations of the ultimate reality.

2.1.1 Refuting the Existence of a Transcendent God

Xiong strongly opposed the idea that ultimate reality denotes a personal God as claimed by many religions. This is why he held a very critical view of religion. Starting with his basic premise ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, Xiong believed that the universe comes into beings by a process of self-changes of the ultimate reality and not by an action of an external force. Since ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, the ultimate reality is never separated from its various appearances and so there is no other way to get hold of the ultimate reality apart from its appearances. Therefore, for Xiong, it is utterly impossible for a transcendent God, who is totally different and independent from appearances, to create the universe. Even though there was a ‘God’, it should not be regarded as a transcendent Creator, but has to come after the ultimate reality (Dao). Xiong believed that the creation and the development of the universe are accomplished by the interdependence and cooperation of human beings and other beings; there is no need to have a transcendent God to create the universe. Xiong put it this way,

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245 Xiong, Yuan Ru (Original Confucianism), 211.
When all people cooperate with each other, demonstrate and develop their own talent, there will be unimaginable power. The so-called creative power of the omnipotence and omniscience God in actual fact is the power of human beings. Why do we always despise human strength and glorify the power of God? 246

The existence of a personal God, for Xiong, is a myth and a primitive belief of ancient religions, which is ‘created’ by the human beings. His negative perspective on religions can be traced throughout his writings, for example:

Heaven always refers to the heavenly king, which is an unshakable base of ancient religious belief… however, in my opinion, this belief is only popular among a sect of Confucians during the Han dynasty; but in the original writing of Confucius, *Book of Changes*, it had never mentioned the existence of such a heavenly king. 247

The religious believe that there is an omniscient and omnipotent god creating the whole universe and human beings, but the words of Confucius disagree with this view… If there was really a god in the universe, it is only created by humans. 248

Ancient religions tried to look for the origin of the myriad beings from something external to them; they mistakenly thought that there was a heaven (or there were gods) independent from the myriad beings. 249

The religious blindly believe that the heavenly king creates the myriad beings and the world; they thought the myriad beings of the universe are simply the toys of this heavenly king; which are lifeless, dependent and have no freedom. 250

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246 Ibid., 143. Original text: 「天下之人人皆互相協和，而發揚其力，勝用無窮，所謂全知全能創造世界之上帝即人力是也，何可輕人力而頌帝力乎？」（《原儒》，143）

247 Xiong, *Qian Kun Yan*, 257. Original text: 「天者，天帝，此是上古先民宗教信仰不可搖動之基石……余按本天之教，興於上古盛於漢以來之小儒，孔子之周易，根本不容天帝存在。」（《乾坤衍》，257）

248 Xiong, *Yuan Ru*, 194. Original text: 「宗教家信仰全能之一神創造世界以及吾人，孔子之道邁與彼反……宇宙果有上帝其必為人類之所造成也歟。」（《原儒》，194）

249 Xiong, *Qian Kun Yan*, 276. Original text: 「古代宗教皆求源于萬物自身以外，妄想有超脫萬物獨存之天或多神。」（《乾坤衍》，276）

250 Ibid., 278. Original text: 「宗教家迷信天帝生萬物，創世界。即以萬物為天帝隨便造作之玩具。萬物
2.1.2 The Understanding of the Ultimate Reality

Thus, for Xiong, the origin of human beings originates in ultimate reality. He clearly refuted the idea that human nature is created by a personal and transcendent God; rather, it comes from a complicated and dynamic reality. In *Qian Kun Yan* (乾坤衍 The Explications of Creativity and Procreativity), Xiong defined the ultimate reality as follows: ²⁵¹

- The ultimate reality is neither materialistic nor spiritual, but is composed of material, mind and life. It is complicated.

- The ultimate reality is not static, but dynamic. It always changes with something new.

- The dynamic ultimate reality is manifested by various appearances. Owing to ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, the ultimate reality turns into various appearances. No reality is found independent from these appearances.

- Appearance can be understood in two aspects, namely material and mind, since the ultimate reality consists of these two aspects.

- The dynamic changes of the ultimate reality is triggered by the interaction of two contradictory forces found in the ultimate reality, that is, the force of materialization [closing] (xi, which leads to the formation of material) and the force of creative unfolding [opening] (pi, which leads to the formation of mind).

²⁵¹ Xiong, *Ti Yong Lun*, 135.
The force of materialization and the force of creative unfolding contradict each other, but mind (force of creative unfolding) can always override material (force of materialization). Material will finally be transformed by mind so that it becomes complementary to mind. Therefore, although material and mind oppose to each other, they complement as well.

In short, Xiong considered the ultimate reality as a dynamic reality; its dynamism is generated by the interaction of contradictory forces and manifested by various appearances.

2.1.3 Criticisms of Buddhist Thought

Xiong had special interest in the study of the ultimate reality and appearance; his early study of the Buddhist doctrines had some bearing on his view of the ultimate reality, even though he always criticised the teaching of the Madhyamika (kongzong 空宗) or the Yogacara (youzong 有宗). In his quest of cosmology, Xiong first attempted to find the answer from the Madhyamika and the Yogacara, yet he could not get a satisfactory account of the relationship of ultimate reality and appearance until he came across with the Confucian perspective, especially the Book of Changes.²⁵²

2.1.3.1 Criticism of Madhyamika

For Xiong, ultimate reality is the purest and unconditioned reality, which is very similar to the ‘true reality as it is’ (zhenru 真如, true dharma or faxing 法性) in Buddhism. According to Xiong, Madhyamika advocated dispelling all appearances, which is unreality, in order to see the

²⁵² Ibid., 29.
true ultimate reality. Xiong agreed with the notion ‘dispel the appearance for the revelation of the ultimate reality’ (破相顯性); therefore he deeply believed that ‘the habitual mind’ (習心) of human beings, which has been contaminated by various appearances, is a great hindrance to the quest of the ultimate reality. That is the reason why Xiong insisted that no one is able to know the ultimate reality truly unless ‘the original mind’ of human beings is employed.253

However, Xiong did not agree with Madhyamika that the ultimate reality, or in Buddhist term zhenru or faxing, is nothing and therefore unreality. Xiong’s interpretation of the zhenru or faxing of Madhyamika came in response to one of its major classics, The Heart Sutra. It is stated that ‘five Skandhas’(五蘊) are all empty. The ‘five Skandhas’, or ‘five aggregates’, is an analysis and categorization of personal experiences, they are called aggregates because they work together to form a mental being. The Five Skandhas are form, feeling, perception, mental formation and consciousness respectively. The aggregate of form refers to physical organs, like eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, and their corresponding senses, like sight, sound, smell, taste and touch; and the other four aggregates denote other personal mental experiences. The aggregate of form governs the other four aggregates; therefore, as ‘form does not differ from emptiness; emptiness does not differ from form’. Form itself is emptiness; emptiness itself is

253 Xiong, Xiong Shili Quan Ji, 10 vols. (Collected Works of Xiong Shili), vol. 3 (Wuhan: Hubei jiao yu chu ban she, 2001), 21; Xiong, Sin Weishilun, 27.
form; so is feeling, cognition (or perception), (mental) formation, and consciousness.\textsuperscript{254} Madhyamika believed that the origin of all phenomena is interdependent, they arise from causes and conditions and they are obliterated by causes and conditions as well.\textsuperscript{255} Therefore, phenomena and forms do not have their own independent existence.\textsuperscript{256} That is the reason why form, together with the other four aggregates, is all empty.

As appearances or phenomena do not have their own independent existences, Xiong stated that one should not be distracted by appearances and get to know the ultimate reality directly by intuition. In this sense, Xiong concurred with Madhyamika on the idea of ‘dispelling the appearance and reveal the ultimate reality’.\textsuperscript{257} However, Xiong criticized Madhyamika for failing to realize the fact that ‘the ultimate reality and appearances are non-dual’. Therefore, as they neglect appearances, the ultimate reality would become static. Thus for Xiong, Madhyamika had erroneously assumed a static nature of the ultimate reality\textsuperscript{258} when in actual fact ultimate reality is truly dynamic.\textsuperscript{259}

Xiong’s criticism against Madhyamika has aroused many counter critiques from the

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\textsuperscript{255} Original text: 『諸法因緣生，諸法因緣滅。』

\textsuperscript{256} Original text: 『諸法無自體。』

\textsuperscript{257} Xiong, \textit{Tī Yong Lun}, 31-35.

\textsuperscript{258} Xiong, \textit{Collected works of Xiong Shili}, vol. 3, 171-172; Shili Xiong, \textit{Shili Yuyao} (Important Conversations of Shili) (Beijing: Xinhua Shudian, 1996), 43.

\textsuperscript{259} Xiong, \textit{Collected works of Xiong Shili}, vol. 3, 175, 177, 188.
\end{flushright}
Buddhists. He is criticized for his erroneous understanding of the nature of faxing.

Madhyamika claimed to have a different understanding of ‘faxing’ which is not what Xiong is meant by the ultimate reality. The emptiness of ‘faxing’, as suggested by Madhyamika, is derived from ‘dependent origination’ (yuansheng 緣生), a doctrine that advocates that the origins of all appearances in the universe are interdependent, they arise from causes and conditions and they are obliterated by causes and conditions as well. However, Xiong, influenced by the idea of ultimate reality in *Book of Changes*, believed that the idea of ‘dependent origination’ does not provide a satisfactory cosmological explanation, as it focuses on the myriad appearances only, without any tracing of the origin of myriad beings. Xiong’s disagreement with Madhyamika on the understanding of the ‘ultimate reality’ and appearances must be understood in the light of his focus on cosmology whereas Madhyamika does not intend to develop any cosmological explanation of the universe. Madhyamika’s main aim with the sayings of ‘dependent origination’ is to ‘wipe out appearance and dismiss any erroneous persistence’ (dangxiang qianzhi 蕩相遣執). It is thus clear that Xiong is obviously more affected by Confucianism than Buddhist Madhyamika. His criticism of Madhyamika demonstrates his basic understanding of the ultimate reality, which is the cosmological origin of the universe.

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261 Original text: 「諸法因緣生，諸法因緣滅。」

262 Xiong, *Ti Yong Lun*, 76.
2.1.3.2 Criticisms of Yogacara

Unlike Madhyamika, Yogacara claims the existence of a true and everlasting reality and so, for Xiong, Yogacara is an improvement over Madhyamika in developing a good theory of cosmology. When dealing with the fact of changing phenomena, Yogacara does not claim that reality is nothing but teaches that ‘Alayavijnana’ (種子識 alaya consciousness, the eighth consciousness in the doctrine of Consciousness-only) is the abode of consciousness from which all appearances spring. In particular, beings in the universe are created and regulated by the seeds underlying in their alaya consciousness; these seeds will be activated by the interactions of the beings and then induce the creation of new seeds. Therefore, alaya consciousness is the origin of myriad beings. However, Xiong was not satisfied with the sayings of Yogacara either. For Xiong, instead of dismissing the origin of the universe like Madhyamika, Yogacara have produced too many origins.

Xiong’s criticisms of Yogacara are twofold. First, Yogacara makes a distinction between appearances and their origins. Secondly, by affirming both the zhenru and ‘seed’ as the origins of appearance, Yogacara creates ‘double origins’ for the universe. In the case of his first critique Xiong stated that unlike Madhyamika, Yogacara affirms the existence of appearance and so they would attempt to look for the ultimate origin of myriad appearances. Finally they came to a conclusion that all appearances come from the activity of ‘seeds’, which are hidden within the

\[263\] Ibid., 53.
Alaya consciousness (the eighth and the last consciousness). However, as appearance comes into being, it is then separated from seed. Just like the relationship of mother and child; child comes from mother, but they are actually two individuals.\textsuperscript{264} The separation of appearances and their origin is obviously a contradiction of Xiong’s notion of ‘the ultimate reality and appearances are non-dual’.

In Xiong’s critique of ‘double origins’ in Yogacara he argued that by declaring ‘seeds’, which are hidden in alaya consciousness, as the origin of appearances, Yogacara actually provides a sound theory of cosmology. However, in as much as Yogacara claims the seeds of alaya consciousness as the origin of beings they does not refute the old teaching of \textit{zhenru} as the ultimate reality, nor do they give any satisfactory explanation on the relationship of ‘seeds’ and \textit{zhenru}. In this way, Xiong argued that they are actually created ‘double origins’ of the universe.

Xiong’s criticism of Yogacara has also received lots of counter arguments. Just like Madhyamika, Yogacara also advocated for ‘dependent origination’, which suggested that the origin of all appearances in the universe are interdependent, they arise from causes and conditions and they are obliterated by causes and conditions as well. However, unlike Madhyamika who regarded all the changes of the universe as emptiness, Yogacara attempted to give an explanation of the ever changing phenomena of the universe by introducing the non-stop interaction of seeds in alaya consciousness. As a matter of fact, they never meant to deal with

\textsuperscript{264} Xiong, \textit{Sin Weishilan}, 123.
the issue of ‘origin’ or ‘first cause’ of the universe with the doctrine of consciousness-only.

Unlike the Confucians who focus on examining the origin of the universe, Buddhists, including Madhyamika and Yogacara, follow an approach of assuming ‘no beginning’. 265

We can conclude that Xiong’s critique of Madhyamika and Yogacara may not be completely justified, for Xiong seems to have misunderstood what Madhyamika intends to mean by *zhēnru* and also what Yogacara intends with the doctrine of the ‘seeds in alaya consciousness’. However, from these critiques we can conclude that Xiong was more strongly influenced by traditional Confucianism than Buddhism.

2.1.4 The ultimate Reality as *Dao*

In the eyes of Xiong, the ultimate reality itself does not have any image, but encloses all the goodness and principles of the universe and there are numerous potentials in ultimate reality.266 It is a lively dynamic reality, manifested by various appearances in the world. The ultimate reality could not exist without appearance; otherwise ultimate reality would only be a null reality. Likewise, appearance could not exist without the ultimate reality; otherwise appearance would emerge suddenly without any origin and basis.267 Ultimate reality is manifested in the form of various appearances both in the forms of material and mind. Material and mind are always changing without any stasis; they are two different aspects of appearance.

265 Huang, 24.
266 Xiong, *Sin Weishilun*, 127.
267 Xiong, *Ti Yong Lun*, 78.
For Xiong, this understanding of ultimate reality and appearance is the result of his detailed observation of the heaven and the earth, a close examination of various people and things, together with a prolonged contemplation and study on *Book of Changes*. Clearly, this is a profound insight for him.\(^{268}\)

Xiong stood firmly in the Confucian tradition, as he attempted to explain his cosmology by employing the concept of *Dao*. For him, *Dao* is the origin of myriad beings in the universe. According to *Book of Changes*, *Dao* is constituted by the successive interactions of *yin* and *yang*. *Dao* is neither *yin* and *yang*, but a principle of continual operations of *yin* and *yang*. Myriad beings in the universe originate from *Dao* - the principle of continual operations. *Dao* is the origin of the myriad beings and the myriad beings are not separated from *Dao*; it is like ocean water is the origin of foam and yet foam cannot separated from ocean water.\(^{269}\) *Dao* is the ultimate reality and the myriad beings are its manifestations. *Dao* cannot exist independent from myriad beings, it has to be revealed by the appearances of various beings, yet the myriad beings are all created and originate from *Dao*, which is the basic principle of the universe.\(^{270}\)

2.1.5 *Dao* as the Origin of Human nature

As myriad beings originate from *Dao*, human beings make up one of the myriad of beings and so they come from *Dao* as well. Thus, human beings and the myriad of beings share the

\(^{268}\) Ibid., 80.

\(^{269}\) Xiong, Yuan Ru, 179.

\(^{270}\) Ibid., 180-181.
same origin. However at the same time, human beings are unique among the myriad of beings, since human beings, with mind and spirit, are able to understand the principle of *Dao*. Furthermore, human beings are not only able to know *Dao*, they can also help to fulfil and reveal the great principle of *Dao*. Virtue (*de* 德) is the manifestation of *Dao* in human beings and it is also the basic principle of human lives. If human beings do not live with virtue, the principle of *Dao* could not be revealed and fulfilled. Confucius said, “A person can promote and develop the Way (*Dao)*.” By relating virtue (*de*) to *Dao*, Xiong added ethical implications to his cosmology. Xiong argued that the interaction of kindness (*ren* 仁) and righteousness (*yi* 義) in human beings is also like the interaction of *yin* and *yang* in *Dao*. Therefore human life with kindness and righteousness should also be a dynamic process of renovation, just like *Dao*. In this way human nature is always dynamic and so human life is filled with lots of potential.

There is similarity between Barth and Xiong’s dynamic views of human nature. For Barth, human beings are destined and determined by God the Creator and so their existences are founded on their relationship with God the Creator. For Xiong, human beings originate from a dynamic ultimate reality or, in Confucian terms, *Dao*. For Xiong, human life is not passively determined and destined; but a process of dynamic renewal, just like *Dao*.

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271 Ibid., 188.
272 Ibid., 184-185.
273 Original text: 「人能弘道。」 Refer to “Wei Ling Gong,” *The Analects*. 《論語 · 卫靈公》
274 Xiong, *Yuan Ru*, 196.
2.2 The Existence of Human Beings – The Relationship Among Human Beings

Based on the primary notion of ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, Xiong claimed that the relationship between human beings should be realized in Confucius’ dream of a world of great harmony.

We have seen how consistently, in the philosophy of Xiong, the ultimate reality is not independent from appearance. Appearance is simply the various manifestations of the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality and appearance are not split, but is a whole. The human implication for this is that both heart/mind and material are appearances; they are simply different aspects of manifestation of the ultimate reality. Likewise, a human being is also one of the manifestations of the ultimate reality; every human individual is in fact a part of the whole universe.¹⁷⁵

For this reason, Xiong tried to explain the relationship among human beings in terms of his political ideal of collectivism. In Yuan Ru (原儒 Original Confucianism), Xiong made his unique interpretation on Confucius’ teachings of ‘inner sagehood and outer kingship’ (neisheng waiwang 内聖外王). According to Xiong, there are two main streams of Confucius’ teachings, namely, practical teachings and philosophical teachings.¹⁷⁶ The former is related to the teaching of ‘outer kingship’ (waiwang), while the latter talks about ‘inner sagehood’ (neisheng). The teaching of ‘outer kingship’ promotes ‘rite’ (li 禮) and ‘order’ (xu 序) in the society and shows

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 188.
¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 14.
how a society can be developed with prosperity and stability. Xiong stated that this teaching is founded on the fact that all things in the universe are united and as a whole; in a particular society, the responsibility of a king is to direct everyone in the society to the road of unity, peace and harmony.

Convinced that *Six Classics* (六經) were the work of Confucius, Xiong explicated ‘outer kingship’ with reference to *Six Classics*, especially *Book of Changes* (易經), *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋) and *Book of Rites* (禮記). From the teachings of these books, Xiong promoted a harmonious society, as suggested by Confucius in the section of ‘great harmony’ in the chapter “Conveyance of the Rites” (Liyun 禮運) in *Book of Rites*. It is said that a perfect society is formed when the ‘grand course’ (Dadao 大道) is pursued. In this perfect world, the country is ruled by a public and common spirit instead of family inheritance. Capable people with talent and virtue are chosen, their words are sincere and what they cultivate is harmony. They will not love their parents only and treat other children as their own. A competent provision is secured for the aged until their death, employment for those in robust health and proper education for youth. People will share kindness and compassion with the widows, orphans, childless people and those who are disabled by diseases, so that everyone is well cared for. Men have their proper work and women have their homes. Things people do not like can be thrown away, with

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277 Ibid., 17-19.
278 Ibid., 23.
no need to keep them; people have no need to work on what they dislike. In this way, rebellion will not be successful and there will not be any robbers; doors can always remain open. This is what is called the ‘great harmony’ (datong 大同). This is the utopian world suggested by Confucius and this is also the perfect world advocated by Xiong.

Further to his cosmology, Xiong drew an ethical implication from his notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’. According to Xiong, the ultimate reality can also be called qian yuan (乾元) in Book of Changes and qian can also be manifested as ‘humanity’ (ren 仁 kindness). Therefore, at the human aspect, qian (乾) (the ultimate reality) can be manifested by realizing ren within human beings; in particular, by abandoning private interests and focusing on the interests of the whole society. Realizing the ren within individuals, or in Confucian term neisheng (內聖 inner sagehood), is a process of personal cultivation. Having accomplished neisheng, sages should aim at waiwang (外王 outer kingship), which devises a system to bring about a peaceful and stable society.

Hence, in order to develop a perfect society with harmonious relationship among human

279 Refer to “The Conveyance of Rites” in The Book of Rites, the English translation here is a revised version of James Legge translation (1885). The original text in Chinese: 「大道之行也，天下為公，選賢與能，講信修睦。故人不獨親其親，不獨子其子，使老有所終，壯有所用，幼有所長，矜寡孤獨廢疾者，皆有所養。男有分，女有歸，貨惡其棄於地也，不必藏於已。力惡其不出於身也.不必為已。是故謀閉而不興，盜竊亂賊而不作，故外戶而不閉，是謂大同。」

280 Xiong, Yuan Ru,132. Xiong related ‘Qian yuan’ to the ultimate reality by citing “Tuan Zhuan”(彖傳) in Book of Changes, “Great indeed is the sublimity of the Creative (Qian yuan), to which all beings owe their beginning and which permeates all heaven.” Original text: 「大哉乾元，萬物資始，乃統天。」

281 Xiong, Yuan Ru,132. Original text: 「乾為仁。」

282 Ibid.
beings, Xiong argued that private interests (small self) have to be given up for the goodness of the whole community (big self).  

‘Small self’ refers to the material part of human beings. If people put all their attention to their own ‘small self’, they are actually spoiling themselves in material desires and prejudice and humanity (ren) cannot be realized in the society. Therefore, Xiong asserted that human beings should immerse themselves into the ‘big self’, in which they can experience the unity with the whole society. As everybody in the society gives up his or her ‘small self’ for the goodness of the ‘big self’, everybody will know how to love the other. In this way ‘humanity’ (ren) can be realized. Furthermore, equality and integrity are also the most important elements among human beings. If there is no integrity, the whole society will be destroyed by persecutors and a satisfactory social order can never be developed.

If we compare the anthropologies of Xiong and Barth, it becomes apparent that both Xiong and Barth advocated a kind of ‘co-humanity’, though their presuppositions are very different from each other. For Barth, the co-humanity of human beings is based on the fact that God is a triune God and Jesus Christ is the ‘man for his human fellows’. It is God who creates human beings and so human beings can never be separated from God. Human beings, therefore, are able to maintain a good relationship with others, if they keep a good relationship with their divine covenant partner, God the Creator. The divine based co-humanity not only builds up the

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283 Ibid.,108.
284 Ibid.,132-134.
285 Ibid.,113.
relationship between human beings, it also maintains the individuality of human beings.

However, for Xiong, the co-humanity of human beings is founded on the ‘humanity’ (ren) within every human being. When human beings are able to cultivate their ‘inner sagehood’, they will also be able to have good relationships with others and to manifest ‘outer kingship.’ In short, for Barth, the relationship between human beings is founded on their personal relationship with the transcendent God the Creator; but for Xiong, the relationship with one’s inner self (the big self) is more crucial in building up co-humanity. Even though it seems that both Barth and Xiong have similar views on the relationship among human beings, it is also important to note that their different presuppositions lead to different implications on their understanding of this co-humanity. Barth tended to be more individualistic while Xiong tended to be more collectivistic.

2.3 The Existence of Human Beings – Mind and Body

Unlike Barth, Xiong did not specifically discuss the relationship of human mind and body. However, Xiong’s view can be deduced from his illustration of the dynamic relationship of mind (xin 心) and material (wu 物). Barth’s theological perspective is consistently related to Jesus Christ. Xiong’s philosophical perspective is consistently related to his basic notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’. Based on this fundamental notion, Xiong stated that human beings and all other beings in the universe share the same origin and therefore they are
one and as a whole. However, for Xiong, human beings are superior to the rest of the creatures in the universe because human beings are equipped with a stronger force of mind (\(pi\) or ‘force of unfolding’), which is able to know the ultimate reality. In another basic notion of Xiong ‘the forces of materialization and creative unfolding form processes of changes’, it is stated there are two forces in the operations of the ultimate reality, namely, the force of materialization (\(xi\)) and the force of unfolding (\(pi\)). The force of \(pi\), or the force of mind, can always override the force of \(xi\), the force of material. Therefore as human beings are equipped with stronger force of \(pi\), the mind of human beings can also override the material part of human beings.

According to Xiong, the forces of materialization (\(xi\)) and unfolding (\(pi\)) interact with each other, thus different appearances in the universe are formed. Materials come from the process of concentration leading towards materialisation, but whenever there is a tendency of concentration, a counter force of unfolding, opening and creative advancement emerge at the same time and does not allow the force of materialization to be overly dominant. This force of unfolding, which is also a spiritualising tendency, always overrides the force of concentration (materializing tendency) and leads to perpetual changes in the universe. Therefore, for Xiong, mind is always more powerful than material.

In his later publication *Qian Kun Yan* (The Explications of Creativity and Procreativity), Xiong further explained the relationship between mind and material. In this regard two forces
are identified, namely the force of *qian* (乾), which refers to mind, and the force of *kun* (坤), which refers to implementation and materialisation. The whole universe is formed by the interaction of these two forces. Xiong put it this way:

The development of all appearances in the universe starts in the very beginning. Heaven was formed and stars were scattered in the sky, materials also started to come into being. After the emergence of non-living materials, living organisms also began to appear. The force of mind was lively and it was always so strong that it could transform the rigid non-living material and turned them into living organisms.286

For Xiong, *qian* is more powerful than *kun*. *Qian* is a creative force and is always ‘going up’. *Kun*, implementing and materialising, is also a powerful force, just like a force of explosion, but it is always ‘going down’ and sinking. *Kun* cannot make any changes by itself; it has to be led by *qian*. The force of mind (*qian*), on one hand, can transform materials in the universe; on the other hand, it can also transform itself. The force of mind first turns the non-living materials into living organisms like plants and inferior animals. It then continues to transform these living organisms and develops them into superior animals, and finally they develop into human beings. Hence, human beings are sharing the same origin with other beings in the universe, but they are in fact different from them since they are holding stronger *qian*. Although plants and animals possess *qian* as well, they are not like human beings, as the force of mind found in them is not

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286 Original text: 「則以萬有現象之發展，蓋自鴻荒肇啟。無量諸天體逐漸凝成、散佈天空。是為物質現盛著之始。無機物世界既成。生物相繼出世。是為生命力，以剛健自勝。轉化固閉之物質，而創成生機體。」 Xiong, *Qian Kun Yan*, 238.
as strong as that in human beings. In short, for Xiong, human beings, equipped with force of
mind, enjoy a superior position in the universe. Moreover, in the constitution of human beings,
mind is also superior to material.

Xiong’s anthropology on the relationship between mind and material formulates a very
positive view on human nature and existence. Human beings are always able to make changes,
whatever their present situation is. This anthropological perspective has been especially
important to Chinese people during the time of tribulation in the 20th century. With this positive
view of human existence, Xiong intended to encourage his Chinese fellows that they can always
make a difference in their present life, even though they may feel helpless under their miserable
conditions. As we noted in the previous chapter, for Barth, the dialectic relationship between
mind and body asserts the indispensable position of an external power, that is the Holy Spirit, in
human life. For Xiong, the superior status of mind over material affirms the internal creative
power of human inner self.

2.4 Human Destiny and Transcendence

2.4.1 Xiong’s View of Death

Xiong seldom mentioned ‘death’ in his writings; rather, he stressed the present life of
human beings. For him, death may put an end to the life of an individual; however, it can

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287 Xiong, Yuan Ru, 188.
288 Xiong, Shili Yuyao, 219.
never terminate human life as a collective community. In the opinion of Xiong, human beings should always perceive themselves in terms of a ‘big self’. Therefore, the death of an individual is only an end of ‘small self’, but the ‘big self’ will continue forever without cessation. This view of death is obviously related to Xiong’s collective view of humanity. When human individuals perceive themselves as a ‘big self’, their lives and death are not a private matter but is related to the whole community. In terms of this view of human death and destiny, Xiong stated that human individuals have no need to think too much on their afterlife because the present life is more important. The concern of people should be how to get along well with the whole community in their present lives. Therefore, self-reflection on their present life is always a good practice and it should be engaged all the time so that people would not think too much of their ‘small self’ and immerse themselves more in the ‘big self’.

2.4.2 The Meaning of Transcendence

The emphasis of ‘big self’ is important in Xiong’s discussion of ‘human transcendence’. Unlike traditional Western understanding, Chinese tradition has a different interpretation on the word ‘transcendence’. With a Latin origin, the word ‘transcendence’ in the Western world used to have a literal meaning of ‘climbing above’ or ‘going beyond’ boundaries and normal limits. However, for Chinese people, ‘transcendence’ refers to the experience of being united with the universe. When Xiong employed the term ‘human transcendence’ he meant it in this Chinese

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289 Xiong, Qian Kun Yan, 355.
way. Based in Xiong’s basic premise ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, the ultimate reality and appearances (including material and mind) are thus not independent and separated, but are able to communicate to one another, or even merge. Therefore, human beings are thrilled when they discover and experience that they are ‘as a whole’ with the universe.

Xiong’s view of human transcendence can especially be found in his discussion of ‘the union of the heaven and human beings’. According to the doctrine that ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, Xiong proposed that human beings are actually united with heaven. This means that for Xiong, human beings are the same as heaven; heaven is also the same as human beings. Thus human beings are not found beyond heaven and heaven is also not found beyond human beings. Xiong argued that his meaning of ‘heaven’ is different from that of the Chinese classic perspective. In classical Chinese writings, there are several meanings of ‘heaven’, it may denote the sky with the moon and stars, or simply refers to the natural world. It also refers to an unlimited and unreachable reality, or even a transcendent God. However, for Xiong, these are not the most accurate connotations of ‘heaven’ in the Confucian thought. He stated that ‘heaven’ refers to the ultimate reality of the whole universe, or in Confucian term Dao. The whole universe is formed by yin and yang of Dao. Dao contains the force of mind (yang) and the force of materials (yin), and the interaction of these two forces forms the whole universe. Therefore, Dao (the ultimate reality) is the origin of all manifestations, including all
human beings, in the universe. As ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’, human beings are united with the ultimate reality and human beings are therefore united with the heaven as well. This is what Xiong meant by ‘the unity of heaven and humans’. In the words of Xiong, “everything is Dao and Dao is everything.” It means that the heaven, or Dao, is actually found in every human being as part of the myriad things.

2.4.3 The Ways to Achieve Transcendence

2.4.3.1 Abandoning the ‘Small Self’

Xiong claimed that human beings would never be able to reach the state of ‘the union of the heaven and human beings’ unless they abandon their ‘small self’. For Xiong, human beings are endowed with an active and dynamic force of mind. However, if human beings focus only on their ‘small self’, they will simply indulge in their material desires and be conditioned by their prejudice. Moreover, the dynamic force of mind within themselves will also be obstructed. The ‘small self’ is the material part of human beings; it must be restrained by the force of mind. When people realize that they are actually united with the whole universe, they can then turn their focus from the ‘small self’ to the ‘big self’; they are also able to manifest and extend their true humanity in constant invention and creation. In short, if human beings can overcome and regulate their ‘small self’, Dao can be realized in their life and they can reach the

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290 Xiong, Yuan Ru, 183.
291 Ibid., 242.
transcendent state of ‘the union of heaven and human beings.’

2.4.3.2 Realizing the humanity (ren) Within

In Yuan Ru (Original Confucianism), Xiong stated that the teachings in Book of Songs (Shijing 詩經), Book of Rites (Liji 禮記), and Book of Music (Yuejing 樂經) describe human transcendent experiences by taking pleasure in music or poems. When human beings immerse themselves in enjoying music, they find themselves non-separated from the music, and even united with the whole universe. In this state of transcendent experience, Xiong claimed that human beings are able to restore the experience of being united with the universe, which they may have once lost when human beings focus on their ‘small self’. In this state of transcendence, the dynamic force of life in human beings is also reinforced. Xiong related his notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’ to traditional Confucian teachings of ‘humanity’ (ren 仁) and ‘righteousness’ (li 禮). He claimed that the relationship between ‘humanity’ and ‘righteousness’ is like that of the ultimate reality and appearance. ‘Humanity’ is the core and the basic part of humans and it is usually manifested by ‘righteousness’. Therefore, ‘humanity’ and ‘righteousness’ are non-dual and as a whole, just like the relationship between the ultimate

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292 Ibid., 182.
293 Ibid., 248-249.
294 In a study contrasting the different views of Barth and Xiong, it is interesting to mention Barth’s love of Mozart’s music here. Barth started every day listening to Mozart and even left the question open that Mozart could have been an angel! See, Karl Barth, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, foreword by John Updike, with a new foreword by Paul Louis Metzger (1986; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003), 60. In the words of Xiong, Barth was definitely in a state of transcendence with Mozart’s music.
cultivating internal ‘humanity’ can also be employed to revive the dynamic life force of human nature. Music, poems and rites are some of the ways that facilitate this process. Nevertheless, for Xiong, human beings must first learn to set aside their ‘small self’ for the goodness of the ‘big self’. Just like the teaching in Book of Rites, sages must be humble and learn to respect the others. 295

2.4.3.3 Self-Reflection and Illumination

For Xiong, self-reflection and illumination is the means of reaching the state of transcendence, which is the experience of being united with the universe. This is not simply a conceptual and theological construction, but a kind of existential self-realization. This is reflected in the words in Book of Changes, “observing things from far away and making analogy closely in one’s person” (yuanguan zhuwu, jinpi yushen). For Xiong, the main task of human beings, on their way searching for the origin of the universe and the truth of humanity, is to turn inward and examine their own selves. 296 Human beings will not be able to understand the truth of humanity, unless they look into their own internal life. This echoes the teachings of Confucius who encouraged the sages to do regular reflections. The main purpose of learning Confucianism is to know and to understand one’s own self, yet it is important to note that this ‘self’ always

295 Ibid., 242.
296 This is also the main premise of Xiong in his book Ming Xin Pian (Understanding the mind); this premise of Xiong is also shown by his advocacy of intuition (xingzi 性智), instead of cognition (liangzi 量智); and also original mind (benxin 本心), instead of habitual mind (xixin 習心), refer to Xiong, Sin Weishilun, 23-28.
refers to the ‘big self’ (the interest of the whole community) instead of the ‘small self’ (private interest). Xiong believed that the ‘small self’ denotes the material part of life and it is an obstacle for human beings to reach the state of transcendence. Therefore, for Xiong, the only way to lay down the ‘small self’ is to practise constant quiet meditation, self-reflection and obtaining enlightenment. For Xiong, when people turn inward and examine their own self, they will be able to get rid of their ‘small self’ and immerse themselves into the ‘big self’, they can also experience a great union with the universe. It is similar to the Buddhist method of ‘sitting in meditation’ and Wang Yangming’s method of extending one’s innate knowledge.

Clearly, Westerners like Barth and Chinese like Xiong have very different understandings of ‘human transcendence’. For Westerners, transcendence means the experience of going beyond limits, but for Chinese, transcendence refers to the experience of being united with the universe. Unlike most Westerners who may feel anxious and restless with human finitude, Chinese seldom have a compulsion to go beyond human limits; rather they always strive for a calm and peaceful union with the universe and the external environment. In addition, traditional Chinese hardly have a concept of ‘final judgement’, and they may not even think that there will be a final ending of the world. Therefore, instead of living with an eschatological expectation, the Chinese emphasize living in their present existence. Therefore, for Xiong, the perfect state for human beings is found in ‘the union of heaven and human beings’ and this is also what he
believed was the goal and destiny of human beings.

3. The Dilemma Between Human Transcendence and Limitation

Xiong attributed the cause of the tension between human transcendence and human limitation to the dialectics of ‘small self’ and ‘big self’. For him, this human struggle is simply the result of human beings’ indulgence in their ‘small self’. He believed that it would be resolved if human beings immerse themselves in the ‘big self’ by constant self-reflection. Furthermore, Xiong contrasted the difference between original mind (benxin) and habitual mind (xixin), as well as intuition (xingzhi) and cognition (liangzhi). For Xiong, as long as human beings employ their original mind and intuition in their daily life, they will be able to be free from this struggle.

We can observe, similar to Barth, that the philosophy of Xiong is also an attempt to deal with various dialectics, like the dialectic between ti (the ultimate reality/substance) and yong (appearance), the dialectic between xi (force of materialization) and pi (force of creative unfolding) and also the dialectic between mind and material. For Xiong, there is an inseparable relationship in these dialectics; they are different, yet they are not independent from each other. The ‘non-dual’ and inseparable relationship between ti and yong gives an explanation of the origin of the universe (and also human beings). Besides, the inseparable relationship between xi and pi leads to the formation and operation of the universe by perpetual transformation.
Applying these dialectics to the understanding of human beings, Xiong believed that human beings, just like the dynamic ultimate reality, are also endowed with creative and dynamic power.

When we compare the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong, it is clear that Barth attempted to bring people back to what he believed the origin of human beings - God the Creator and the Wholly Other. However, Xiong attempted to turn people internally to their own selves. It has to be noted that, for Xiong, ‘self’ always denotes the ‘big self’, that is the collective self, instead of ‘small self’, the human individuals. For Barth, human struggle is originated from the broken relationship with God the Creator and so human struggle will be settled if the broken relationship is reconciled. Yet for Xiong, human struggle comes from the broken relationship with the ‘big self’ (collective self) and therefore human beings can never resolve the struggle unless they make themselves harmonious with the community.

After detailed examination of the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong, there is no denying that Barth and Xiong have fundamentally different approaches. Their differences are not only due to their cultural variation, but also their disparity in academic disciplines. However, their differences and variations may help to provide a new picture in the understanding of humanity. In the following chapter, the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong will be examined more deeply by the method of contrast.
Chapter VI

Contrast and Dialogue

‘Contrast’ is “an interplay between complementarity and difference, continuity and discontinuity, distancing and co-belongingness, which constitutes the structure as well as the dynamism of objects under investigation, including science and human society.”

It is a basic way of thinking and praxis; whenever there are contrasts and differences happening in some phenomena, the method of contrast calls people to discover the mutual similarities and continuities within those phenomena, provided that differences are well respected. This process of discovery can be carried out in the form of inner dialogue, in which three processes, namely re-examination, exploration and finally comparison and contrast are undertaken.

In the previous two chapters, the first two processes of inner dialogue, that is re-examination and exploration, are carried out by scrutinizing the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong. In this chapter, we come to the last process, comparison and contrast. Here two types of contrasts, namely structural contrast and dynamic contrast, are engaged to compare and contrast the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong. In structural contrast, the objective variations of Barth and Xiong’s anthropologies are listed side by side. This list of variations, on one hand, helps to identify the underlying issues contributing to the different viewpoints of

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298 Please refer to Chapter II Methodology for details.
Barth and Xiong. On the other hand, it facilitates the process of dynamic contrast in the form of dialogue.

1. Structural contrast

1.1 Definition

According to the method of contrast, structural contrast is basically a description of “the configuration and coordination of the elements found in a phenomenon at a particular point of time”. In the following section, the anthropological perspectives of Barth and Xiong are listed side by side for structural contrast.

1.2. Structural contrast

1.2.1 Structural Contrast of the Basic Presuppositions on the Anthropologies of Xiong and Barth

Barth, a theologian, and Xiong, a philosopher, obviously take two different perspectives in formulating their anthropologies and their basic presuppositions are also very different from each other. As a theologian, Barth’s main concern is undoubtedly related to God, he is always theocentric and, in particular, he is Christocentric. However, Xiong, a philosopher, obviously takes a philosophical perspective and he tends to be anthropocentric. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that their different perspectives lead to a disparity in their points of departure on anthropology - Barth believes that human beings are destined by God the Creator, while

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Xiong refutes even the existence of a personal God.

With different perspectives and orientations, Barth and Xiong’s epistemologies are thus indisputably different. For Barth, there remains always a distinction between God and human beings, the only contact point between them, or the only revelation of God to human beings, is in the person of Jesus Christ; therefore for Barth all understanding of God and also the world God creates can only be acquired in the light of Jesus Christ. This is the very consistent christocentric emphasis of Barth. On the other hand, Xiong believed that the knowledge of the universe can only be obtained by existential self-reflections. By ‘turning inward and examining one’s own self’, human beings are able to get hold of the ultimate reality and also the truth of human life. This is consistently the anthropocentric epistemology of Xiong.

1.2.2 Structural Contrast of Views on Human Origin and Nature

On the subject of human origin, Barth argued that God the Creator is the origin of all beings and things in the universe, this certainly includes human beings; while Xiong believed that all beings in the universe originate from the ultimate reality, myriad creatures are formed as a result of the perpetual transformations of the ultimate reality.

Regarding the nature of human beings, Barth suggested that human nature is determined and destined by ‘relationship’; in particular, the covenant relationship with God the Creator. Furthermore this means for Barth that human beings are determined and destined by the
extrinsic relationship with the ‘Wholly Other’ (God). Xiong also understood human nature in terms of ‘relationship’, but it is an ‘intrinsic’ relationship through the ren inside human beings towards the ultimate reality. Therefore this intrinsic relationship can allow human beings to get hold of the ultimate reality - the origin of human beings.

1.2.3 Structural Contrast of the Views on Human Existence

We have seen above that Barth and Xiong do not share similar views on human origin and nature, yet it does not mean that all of their perspectives are dissimilar. In fact both of them agree that human beings should exist in a form of ‘co-humanity’, which implies the interdependence of human beings. They believe that human beings cannot exist alone – as isolated individuals – and ‘co-humanity’ is thus the basic form of humanity. However, as we prod deeper into their views, it becomes clear that their rationales are quite different. For Barth, the ‘co-humanity’ of human beings is founded on the Trinitarian nature of God the creator as made known by the man Jesus Christ. As the man Jesus Christ is the man for other fellows, human beings are created with this destiny. For Barth, this divine-based co-humanity not only builds the relationship between human beings, it also maintains the individuality of human beings. In the relationship of co-humanity, it is important for human beings not to lose their own selves in the others. Human beings are bound to their fellows, but they cannot belong entirely to them. Nevertheless, human beings should not make use of their encounter with the others as a
way to extend and secure their own self-interest.

Xiong’s advocacy of ‘co-humanity’ is founded on the ren. When human beings are able to cultivate the ren within themselves; they will have a good relationship with the others and the ‘humanity’ within is then manifested. In order to cultivate ren, people are always asked to give up their ‘small self’ (individual interest) for the goodness of the ‘big self’ (interest of the community). Therefore, for Chinese people, it is easy to lose one’s own self in the whole of the community and this is more collectivistic than Barth’s perspective. Although Barth and Xiong apparently share similar views on the nature of humanity as ‘co-humanity’, they are also profoundly different. Barth underscored the importance of maintaining ‘self’ in a co-human relationship, while Xiong promoted compliance of individuals to the whole community.

Apart from their views on the relationship between human beings, they also seem to share similar perspectives on the internal relationship of human beings; that is the relationship between mind-soul and body. Both of them support neither materialism nor idealism. They agree on the importance of both mind-soul and body in the constitution of the human beings, yet mind-soul should always take a superior position over body. For Barth, a human being is a

300 In *Church Dogmatics III/2*, the word Seele is translated as ‘soul’, which is a proper and usual translation. However, the word Seele also carries a meaning of ‘mind’; in the section “Das Leib-Seele-Problem” in *Church Dogmatics III/2*, Barth referred to the traditional philosophical question of mind and body. Seele, for Barth, may probably mean the internal core of human beings, which includes the mind, soul, heart. This idea of ‘internal core’ is similar to Chinese concept xin. Although xin literally means ‘heart’, its meaning is obviously more than that. In most of the English translation of Chinese classics, the word xin is usually translated as ‘mind’, which refers to the non-physical part of human beings. In the present thesis, the German word Seele is translated as ‘soul’, and the Chinese word xin is translated as ‘mind’, just to be consistent with the usual translation. However, as it comes to the comparison of Barth and Xiong’s views, a combined word ‘mind-soul’ is used to refer to the non-physical part of human beings.
whole person; in his words, a human being is ‘an embodied soul’ and also ‘a besouled body’. As a human being is a rational being, there is always an inner order in the unity of soul and body; in particular, it should be a ruling soul and a serving body. Soul and body have their own particularities and complementarities; but the dialectic relationship of soul and body can only be resolved by the Holy Spirit, who plays a critical role on maintaining their right order.

Xiong also suggested that mind should enjoy precedence over body (material), but the order of mind and body has nothing related to any external power, like the Holy Spirit as suggested by Barth. For Xiong, because the force of creative unfolding (\(pi\), a spiritual tendency) can always override the force of materialization (\(xi\), a material tendency), and the creative power of human beings comes from the stronger force of creative unfolding within human beings, therefore mind should always override body. Although Barth and Xiong share similar views on the relationship between mind-soul and body, their views are founded on very different presuppositions and so lead to different anthropological implications. For Barth, the inner order of soul and body affirms the significant and authoritative position of the Holy Spirit in the existence of the human beings. However, for Xiong, the superior position of mind to body asserts the internal creative power of the human beings.

1.2.4 Structural Contrast of the Views on Human Destiny and Transcendence

Westerners and Chinese have different understandings on human destiny and transcendence,
and so it is hardly surprising to observe divergence in the views of Barth and Xiong on this issue.

For Barth, human beings tend to strive towards going beyond their finitude. This tendency may be due to their anxiety about the destiny (or the Final Judgement). However, Barth stated that human beings could never truly resolve this anxiety unless they recognize their limitation as the creatures of God the Creator. Instead of thinking of human transcendence as ‘going beyond’, Xiong understands human transcendence in another way. Like most Chinese people, Xiong regards transcendence as a peaceful union with the universe, which can be achieved by perpetual existential self-reflection. This is also the ideal state of human beings as ‘the union of the heaven and human beings’. 301

1.2.5 Summary of the Anthropological Perspectives of Barth and Xiong

In short, the major contrasts found between Barth and Xiong can be summarised in the following table:

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301 A detailed discussion on the state of the ‘the union of the heaven and human beings’ as understood by Xiong can be found in the chapter V of the present thesis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic presuppositions</th>
<th>Barth</th>
<th>Xiong</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>theological</td>
<td>philosophical</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>christological epistemology</td>
<td>anthropological epistemology</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human nature/origin</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God the Creator</td>
<td>the ultimate reality/Dao</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>founded on extrinsic relation</td>
<td>founded on intrinsic relation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human existence</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maintaining the individuality in co-humanity</td>
<td>surrendering individual interest in co-humanity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mind-soul-body relationship affirms the power of the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>Mind-soul-body relationship affirms the internal creative power of human beings</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human destiny</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be satisfied with human finitude as the creatures of God</td>
<td>striving for a peaceful union with the universe</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The underlying Issues that Contributed to the Differences

The process of structure contrast undoubtedly helps to enrich the understanding of the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong. As the discrepancies of these anthropologies are listed side by side, the underlying issues that contributed to the development of the diverse anthropological perspectives of Barth and Xiong become increasingly apparent.

2.1 About The Origin of Human Beings

2.1.1 The Issue of the Existence of a Personal God

One of the most dramatic differences between Barth and Xiong is on the question whether there is a personal God as the creator of the universe and, if so, how does this ‘God’ relate to the human beings. In the argument of his theological anthropology, Barth insisted that there is a
necessary and inseparable relationship between God (the Creator) and human beings (the creature), so he always took a theological and particularly christological approach in his understanding of the human beings. For Barth, God the Creator is surely the origin of all human beings. The covenant relationship between God and human beings is the foundation of human nature. In his theological anthropology, Barth further elaborated a new understanding of human beings with the concept of ‘relationship’. Human beings, for Barth, are relational beings; in other words, ‘being in relationship’ is a dominant feature in the determination of human beings. Human nature can never be fully realized unless it is realized in a relationship with others. For Barth, it is not a simple relationship with other human fellows that determines the nature of human beings, but the covenant relationship with God the creator, a ‘Wholly Other’. This covenant relationship was once broken owing to the fall of human beings, yet it has already been reconciled by the salvific work of Jesus Christ. The nature and origin of human beings are revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and the existence of human beings is determined and destined by God.

However, for Xiong there is not a personal God in the universe. He stated that there must be an origin for the universe and human beings; yet this origin should never be a transcendent being completely independent from the universe and the human beings. For Xiong, ‘the ultimate reality (ni) and appearance (yong) are non-dual’. Starting from a quest of ontology, Xiong
claimed that one can never find the ultimate reality away from appearance. The ultimate reality, which is manifested by various appearances, is the origin of everything in the universe; it is also the origin of human beings.

Xiong refuted the existence of a transcendent personal God in the universe; that is the reason he disapproves of any theistic religion. For Xiong, theistic religion is only an ancient superstition; ‘God’, whom people usually believed in, is often considered to be absolutely transcendent and no one is able to have access to such a God. As a result of Xiong’s anthropocentric premise, there should not be any factor in the origin of reality absolutely other than human beings. Therefore, in the opinion of Xiong, all theistic religions, and in particular religions that believe in the existence of a transcendent God, represent false belief. However, it could be argued that what Xiong rejected is not the existence of God, but a kind of God who could not be accessed and understood by human beings; for Xiong there is an ontological continuity between the ultimate reality and the human beings.

It must be noted that Barth also adopted a critical view of ‘religion’. Based on his understanding of revelation, Barth stated that religion is just a human attempt to anticipate the work of God; or in his words, it ‘becomes visible as the enterprise by which man anticipates that which God wills to do and does do in his revelation, putting a human contraption in place of the

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302 Please refer to Chapter IV for the discourses of Xiong about rejecting the existence of God.
divine handiwork’. For him, ‘religion’ does not show the truth of God, since the true divine reality, offered and presented to humanity in revelation, is replaced by a concept of God ‘arbitrarily and wilfully’ devised for human beings. In other words, Barth ‘negated’ religion because it seems to be something coming from the human beings. However, for Xiong, religion is false belief, simply because it does not originate from human beings!

This difference of Xiong and Barth is clearly due to their different basic presuppositions; Barth thinks theologically, while Xiong thinks in an anthropocentric way. In particular, Xiong’s argument is that all human knowledge must first undergo a process of reflection and examination by human beings themselves; otherwise it is only ‘cognitive knowledge’, instead of ‘true and original knowledge’. However, it is Barth’s theological argument that true faith and knowledge can never originate from the human realm, but break in from beyond.

As we look into the basic presuppositions of Barth and Xiong, their variation in fact reflects the issue of ‘transcendence’ and ‘immanence’. Fu Peijung (傅佩榮), from the National Taiwan University, ventured two phrases to delineate the different emphases of Christianity and Confucianism on this issue, namely, ‘transcendence over immanence’ for Christianity and ‘immanence over transcendence’ for Confucianism. Fu stated that both Christianity and

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303 Barth’s view of religion can be found in *Church Dogmatics I/2*, section 17, “The revelation of God as abolition of religion”. Garrett Green had provided a fresh translation of this section, supporting his claim that Barth should be studied as a religious theoist, rather than just a theologian. He gave a clearer picture of what Barth really meant for religion by translating the crucial German word ‘Aufhebung’ as ‘sublimation’ instead of ‘abolition’. The quotations of Barth here are quoted from Green’s latest translation. Refer to Karl Barth, *On Religion: The Revelation of God as the Sublimation of Religion*, trans. Garrett Green (London: T & T Clarks, 2006).
Confucianism in fact involve the ideas of transcendence and immanence, yet they are different in the degree of emphasis.\textsuperscript{304} Without doubt, Xiong and Barth are standing on two extremes; Xiong stressed the immanence of human beings, while Barth emphasized the ‘transcendence’ of God. However, does it mean that Barth would utterly refute human immanence and Xiong would absolutely object the existence of God? Or they are simply different in degree of emphasis? The tension of transcendence and immanence is indeed related to one’s view of God; it also draws to an important issue in the study of anthropology, that is the issue of human autonomy.

2.1.2 The Issue of Human Autonomy

Barth’s theological tendency is also reflected in his epistemology. He insisted that, apart from the theological and particularly christological understanding, there is no other legitimate way to know what the human being is. Barth asserted that human beings are unable to know anything about themselves and the universe, unless God the Creator reveals it in the first place. For Barth, the grace of God is the only necessary condition for revelation. However, for Xiong, human beings are always able to get hold of the universe through their own effort and no other means of revelation are necessary. In the light of this discrepancy, the issue of human autonomy becomes important.

Human autonomy is a major concern in the study of anthropology. There is no doubt that Xiong consistently promoted human autonomy, which entails the capacity of self-awareness, self-determination and self-regulation. Barth, on the contrary, tended to emphasize the absolute sovereignty and freedom of God, instead of human autonomy. Nevertheless, it must be noted that Barth did not utterly deny any human ability or autonomy. In his *Church Dogmatics* I/2, he dealt with the issue of human autonomy in his discussion of dogmatics and revelation, especially in the explanations of theonomy, heteronomy and autonomy.\(^\text{305}\) For Barth, human autonomy must be understood in the light of the Word of God; it is the subjective act of obedience to the Word of God. For Barth, human beings can make their own choice; but it is only a choice of rejecting the grace of God, or obeying God and participating in what God has done for human beings. In other words, the autonomy of human beings needs to be understood as related to their response to God. Human autonomy is thus contingent on God. Moreover, as Barth understood human nature as an ‘I-Thou relationship’, he also stressed the position of human beings before God. For him, human beings are addressed by God as ‘You’, and at the same time, they are also an ‘I’ who can be responsible before God. The only possibility of human freedom, for Barth, is ‘the freedom of obedience’ to God the Creator. Human beings are created with freedom and autonomy, but obviously it is a given one. It is given by the Creator,

who is the only one truly free. Therefore, human freedom is understood as the ability of human beings to accord themselves gladly with the freedom of God.\footnote{Colin Gunton, “Barth, the Trinity and Human Freedom,” *Theology Today* 43, no. 3 (October 1986): 320.} It is thus freedom with limitation.

Clearly, Barth did not utterly refute human freedom, and Xiong did not extol human freedom without reservation either. In his discussion of the difference of ‘intuition’ and ‘cognition’, and also the difference of ‘original mind’ and ‘habitual mind’, Xiong concluded that human beings sometimes would be agitated by their cognitive knowledge and would employ their habitual mind to understand the world. This understanding, according to Xiong, is only at a limited and phenomenal level. Human beings thus have some limitation on their autonomy as they are not always able to have a correct understanding of the world and their own selves.

When it comes to human autonomy, Barth, on one hand, strived to maintain the sovereignty of God; yet on the other hand, he did not intend to annul all responsibility of human beings. Besides, Xiong advocated for human freedom, but he still admitted the limitation of human beings. Barth and Xiong obviously have different points of view on human autonomy. However, it seems that their perspectives do leave some room for further dialogue.

2.2 The Condition of Human Existence: Maintaining or Surrendering the Individual in Co-Humanity

Barth approached the issues of human relationships and the relationship between body and
soul true to his Christological presupposition. For him, good relationships between human beings and also a peaceful relationship between soul and body are founded on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The co-humanity of human beings is based on the fact that God is a triune God and Jesus Christ is the ‘man for his human fellows’. Therefore, human beings cannot maintain a good relationship with others, unless they keep a good relationship with God their Creator. This divine source of co-humanity not only builds up the relationship between human beings, it also maintains the individuality of human beings. Relationship requires reconciled difference founded in God’s relationship with God’s creatures through Jesus Christ.

However, for Xiong, the co-humanity of human beings is founded on the ‘humanity’ (ren) within every human being. When human beings are able to cultivate their ‘inner sagehood’, they will also be able to have good relationships with others and to manifest ‘outer kingship.’ By relating the concept of ti (the ultimate reality) to ren (humanity), Xiong established a metaphysical foundation for morality and virtue, which is the essence of Confucianism. Xiong advocated co-humanity when he talked about the relationship between human beings. However, unlike what Barth meant for co-humanity, Xiong stressed the interest of the community. In the discussion of human transcendence (that is, the union of human beings and the universe), Xiong always asked people to turn inward and to self-reflect. However, what Xiong meant by ‘self’ is always a ‘big self’ (the community), instead of a ‘small self’ (the individual). In other words,
Xiong, just like most Confucians, asked people to be compliant for the goodness of the whole society.

Chinese philosophy is fundamentally anthropocentric, but it is dissimilar to Western humanistic philosophy. Western humanistic philosophy stresses the interest of individuals, but the long-established Confucian tradition used to emphasize the interest of the collective community. Therefore, in the Chinese tradition, ‘self’ always refers to the ‘big self’, instead of ‘small self’. The interest of human beings and also the well being of the whole society is always the goal of Chinese philosophy. The philosophy of Xiong undoubtedly inherits this Chinese Confucian tradition. Although both Barth and Xiong seem to promote ‘co-humanity’, they differ in what they meant by ‘co-humanity’. The question of the meaning of the concept ‘co-humanity’ thus becomes critical.

2.3 The Issue of Human Transcendence

Barth asserted that human beings are fundamentally determined and destined by the covenant relationship with God the creator and so, for Barth, human beings can never go beyond the boundary between God and humans. Therefore, Barth argued that people should be satisfied with their finitude as creatures. As pointed out earlier, Barth’s emphasis on human limitation, instead of human power, is related to his historical context. In order to suppress excessive human self-righteousness in his time, Barth always stressed the sovereignty of God and the
finitude of human beings.

However, Barth’s resistance to human transcendence pertains to the divine relationship with God only; when it comes to the horizontal relationship between human beings, Barth has a different point of view. In the Western world, the word ‘transcendence’ is usually understood as ‘going beyond’. For Barth, if ‘transcendence’ refers to ‘going beyond’ the boundary between God and human beings, he would surely oppose it. However, if it refers to ‘going beyond’ one’s internal world and reaching out to the other fellows, Barth would encourage it. In his discussion of the basic form of humanity, Barth argued that human beings could never live without other fellows. Being human always involves awareness, communications, actions and also personal willingness in the relationship with others. The basic form of humanity requires human beings to go beyond their own individual boundaries and achieve an ideal of co-humanity; thus it shows the importance of the social orientation of human beings.

As we look into the issue of human transcendence, the understanding of the word ‘transcendence’ does matter. For Barth, ‘transcendence’ in terms of the horizontal relationship with human fellows is good, but it will be unacceptable in terms of the vertical relationship with God. Nevertheless, as it comes to the different understandings of ‘transcendence’ in the Eastern and Western world, the issue is getting more complex. Barth would probably not promote any understanding of human transcendence, if the word ‘transcendence’ is understood in a Chinese
way, which refers to a union with the universe. Although a similar idea ‘theosis’ has been found in Eastern Orthodox spirituality, it has been contested that sinful human beings could come into such a profound union with the divine God. The Eastern Church father Gregory Palamas suggested that it is possible for human beings to unite with God in the ‘energies’ of God, but it is impossible to unite with God in the ‘essence’ of God. In the Protestant tradition, with the help of the Holy Spirit, it is believed that Christians could be made holy, yet human beings can never reach a state of perfection like God. Likewise, it is also the belief of Barth that human beings can never ‘transcend’ to unite with God, or to be equal to God. For Barth, the reconciliation achieved in and through Christ would be a cosmic reconciliation. The kingdom of God has been inaugurated by the reconciliation work of Jesus Christ and it will continue until it reaches maturity in the consummation of the Kingdom of God on earth and at that time the whole universe will be redeemed. Before the second coming of Jesus Christ, it is believed that human beings can participate in the development of the Kingdom of God by obeying the teachings of Jesus Christ. As the time of maturity comes, the final redemption of human beings and the universe before God will be completed; but in fact this is not what Xiong meant by the ‘union with the universe’.

Unlike Barth, Xiong believed that human beings are able to unite with the universe. For

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308 Barth, *Der Römerbrief*, 1919, 24, quoted in McCormack, 152.
him, human transcendence is expressed in the ecstatic experience of being united with the universe by focusing on the ‘big self’. Therefore, Xiong always asked people to give up their own interest for the good of the community so that they can achieve the state of human transcendence. It is always the responsibility of human individuals to accommodate themselves to the community so that harmony can be achieved in the society. This philosophy of Xiong undoubtedly leads to important moral implications of Xiong’s philosophy. Even though Barth and Xiong have very different understandings of human transcendence, yet as we put the views of Xiong and Barth in contrast, it becomes apparent that both of them draw moral implications in their discussion of human transcendence. We can thus identify another critical question for further attention, how far are the moral implication of Xiong’s philosophy related to the development of the Kingdom of God as discussed by Barth?

3. Dynamic Contrast in the Form of Inner Dialogue

As the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong are put side by side, their differences become clear. The process of structural contrast helps not only to discover the underlying issues contributing to the differences; it also facilitates a further exploration of the phenomena in the form of inner dialogue. In the process of dialogue, dialogue partners are always encouraged to express their own views with no need to give up their positions. It is important for the dialogue
partners to speak for themselves. Therefore, in the following section, the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong will be examined in a format of simulated dialogue, which is also my own inner dialogue. In the simulated dialogues, I (researcher) act like an interviewer and Barth and Xiong are like the interviewees. Most of the words of Barth and Xiong are the direct quotations of their writings. The major issues to be discussed are still related to the three aspects mentioned above; namely, on the issue of human origin, human existence and also human destiny.

3.1 Dialogue on Human Origin

Researcher: What is the origin of human beings?

Barth: The God of Holy Scripture and of the Church’s confession is, of course, the Creator of heaven and earth. The human being is certainly not God’s only creation; a human being is only a creature. The human being is a creature in the midst of others, which were directly created by God and exist independently of humans. The human being is the creature of God and is placed by God in the world which God has created. (CD III/2, p3-4)

Researcher: Therefore, you mean God the Creator is the origin of human beings. How do you know this?

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309 In the simulated dialogues, the words of Xiong, as originally written in Chinese, are translated by myself; the original texts of these quotations are listed as footnotes. The words of Barth quoted here are basically cited from the English translation of Church Dogmatics, as published by T & T Clark in the 1960s; yet in order to use inclusive language, words like ‘man’ and ‘Him (refer to God)’ are changed to ‘human being’ and ‘God’ respectively. Besides, words in brackets are added by myself to make the dialogues smoother.
Barth: (We know about) the relationship between God and human beings from the Word of God.

The Word of God shows that their beings on earth and under heaven are wholly determined and created in order that God should speak with them and that they should hear and answer (CD III/2, p17). We are not able to see the essence and nature of human beings apart from the Word of God. (CD III/2, p23) As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of human beings as created by God (CD III/2, p41).

Xiong: On close examination I deeply believe in the notion ‘the ultimate reality and appearance are non-dual’. Therefore, I can hardly concur with some predecessors, who claim that the ultimate reality refers to an omnipotent and omniscient God. In my opinion, the whole universe and human beings develop their own potentials; every being possesses unlimited possibilities [that is what I mean by ‘potentials’]. There could be infinite explorations of these beings and they are always changing. The transformation and exploration of the whole universe are all originated from the self-expansion and development of their original beings.310 (The Ultimate Reality and Phenomenon, p226)

Researcher: Therefore, you mean that all beings, including human beings originate from the ultimate reality. If this ultimate reality does not refer to a transcendent God, in what ways

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310 余實悟，實信體用不二，故對於前哲以實體比擬全知全能之上帝者，皆不能贊同。余主張萬物與吾人各各以自力發展其本體潛能，本體潛藏無限的可能，名曰潛能。其開拓豐富，無有窮盡；其變化日新，不守故常。萬物之變化與開拓，皆以自力擴大其本體。」（《體用論》，p226）
can we understand this ultimate reality?

Xiong: I am simply trying to demonstrate to all scholars, who are interested in studying the universe, that the ultimate reality of the universe can neither be found externally away from the mind of human individuals, nor be understood by one’s cognitive knowledge; it can only be comprehended by introspective self-realization.311 (The New Doctrine of Consciousness-only, p22)

Researcher: So, for Barth, the origin of human beings is from God; while for Xiong, the origin of human beings is rooted in the ultimate reality, which can only be reached by self-reflection.

Therefore, Barth proposes that all knowledge of human beings must be based on the Word of God, but Xiong advocates that we can only know human beings by introspective self-realization. In terms of the human capacity for understanding themselves, is it really possible for human beings to know simply by introspective self-realization?

Barth: From the standpoint of our criteria, human self-knowledge must be regarded as a vicious circle in which we can never attain to real humans. For the point at issue is who are the people want to know themselves and think they can? How do they reach the platform from which they think they can see themselves? What kind of a platform is it, and what kind of knowledge will they give themselves from it, when for some reason they want to see

311 「今造此論，為欲悟諸究玄學者，令知宇宙本體非是離自心外境界及非知識所行境界，唯是反求實證相應故。」（《新唯識論》，p22）
themselves otherwise than from God, looking at themselves and not at God? Who is the
people who know themselves first wish to disregard the fact that they belong to God, that
they exist because they stand in relation to the work of God, that they live for the glory,
under the lordship and in the service of God? Who are the people who think they can
disregard all this? Real human beings cannot disregard it. (CD III/2, p75) Our thinking is
related to our sense perception; it consists in the ordering and linking of what is sensually
perceived, as it is grounded on human thought, we are forced to say that its objects are
necessarily those of sense perception. To the extent that it is knowledge, it is scientific
knowledge. Knowledge of our knowledge can never lead us beyond a view of ourselves in
which we are to ourselves natural phenomena and nothing more. We are dependent on
sense perception, as thinking beings we are to ourselves only what we perceive ourselves to
be through our senses. (CD III/2, p91-92) If we ask concerning existence and therefore
about human beings as subject, we ask concerning something which lies essentially outside
any theory of human beings and therefore outside all possibilities of understanding and
control of human beings. (CD III/2, p110)

Xiong: (However), the entire universe and I are actually a whole, therefore as we examine the
origin of life and universe, we should never make up any pointless theory by our thinking
skills, rather we should realize it with effort by turning inward to our own selves. Just like
the inspection of Fu Xi as mentioned in the Book of Changes, as we observe an object from a distance, we must also reflect it closely within our own selves; that is the meaning of turning inward to our own selves. When I, as a Confucian, turn inward to my own self, I will never go against ‘humanity’ (ren), that is the way I get along with the entire universe as a whole.\(^{312}\) (The Ultimate Reality and Phenomenon, p183)\(^{313}\)

Researcher: Therefore, in your opinion, what is the most fundamental reference for human beings to understand themselves?

Barth: Basically and comprehensively, therefore, to be a human being is to be with God. What a human being is with this Counterpart is obviously the basic and comprehensive determination and destination of his/her true being. (CD III/2, p135) Godlessness is therefore an ontological impossibility for human beings. (CD III/2, p136) To be a human being is to be with God; if the human being is a being with God, we have to say first and comprehensively that it is a being derived from God. It is a being dependent on God yet he or she is not identical with the being of God. The concrete form of their beings with God is that they are with Jesus. (CD III/2, p139-140)

\(^{312}\)「我與天地萬物本一體故。為道之學窮究宇宙人生根源，不可只靠思維術作出一套空理論，須返在自身上用力而實現之。易大傳稱伏羲氏仰觀俯察，遠取諸物必歸諸近取諸身，此亦返己之意。吾儒返己，在不違仁，實現我與天地萬物為一。」(《體用論〔明心篇〕》, 183)

\(^{313}\) As it has been discussed in Chapter V, ‘cognitive knowledge’, for Xiong, comes from ‘habitual mind’ which is in contrast to ‘original mind’. ‘Original mind’ is quiescent and can only be achieved by introspective self reflection. Therefore, for him, the reference for human beings to understand the universe and humanity comes internally from human beings themselves. Human beings are able to understand the universe by the creatures in the universe, yet whether they could really understand still depends on how human beings perceive and reflect the universe.
Xiong: How can human beings establish themselves? As human beings come to know the heaven, they are able to establish themselves. If there were no heaven, were the existences of human beings simply an illusion? If human life were simply an illusion, there would be no need to talk about the way of establishing human life. If human beings were not real, what was the meaning of establishing them? Therefore, as we know that human beings are alive, they are alive as they come to know the heaven; they are also established when they know the heaven. As people come to know heaven, they are seeking and grasping humanity/kindness (ren). Humanity/kindness refers to the heart of human beings, as humanity/kindness is found inside human beings; it is strong, brilliant, dynamic and able to love. It would not be controlled by the selfishness of ‘small self’, but goes freely around the heaven and the earth without any restraints; this is founded on the moral nature of the ultimate reality, this is also the source of all moral behaviours. Humanity/kindness is found in all human beings, yet it sometimes may be unfortunately imprisoned inside individual physical bodies. However, humanity/kindness is innate, it can always be realized as one turns inward and examines one’s own self. (The Ultimate

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314 ‘Establish’ is a Confucian concept, it refers to people’s effort to gain acceptance and recognition in the society.
315 There are two general translations for the Chinese concept ren; literally it means ‘kindness’; yet ren is often regarded as a fundamental quality of human being, so sometimes it is also translated as ‘humanity’. Both translations are put here since Xiong is probably referring both meanings.
316 「夫人何由立？得天而立也。若無有天，則人豈空幻現得來乎？人生如是幻現，即不可更談立人之道。人既非實有，何所立乎？故知人之所以生者，得天而生也；其所以立者，得天而立也。得天者，求仁而得仁也。仁，人之心也。夫人心之存乎人者，剛健，炤明，生生而能愛，不為小己之私欲所縛，常流通
Reality and Phenomenon, p222)

Researcher: So, Barth insists that the Word of God is the only determination and destiny of human beings, and the understanding of human beings themselves are originated from an external source. However, for Xiong, human beings are founded by ‘ren’ (humanity/kindness), which is found inside all human beings. It seems that we come to the issue of human autonomy. Is a human being really free?

Barth: (Yes, there is) the freedom of human beings to choose to be the partner of God, the freedom to say ‘yes’ to the ‘yes’ of God and say ‘no’ to disobedience. (CD IV/1, p480) Our reference is to the mighty activity of the Holy Spirit; it is He who awakens a man to be a Christian, to be the kind of Christian who may hope in God, who in the service of God in and for the world, in the sphere of the penultimate, may hope for the ultimate. The Holy Spirit is not a good daemon intervening between God and man, like a ‘Deus ex machina’, to make possible the impossible by a kind of magic. As there is no human skill, so there is no supernatural magic, to make possible the impossibility of a human life in hope. There is thus no daemon to grant this impossibility... And God Himself is the Holy Spirit who awakens the Christian to life in hope. (CD IV/3.2, p941)

Xiong: The internal origin found in my own self is actually a big and affluent treasure. Do
human beings passively rely on the heaven for development with no need to take any effort by their own selves? No, not really. Although the origin of human beings is held inside, it still needs to be explored, created and developed by our own effort. It is like a rich but tight-fisted man, he has lots of possession, but he simply leaves them in the warehouse and never makes good use of them; in this case, is he different from a beggar?

Just take another example, if there is an intelligent man, he is clever but he never learns properly, he would then become useless like trash. With all these examples, it can be seen that we have to try our best to explore our internal origin so that humans can be enhanced and glorified.317 (Original Confucianism, p193)

Researcher: With different presuppositions on the basic determination of human beings, Barth and Xiong seem to stand at the two extremes on the issue of human autonomy. For Barth, human beings are the creatures of God the Creator and therefore the sovereignty of God always prevails. For Xiong, human beings originate from the ultimate reality (Dao) and so they are free and dynamic as is Dao. However, it does not mean that human beings, in the eyes of Barth, are utterly passive and without any autonomy, they in fact enjoy freedom within the covenant God establishes, and respond to the grace of God by being the

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317 「吾人之內自本因即大寶藏，若是其盛也。然則人可恃天而無須費自力乎？否，不然。內自本因雖是吾人所固有，要待吾人以自力開辟，以自力創造，以自力發展。譬如守財奴，家擁鉅資而不知經營，不肯動用，則粟腐於倉，金鎖於室，其人以貧乏度其終身與乞丐以異？又如穎異之子，得天優厚，而浪費不學竟成廢物。舉茲近事為喻，可見吾人須以自力開拓內自本因，發揚光大，貴甚不已。」 (《原儒》，193)
covenant partner of God. For Xiong, human beings are not absolutely free as well; sometimes they will still be constrained by their ‘small’ and material self. They will have to try their best to explore their ‘internal treasure’ (ren) in order to avoid this constraint.

Regarding human autonomy, it seems that the views of Barth and Xiong are not absolutely contradictory. Barth admits that human beings are free in their obedience to God; on the other hand, Xiong does not unquestionably insist on complete human autonomy, human beings are with limitations.

3.2 Dialogue on Human Existence

Researcher: Do you agree that human beings do not live in isolation but always connect to the others? If this is the case, what should be the proper relationship between human beings?

Barth: (Yes), human being is a being in encounter. (CD III/2, p287) We have to rule out the possibility of humanity without the fellow-human being. (CD III/2, p229) The relationship should be between a human being and his/her fellow-human being, I and thou, this means mutual limitation. But in this relationship, which is not a relationship of things, but the very different relationship of people, limitation means mutual determination. And this determination is inward as well as outward; it is not something originally and properly alien to human beings and added to their essence. At some level of the nature of human beings, they are determined by this mutual determination among human beings. Moreover,
human beings are not their fellows, but they are ‘with’ them. I am not thou, but I am with thee. Humanity is the realisation of this ‘with’. (CD III/2, p268)

Xiong: (Yes, people cannot live in isolation), just as what is described in The Evolution of Rites, people should not love their parents only, and they should treat other's children as their own sons. A competent provision is secured for the aged until their death, employment for those in robust health and proper education for the youth. People will share kindness and compassion to the widows, orphans, childless people and those who are disabled by diseases, so that they all will be well cared for. Men have their proper work and women have their homes. The perfect society described by Confucius is to turn the whole society as a family, so that all beings in the universe are well treated.  

Researcher: So, in your opinion, what is the basis of this co-humanity?

Barth: It is inevitable that we should recall the Triune being of God at this point. God exists in relationship and fellowship. As the Father of the Son and the Son of the Father, God is Godself I and Thou, confronting Godself and yet always one and the same in the Holy Ghost. God created human beings in the image of God; in correspondence with God's own being and essence. Because God is not solitary in Godself, and therefore does not will to be

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318 「故人不獨親其親，不獨子其子；使老有所終，壯有所用，幼有所長，鰥寡孤獨廢者皆有所養，男有分，女有歸，疏曰，孔子之社會思想在合天下為一家，使萬物各得其所。」（《原儒》，141）
ad extra, it is not good for human beings to be alone, and God created them in God’s own image, as male and female. (CD III/2, p324)

Xiong: The predecessors had written *Spring and Autumn Annals*, they advocated ‘all under the heaven’, that is a society to be governed by all. They prescribed that the whole society should be regarded as a family. This can also be found in Evolution of Rites.\(^{319}\) *(Original Confucianism, p115, 126)* …(Furthermore,) according to the principle of kindness and righteousness, the reason for establishing ourselves and for governing the society by community can never be separated from kindness and righteousness; it is like our daily life can never be separated from clothes and food.\(^{320}\) *(Original Confucianism, p133-134)*

Researcher: So does it mean that we shall be compliant for the goodness of the others?

Xiong: In this world, all people should be compliant for the goodness of the whole community.

*Be cautious of scattering and work hard to get along with the others; so that we can get over the interest of our ‘small self’ and be enlightened.*\(^{321}\)

*The rule of kindness is realized in loving the others, instead of loving our own selves; the rule of righteousness is found on correcting ourselves, not correcting others. If I am not self-regulative, I cannot be entitled as with righteousness even though I can correct the*
others. If people are not loved by the others, they cannot be regarded as with kindness even though they love their own selves.\textsuperscript{322} (Original Confucianism, p134)

Barth: (No!) Humanity in the highest sense cannot consist in the fact that the one loses own self in the other, surrendering or forgetting or neglecting one's own life and task and responsibility, making own self a mere copy of the other, and the life and task and responsibility of the other a framework for his own life. Human beings are bound to their fellows, but they cannot belong to them. (CD III/2, p269)

(However, at the same time), humanity in the highest sense cannot consist in the fact that the one only intends and seeks in the other, and thus uses the encounter with the other to extend and enrich and deepen and confirm and secure one's own being. (CD III/2, p270)

Researcher: In terms of the relationship between human beings, both Barth and Xiong argue that human beings should exist in a form of co-humanity. This means human beings could never live without their fellows. For Barth, this co-humanity is based on the fact that human beings are created in the \textit{Imago Dei}, while for Xiong, the co-humanity is founded on the major Confucian concept \textit{ren}. Owing to their different bases, they are actually quite different especially on the relationship between the individual and the community. Following the line of thought of Confucianism, Xiong states that human beings should be compliant

\textsuperscript{322}「仁之法在愛人，不在愛我，義之法在正我，不在正人。我不自正，雖能正人，弗予為義；人不被其愛，雖厚自愛，不予為仁。」 (繁露，仁義篇；《原儒》，134)
and give up their own individual interests (small self) for the goodness of the whole society (big self); yet for Barth, although he agrees that human individuals should not make use of the others for self interest, human beings should never lose their own selves in the relationship. These differences are clearly related to their basic presuppositions on humanity. For Barth, every human being is created in the image of the Triune God and so he/she, on one hand, is accountable to God individually; on the other hand, he/she reflects the communal relationship of the Triune God. This divine based humanity not only builds up the relationship between human beings, it also maintains the individuality of human beings. However, for Xiong, human beings are all rooted in ren, which is manifested by kindness and unselfishness, and so the co-humanity he advocated serves communal interest only and individuality is subsumed in the whole.

Researcher: Let us turn to another issue of human existence, what is your opinion on mind-soul and body of human beings?

Barth: From the particularity in which human being as soul of their body is a perceiving and active being there arises a particular relation between soul and body. From their inner differentiation there arises the inner order of human creatureliness. (CD III/2, p418) To exist as human being is to exist in the order, rationality and logicality which consist in the ruling and serving which so mysteriously pervade the whole work of the Creator with God’s
creation... In addressing others and ourselves as human beings, we reckon with the validity of this order. We do not do this arbitrarily but necessarily, for God reckons with it, and the being with whom God willed and still wills to keep company is undoubtedly the one which exists in this order, not a dual being but the one being who as soul must rule one’s own self and as body may serve. (CD III/2, p427-8)

Xiong: The sages consider life as strong, dynamic and enlightened; it can differentiate, transform and guide materials, instead of being obscured by materials. Besides, the sages regard materials as dependent. Materials sometimes can be very powerful, just like dynamite, yet its power cannot last for a long period of time. However, mind can always control materials, it change them and make them useful for human beings. Therefore, mind always gets an upper hand over materials. (The Explication of Creativity and Procreativity, p239-240)

Researcher: So, it seems that both Barth and Xiong admit the importance of mind-soul and body of human beings, and mind-soul gets an upper hand over the material. Then, how does this internal order of mind-soul and body function?

Barth: Human beings have Spirit, and through the Spirit have the soul of their bodies. This

323「聖人以生命心靈，同有剛健、生生、升進、炤明等性故... 心能了別物，改造物，主導物，而不受物之蔽。聖人以物質、能力、同是勢不自舉。蓋以物質能力，雖亦有猛烈之動，而其性實柔。炸葯一爆發即消失，其猛烈不足恃也。惟心靈操縱乎質，能，使其起非常之變化，而質益增盛，能益擴大，遂有利濟人生之優勝價值。此惟心靈主導之，乃有如是盛事耳。」（《乾坤衍》，239-240）
means at least that, by reason of their creaturely being, they are capable of meeting God, of being a person for and in relation to God, and of being one as God is one. They are capable of being aware of themselves as different both from God and from the rest of the created world, yet also bound up with God and with the rest of the created world. (CD III/2, p395)

Without the same Spirit, the person cannot at all be a human being, nor at all the soul of body. As he/she has the Spirit from God, he/she lives, he/she becomes and is soul; his/her material body becomes and is physical body and he/she is the soul of this body. Spirit is the conditio sine qua non of the being of human beings as the soul of the body. What distinguishes human beings from beast is the special movement and purpose with which God through the Spirit gives them life. (CD III/2, p359)

The inner unity of human creatureliness and therefore the interconnexion of soul and body consist in the fact that in human being the soul is the quickening factor aroused by the Spirit and the body is that which is quickened by it and lives. (CD III/2, p394)

Xiong: The ultimate reality is operated by the forces of materialization (xi) and creative unfolding (pi), the interaction of the forces of integration and development forms transformation; the force of unfolding (pi) can be regarded as the mind (or the soul) while the force of materialization (xi) as the material. There is constant change found in the
forces of integration and development, without any special order. The force of materialization subsides and forms material, so it is regarded as material. However, the force of creative unfolding always explodes but never away from the dynamism of the ultimate reality; therefore the force of creative unfolding is regarded as mind. The force of creative unfolding interacts with the force of materialization, and it can change the force of materialization to conform to it. The force of creative unfolding reverses the descending tendency of the force of materialization and causes it to ascend; it shows the strength and dynamism of the ultimate reality, these are also the characteristics of the force of creative unfolding (the force of mind). (The Ultimate Reality and Phenomenon, p16-17)

Moreover, the power of life or mind is always self-regulative. Materials can never control their own selves, but have to rely on external forces. The power of life and mind, on one hand, is able to form the heaven and the earth and transform the whole universe; on the other hand, it is self-constructed and self-transformed. Just like plants or animals, or even as superior as human beings, the force of life or mind always shape itself by its own power, it always changes itself by its own power. (The Explication of Creativity and

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324 「本體流行以翕辟成變，即依辟而說為心，依翕而說為物…… 翕辟恆俱轉，無有一先一後之次第也。翕即凝斂成物，故於翕直名為物。辟恆開發而不失其本體之健，故於辟直名以心…… 辟勢運行於翕之中，而能轉翕從己…… 此辟復反乎之墜勢而挾以俱升，能顯發其本體固有剛健、清淨諸德。辟之特在是也。」（《體用論》，16-17）

325 「且生命與心靈之力，能自由操縱自己… 物質不能操縱自己… 以其待他力主導故。生命心靈之力，
Researcher: On the relationship of mind-soul and body within human beings, both Barth and Xiong agree the holistic nature of human beings, yet mind-soul always gets an upper hand over body. Similar to their views on the relationship between human beings, Barth and Xiong have apparently unanimous views on this issue, but in fact their views are not the same. For Barth, the internal order within human beings is maintained by the Holy Spirit; it is God-given and so relies on an external force. However, for Xiong, the operation of the mind-soul and body does not count on any external force, but it is in fact a self-regulative and self-transformed process connected with the creative dynamic of the whole. This dynamic process demonstrates the strength of human creativity. Again the different presuppositions of Barth and Xiong attribute to this fundamental difference. For Barth, all human beings own their origin to God the Creator and so the internal operation of mind-soul and body should also be under the sovereignty of God. However, for Xiong, human beings are originated from the ultimate reality in the universe and they are a part of it, therefore human beings should learn about themselves by observing the universe, in which a self-regulative mechanism is found. Whenever there is any disturbance in the universe, it will be resolved sooner or later by the self-regulative
mechanism. Therefore, human beings are also like the universe, the mind-soul-body relationship is also operated by a self-regulative mechanism of human beings. There is no need to rely on any external force, or the external force might interrupt the self-regulative mechanism.

Nonetheless, how can we interpret this ‘self-regulative mechanism’? Would it simply be dependent on one’s basic presupposition? With a theological presupposition, one may attribute this internal ‘self-regulative mechanism’ to the work of the Holy Spirit, while with an anthropological presupposition; one may attribute this process to the human achievement.

3.3 Dialogue on Human Destiny

Researcher: Let us come to the issue of human destiny. How do you understand the influence of ‘death’ on the lives of human beings?

Barth: An end is set to our time. One day our life will be no more. Death is a reality. (CD III/2, p594) Is it possible to make a single statement about the finitude of our being in time without bringing to light this negative aspect of the matter? The fact that at a particular moment, at the beginning of time, we emerged from non-being to being is not intrinsically negative or necessarily evil. It can be negative and evil only if our end means passing not only into non-being but into the negation of being. If this is what is meant by the death which is the end of our time, it follows as a consequence that we have also emerged from
negation. (CD III/2, p595) Death, as it actually encounters us human beings, is also the
sign of God’s judgement on us. (CD III/2, p596) It is obviously to be found in the fact that
death is an enemy with its own destructive purpose and power to which we have rightly
fallen a prey in virtue of God’s right against us and the wrong which we have done to God.

In death, we are confronted not only with death itself but also with God. (CD III/2, p607)

Xiong: Yangming had said when a person dies, his/her life and soul will disperse, the heaven,
the earth and the whole universe will also no longer exist. This is very true. If people have
a reservation about this view, it is because they have a misunderstanding that the heaven,
the earth and the whole universe always exist. However, the whole universe does not
exist forever; it has to be made clearly. For example, as a person is born, he is born with
the whole universe and is united with it. However, this person, together with the universe
united with him/her, appears only in a flash, with perpetual life and death. As this person
is dead, the universe which is united with him/her will not exist anymore. The new
universe is united with other people, but it has nothing related to the dead person. 326

(Important Conversations of Shili, p219)

Researcher: Xiong, in your opinion, does it mean that death brings a definite end to human

326 『陽明云，人死則精靈遊散，天地萬物即亦不在。此誠然之言。於此有疑者，由執定有恆常存在的
天地萬物故也。須知，天地萬物沒有恆存的，這層意義須先認清。如某甲有生以來，便同他有生以來之天
地萬物是同體的。但是，某甲與他同體的天地萬物，都是剎那剎那，生滅滅生而不息的。一旦某甲已死而
不復續生，則某甲所與同體的天地萬物，確也是和某甲一同死過了，那有存在的呢？至於新生的天地萬物，
則有他人與之同體而俱生，實與已死之某甲無干也。』（（十力語要），219）
beings?

Xiong: If I know that the way to the truth is found in my inner self, I will realize that my life is actually everlasting. However, if I focus on my own individual life (small self) only, it will be a waste of life and life will seem to be brief and transient. In China, Buddhists always focus on the transmigration of the soul. If one’s good deed is done simply for the fear that the small self will disappear after death, this is obviously a self-interested concern. What a pity to have this view! The whole universe is actually composed by big and perpetual life. Human life is also big and perpetual life; if people are able to detach from their ‘small self’ and never be separated from the big self, there is no need to worry about the death of ‘small self’.327 (The Explication of Creativity and Procreativity, p355)

Researcher: The way we perceive our destiny always influence our present life, so in your opinion, how can ‘death’ be an inspiration to present human life?

Barth: If death is indisputably a return to non-being, and if this can mean only a return to the same God who called us out of non-being to being, our future prospect is to be seen in a very different light, or rather in a gloomy shadow as compared with our beginning. (CD III/2, p595) It is really true that we need not fear death, but only God. But we cannot fear

327「吾人若識得自性即是道，即自家生命本來至大，無有窮盡。今拘小己而迷其本來，便自減損其大生命，而不免於短促，細小之悲也。」 (原儒，181-182) 「中國從來學佛人，其發心痛切，專在輪迴一事上。明明是一個自私自利的心，還怕死後沒有小己存在，要為他求福果。哀哉，宇宙萬物畢竟是大生，大有，日新不已。人生畢竟是大生，大有，日新不已。人如做到，不墮予小己，不離其大體，便無小己之死亡可顧念。」 (《乾坤衍》，355)
God without finding in God the radical comfort which we cannot have in any other. (CD III/2, p610) The view of human nature, with its frank recognition of the fact that it ends as well as begins, will be most important for our understanding of the divine command and the bearing of Christian ethics, giving to human life an importance as something which will one day be completed and not be continued indefinitely, and therefore to that which is required of it an urgency which would obviously be lacking if we set our hopes on deliverance from the limitation of our time and therefore on a beyond, instead of on the eternal God. (CD III/2, p633)

Researcher: About the limitation of time, it seems to relate to the issue of human transcendence as well, how should we deal with the dilemma of human limitation and human transcendence?

Barth: Our conclusion are (1) that life in an allotted span is appropriate to human beings as such in their difference from God; (2) that it is certainly not to human beings’ disadvantage to live in a definite and not an indefinite span; (3) that it would be fatal for them if they had to live in an indefinite instead of a definite span. (CD III/2, p562) We found in the determination of human life for God and our fellows the basis of the craving which makes the set span of our life seem so painful at a first glance. We accepted the necessary difference between the eternal existence of God and our temporal existence. We counted
generally on the fact that between God and human beings there is nevertheless encounter and fellowship. And finally and decisively we presupposed that the God with whom we have to do is the God who has turned to us in grace, who is not only for Godself, but in very truth for us. In our whole assumption that the gracious God is the limit of our time, and our conclusion that it is therefore good and salutary for us to be limited in time in this way, our starting point has been the man Jesus in His time, but He also is the Lord of time, and it is only in view of this man that we have been able to consider the human being in the abstract and in general and therefore temporality. (CD III/2, p570-571) God wills neither our life in itself nor our death in itself. He wills our life in order to lead it through death to eternal life. He wills death in order to lead our life through it to eternal life. He wills this transition of our life through death to eternal life. His Kingdom is this new birth. (CD I/1, p388)

Researcher: For Barth, present temporal life is like a transition and the eternal life, that is a life with God, is indeed the final destiny of human beings. However, Chinese people hardly get a concept of ‘eternal life’ and seldom talk about ‘eschatology’ like the Westerner. Instead, for Chinese people, human destiny is realized by the union of the universe and human beings and so human destiny is actually related to one’s ‘communal life’. Xiong, how does this view affect the present life of human beings?

Xiong: If people can realize the way to the truth, restrain all their self-interests; it is already a
great advancement. Therefore, though the sages advocate for the study of nature, it is always more important to learn self-reflection. If people are able to have introspection and restrain their self-interest, they would never be selfish and have a clear conscience, the law of nature is also found there. Otherwise, if people do not have any self-reflection, they would only immerse themselves in their self-interests without realizing it. Therefore, the study of introspection is founded on the truth of the universe, and it is united with everything in the universe.328 (The Original Confucianism, p260)

Researcher: Would it be too tough if human beings must always restrain their self-interests?

Xiong: Happiness refers to harmonious happiness. When I am enjoying the harmonious happiness, I am not separated from the others; the whole universe is as a whole with me, that is what I experience. If people can always be cultivated by this happiness, and do not separate from the harmonious happiness, the principle of life can be achieved and people will have no regret for human life. As people are as a whole with the whole universe, how come there will be any regret?329 (The Original Confucianism, p248-249)

Researcher: Barth and Xiong definitely have different perspectives on death and human destiny.

328 「人能體現大道，克治迷妄，自明自誠自強之功進一步，即道弘大一步，進也無止境，道之弘大亦無止境。」（《原儒》，182）「是故聖人雖盛倡格物之學，而必以返己之學為宗。人能返己自克，自克治己，曰自克。必不肯以好惡之私，蔽其良知，天理所由存也。不能返己，則為私好私惡所役使而自不覺也。」（《原儒》，260）

329 「樂者，和樂也。正和樂時，渾然無物我分別，而吾人與天地萬物一體暢通之血脈，於此可驗也。人能以樂自養，終不失其和樂，則人道完成，而人生乃立於無對矣，通天地萬物為一體，何對之有？」（《原儒》，248-249）
For Barth, death is a threat to human beings, as it annihilates them and worse, death will put them under God's judgement. However, it does not mean that human beings are necessarily living without hope in their present lives. Death becomes reshaped because of the redemption in Jesus Christ; it is no longer a threat, but a transition leading people to the eternal life. Human beings can surely get past the hopeless fate by the redemption of Jesus Christ; they can also enjoy good lives if they set their hopes on the eternal God and are satisfied with their finitude as the creature of God the Creator and the covenant partner of God. However, for Xiong, there is no eschatological implication of death. Death may put an end to human individuals, but it can never terminate human lives as a whole. Therefore, in the opinion of Xiong, it is more important to adjust one's own self for the goodness of the whole community; self-reflection and self-appropriation is always a significant responsibility of human beings.

In the matter of human destiny, Barth, as a European thinker, is always forward-looking for him time will finally come to an end. However, Xiong, as a Chinese thinker, always stresses the present and for him, human life as a whole will go on unceasingly in its union with the universe. However, as it comes to the influence of 'death' on the present in human life, both Barth and Xiong suggest human beings are to restrain their self-interest (for Barth, self-interest refers to human pride and humans’ striving for
transcendence). Besides, it seems that both of them agree that human beings will become happy and satisfied if they can live in accordance to what they “should be”. For Barth, human beings will be satisfied and fully human if they can live out their destiny and determination as the covenant partner of God. The destiny of human being as the covenant partner of God orientates people toward the future as people are living in their present lives. For Xiong, human beings would enjoy their lives if they can control their self-interest and manifest kindness (ren) and conscience in their daily lives. A good destiny is in store for human beings who comply with the moral and ethical rules in their present life. Therefore, although Barth and Xiong are fundamentally different in their perspective of death and human destiny, both of their perspectives on human destiny draw important moral conclusions for present human life.

4. Conclusions Based on the Inner Dialogue

4.1 Similarities among Differences and Differences among Similarities

When the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are put side by side for contrast, their views are clearly very different from each other. However, in the above inner dialogue, I find that the perspectives of Barth and Xiong are not absolutely contradictory of each other. Differences are identified among the similarities and at the same time similarities are also found among the
In the dialogue on human origin, Barth consistently thinks theologically and therefore for him God the Creator is the only possible origin of humankind. However, Xiong consistently thinks in a Chinese philosophical tradition and for him, human beings originate from ultimate reality, and this origin can only be accessed by means of human self-reflections. This difference on human origin raises the issue of human autonomy. For Barth, the sovereignty of God always prevails and so human autonomy is limited. However, for Xiong, the ultimate reality, which is dynamic in perpetual transformation, is the origin of human beings and human beings, like this ultimate reality, are free and able to make all kinds of changes. However, in the process of inner dialogue, we find that Barth did not utterly reject human autonomy. Rather, he redefines human autonomy by describing it as the freedom to respond to the grace of God by being the covenant partner of God. On the other hand, Xiong did not describe an unconditional human autonomy, but rather, he argued that human freedom may sometimes be restrained by people`s material desires. Thus Barth and Xiong stand at the two ends of the spectrum of human dependence and human autonomy, yet their views are not necessarily completely contradictory.

When we examined the dialogue on human existence, the ‘relationship without’ (relationship among human beings) and the ‘relationship within’ (relationship between mind-soul and body) were discussed. Both Barth and Xiong have similarities in their points of
view, yet their underlying rationales are quite different from each other. On the matter of the relationship without, both Barth and Xiong argue for a kind of co-humanity, however, they understand what they mean by this co-humanity from different perspectives, especially on the issue of maintaining or surrendering one’s individual self in the co-humanity. On the relationship within, both of them agree that there is an inseparable relationship between mind-soul and body, and mind-soul always gets an upper hand over body. However, for Barth, the order of soul and body is maintained externally by the work of the Holy Spirit, whereas for Xiong, the order is maintained by an internal self-regulative process of the human being. The dialogue on human existence shows that even though apparent similarities are identified, there are still differences.

In the dialogue on human destiny, differences are identified not only on the subject of death, but also on human transcendence. However, in the inner dialogue we also found that the divergent views of human destiny and transcendence finally draw significant moral implications which give guidance for an abundant present life. For Barth, if human beings choose to respond to the grace of God and live out their destiny and determination as covenant partner of God, the grace of God, as realized in the person of Jesus Christ, will lead them to an abundant life. Xiong also calls for a reconciliation of relationship, but he advocates a renewed relationship between human beings and the ‘big self’, and self-reflection is the path of renewal. Therefore, although
Barth and Xiong fundamentally differ on their basic presuppositions, their discussions of human destiny both lead to moral implications for the present life.

4.2 Different Interpretations on Similar Observations of the Phenomena of Humanity

As Barth and Xiong are coming from different cultures, their differences are not unexpected. Therefore, it seems especially worthwhile to further examine the similarities of Barth and Xiong’s anthropologies. As we examine the similarities, we find that Barth and Xiong agree on observations of some phenomena of humanity. For example, both of them observe that human beings are autonomous and at the same time dependent, although their emphases are different in degree. In addition, both of them emphasize the necessity of human beings living in a form of co-humanity; both also describe the holistic and orderly mind-soul body relationship of human beings. Moreover, both of their discussions of human destiny finally draw important moral conclusions. Thus it appears that Barth and Xiong share several similarities in their observations of phenomena of humanity; yet they adopt different perspectives to interpret these phenomena. Barth interprets from a theological perspective and Xiong, as a Chinese philosopher, from a Chinese philosophical perspective.

Among the similar observations listed, the one regarding co-humanity is especially worth our attention. For Barth, the co-humanity of human beings is based on the Imago Dei; while for Xiong, the basis of co-humanity is founded on the innate ren. As the views of Barth and Xiong
are put side by side for contrast, it is interesting to find that both the *Imago Dei* and *ren* are in fact not only the basis of co-humanity, but also the key to understanding humanity as a whole. Thus, for Barth, human beings are created in the *Imago Dei*. This Creator, in whose image humanity is created, is the Triune God. Humanity is thus ontologically contingent on God the Creator and in communion with God and one another. Consequently a human being can only be rightly understood in terms of these relationships with God and human fellows. Moreover, the fact that human beings are created in the *Imago Dei* affects the whole of Barth’s theological project. On the other hand, for Xiong, *ren* is a key basis for understanding humanity. The Chinese character *ren* is composed of two main parts, one denotes a human being and the other denotes the number two; so it carries a meaning of ‘how two people should get along with each other.’ The pronunciation of this character is also exactly the same as that of the Chinese character denoting the human being. In addition, as a major Confucian concept, *ren* also means “the perfect virtue of subduing oneself and return to propriety.” (keji fuli 克己復禮) 330

Therefore, based on *ren*, the Chinese understanding of a human being could not be apart from other fellows or even the whole community; the harmony of getting along with the others is always treasured. That is also the reason Xiong advocated the sacrifice of individual interest for the goodness of the community.

Here it seems that there is a parallel between *Imago Dei* and *ren*. In the theological anthropology of Barth, the basis of co-humanity and the general understanding of human beings are founded on *Imago Dei*, which could be regarded as the crux of human beings. For Barth, Jesus Christ is the only Real man in the world as he is the only one possessed uncorrupted *Imago Dei*;³³¹ a human being could never be real unless his/her *Imago Dei* is revived by Jesus Christ. On the other hand, in the anthropology of Xiong and also most of the Confucian teachings, *ren* is also the key to understanding human beings. From the Confucius and Mencius to teachers of the Sung and Ming periods, and even the contemporary Confucians, no one would question the importance of *ren* in human beings. Therefore, it can be said that for Xiong, *ren* is the most fundamental thing for human beings, while for Barth, it is the *Imago Dei*.

Nevertheless, although the *Imago Dei* and *ren* are similar to each other in some ways, they are not equivalent. First, the concept *Imago Dei* emphasizes that the Triune God is the origin of human beings and a human being is thus only an image. *Imago Dei* implies the dependence of human beings on their Creator and it implies that they are never equal to the Creator. On the contrary, in Chinese Confucian thought, *ren* is innate and it does neither originate from any source, nor is it given by anyone. According to Xiong, it is the original mind found in human beings and it is also the original substance (*ti*) common to human beings, as well as the heaven,

³³¹ For a more detailed discussion on *Imago Dei*, please refer to the chapter IV of the present thesis, section 2.2.1.
the earth and myriad things in the world. It is also the foundation of myriad things in the universe and the source of all transformations. Unlike *Imago Dei*, *ren* does not originate from any transcendent source, rather it is originally found within human beings. Thus, in the light of the *Imago Dei*, it is the understanding of the Triune God (as revealed by the Real man Jesus Christ) that clarifies the understanding of the human being. However, through the concept of *ren*, we find an inherent understanding of humanity which contributes to the understanding of the universe.

Secondly, the *Imago Dei* reflects the Trinitarian community of God the Creator, who is one and at the same time is three. That is the reason the co-humanity advocated by Barth could never sacrifice individuality. However, *ren* does not entail any idea of Trinitarianism but rather it stresses ‘one’ - the unity and harmony of the society. That is also why the co-humanity advocated by Xiong would be different from that of Barth. The apparent parallels between Xiong and Barth could thus be misleading even though some of their observations on the phenomena of humanity look similar.

We can take the mind-soul body relationship as another example. Barth and Xiong have similar views on the holistic and orderly mind-soul body relationship. However, Barth, from his theological perspective, attributed the orderly mind-soul body relationship to the work of the Holy Spirit; and Xiong, inspired by the interaction of the force of creative unfolding (*pi*) and the
force of materialization (xi), understood it as a self-regulative mechanism of the human being.

Here it appears that there is a parallel between ‘the work of Holy Spirit’ and ‘the interaction of the force of creative unfolding (pi) and the force of materialization (xi)’. However, the theological discussions of Barth’s pneumatology and also the philosophical discussions of ‘the force of creative unfolding and the force of materialization’ show that there are many considerations which militate against hasty conclusions on the equivalence between these ideas. One could conclude that the difference of Barth and Xiong in terms of mind-soul body relationship could be perspectival; however, there are also some strong divergences in their understanding which seem to indicate more fundamental differences.

One more example could be found in the discussion of human destiny. Although Barth and Xiong have very different understandings of human destiny, they agree that human beings would be satisfied if they can live in congruence to what they are supposed to be. For Barth, human beings should live out their destiny and determination as the covenant partner of God, while for Xiong, human beings should manifest humanity (ren) and conscience in their daily lives. In this case, in the discussion of moral implication of human destiny, it may appear that God for Barth ‘functions’ like the heaven or Dao for Xiong. For Barth, human destiny is revealed in Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and the life; but for Xiong, human beings have to find their human destiny in their self-reflection, in which they can connect themselves to the
heaven or Dao. It may appear that there is a parallel between Barth’s understanding of ‘God’ and Xiong’s understanding of the ‘heaven’ or Dao. However, this apparent parallel is misleading.

There are in fact long standing traditions for both the Christian understanding of God and the Chinese understanding of the ‘heaven’ or Dao. We may find some similarities, though there are more differences than similarities. Therefore, it would be a too hasty conclusion to state that the God of Barth is equivalent to the heaven or Dao of Xiong, or that there are any parallel between them. Yet again, Barth and Xiong may have had similar observations on some phenomena of humanity and have attempted to interpret them from different perspectives; yet it is too simplistic to conclude that there is convergence between Barth and Xiong’s perspectives. The difference between Barth and Xiong will fundamentally disrespect their distinctiveness if hasty conclusions are drawn.

4.3 The Phenomena of Humanity

In the above dialogue, it is argued that parallels should not be too easily drawn, even though similarities are found among differences. However, because Barth and Xiong are so different from each other on their cultural and academic background, it is interesting that they do seem to come to such interesting conclusions on phenomena of humanity. Despite the danger of making facile conclusions, it is still worthwhile to look into the similar phenomena of humanity observed by Barth and Xiong.
For example if we look at the issue of human autonomy, despite Barth and Xiong’s different understandings of human autonomy, they do agree that human beings are not absolutely autonomous, nor utterly dependent. Even though Barth and Xiong have very different understandings of death and human destiny, both of them conclude their discussions with reference to morality. They agree that human destiny is not simply something relegated to the future, but it is actually related to the present life of human beings, and it is especially related to human beings’ moral life. These similarities in their observations on the phenomena of the human condition are therefore quite significant. As we look at Barth and Xiong’s discussion of these phenomena, we can conclude that human beings exist in a tension between extremes. These tensions include autonomy and dependence as well as individualism and collectivism. In the discussion of the mind-soul body relationship, we also see the similarities outlined above contrasted with the tension between mind-soul and body. The exploration of human destiny also showed that one’s view of human destiny seems to have significant influence on one’s present moral life. Thus human beings live in the tension between the present and the future. The present moral life of people is in turn influenced by their earnest pursuit of a good future destiny.

In the above inner dialogue on the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong, it can thus be concluded that human beings are in fact living in between extremes. Therefore, in the inner
dialogue on the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong, an important conclusion is that the state of being ‘in-between’ seems to be a significant phenomenon in various aspects of human life, and it could also be an important implication of Chinese theological anthropology.
Chapter VII

Implications of the study

In this chapter the implications of the present study will be discussed. First, following the conclusions of the inner dialogue as explored in the previous chapter, the theme of ‘in-between’ will be deliberated as a feature of Chinese theological anthropology. The contribution of the method of contrast in developing this theme will also be mentioned. In addition, the potential contribution of the method of contrast to the study of Chinese contextual theology and also interreligious/ecumenical dialogue will be discussed as well.

1. Chinese Theological Anthropology: ‘In-Between’ the Extremes

1.1 The Unavoidable Tensions

As the study showed so far by employing the method of contrast, the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are dissimilar to each other in various aspects and differences seem to be unavoidable. This is similar to the tensions between Christianity and culture in contextual theology. As we attempt to develop a theological anthropology in the context of Chinese culture, it is important to deal with these unavoidable differences.

So far, several differences between Barth and Xiong’s anthropologies have become apparent. First, Barth and Xiong hold different views on human autonomy, which arises out of their different understandings of human nature. These different understandings even lead to
different interpretations of human destiny. However, as their ideas and thoughts are examined in
the form of inner dialogue, I argue that their views are not as contradictory as they seem at first

glance. Barth obviously tended to have a negative view on human autonomy, yet he did not
completely refute human freedom. Xiong advocated the unlimited potential of human beings,
yet he did admit that human power and creativity would sometimes be obstructed. In addition, in
the discussion of human destiny, although their views are different from each other, they finally
came up to similar moral implications. This contrast shows that the anthropological perspectives
of Barth and Xiong are not utterly contradictory. Conversely, Barth and Xiong seem to have
similar observations on relationship between human beings and also the relationship between
mind and body, but they adopt different interpretations and understandings of these phenomena
and so they finally come to different conclusions of humanity. The contrast of the
anthropologies of Barth and Xiong shows the complexity of humanity; similarities are found
among the differences, though differences are also found among similarities. Barth and Xiong
have similar observations on some anthropological phenomena like the co-humanity of human
beings, the tension between human autonomy and dependence, etc. Yet, they are quite different
from each other in the interpretations of these anthropological phenomena; Barth is consistently
theocentric (Christocentric) while Xiong tends to be anthropocentric.

1.2 ‘In-Between’ as a Characteristic of Chinese Theological Anthropology
Tensions seem to be unavoidable between the anthropologies of a ‘Western theologian’ and a ‘Chinese philosopher’. Barth and Xiong are dissimilar to each other, not only because of their differences in academic training, but also their cultural background. By means of the method of contrast, the differences between the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are exposed; yet as we look into their differences, we are able to find some similarities among the differences. In the light of the inner dialogue performed in the present study, a main theme of ‘in-between’ is noticed. In the following session, I will argue that this main theme could be a significant characteristic of Chinese theological anthropology and it may even shed light to the development of both Chinese anthropology and theological anthropology.

In the inner dialogue regarding human autonomy, the tension of human autonomy and human dependence is clearly shown. For Barth, human nature is dependent on an extrinsic relationship with God and he tended to remain sceptical of human autonomy. For Xiong, human nature is founded on an intrinsic relationship with one’s own self and so he tended to affirm human autonomy. However, as we further explore the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong, it becomes clear that Barth did not absolutely refute human autonomy, as long as it is related to humans’ response and obedience to God. On the other side Xiong was not totally optimistic on human autonomy either; he did admit to some limitations of the human beings. A contrast of Barth’s and Xiong’s views on human autonomy reveals that human beings are not totally
autonomous, nor completely dependent. A simple claim of either human autonomy or human limitation may neglect the complexity of the human condition. Human beings are neither utterly autonomous nor dependent, but perhaps in between these two extremes.

In the study of theological anthropology, many theologians, like Barth, understand the nature of human beings in terms of their relationship with God; this emphasis of ‘extrinsic relationship’ may lead them to a more negative perspective on human autonomy. Therefore, as this theological understanding of humanity encounters the Chinese philosophical understanding of humanity, which holds a relatively more positive view on human autonomy, difference and tension appears. However, this tension does help to trigger an inner dialogue. In my inner dialogue, the inner tension is resolved by finding that it is not necessary for me to stand either with theological anthropology for human dependence, or with philosophical anthropology for human autonomy; rather human beings are in fact in between these two extremes! This ‘encounter’ between theological anthropology and Chinese philosophical anthropology may also help the Western theologians and Chinese philosophers to enrich their understanding of human autonomy. On the one hand, for the Western theologians that tend to emphasize human limitation and dependence, the encounter with Chinese philosophical anthropology leads them to a more positive stance on human autonomy, though this human autonomy could still be understood as being under the sovereignty of God. On the other hand, for traditional Chinese
philosophers that usually stress human autonomy, the inspiration gained from the encounter with theological anthropology reminds them human limitation and human beings are actually not as autonomous as they imagined. Therefore, instead of stressing human autonomy or human dependence, it may be better to say that human beings are living ‘in-between human autonomy and dependence’.

Secondly, regarding relationships among the human beings, both Barth and Xiong agree that there is a profound requirement of relationality among human beings, which seems to be a universal human phenomenon. Thus they both conclude that human beings cannot live fully and wholly without companions.

Their different interpretations of this co-humanity contributed to different understandings of individual-communal relationship. Under the divine based understanding of co-humanity, Barth emphasized that human beings should maintain their own individuality in this relationship of co-humanity. However, from the understanding of ren, Xiong claimed that people should be compliant for the goodness of the others. In this aspect, Barth and Xiong obviously have divided opinions on how individual person should accommodate himself or herself to the whole community. Barth, on one hand, did not deny the importance of co-humanity; on the other hand, he asked individuals not to lose their own selves in the community. However, in contrast to Barth, Xiong tended to emphasize more the interest of the community.
The contrast of Barth and Xiong on their understanding of ‘co-humanity’ introduces the issue of individualism and collectivism. It appears that Xiong is influenced by traditional Chinese collectivism; however many recent studies of collectivism and individualism show that traditional stereotypical notions of Chinese collectivism and Western individualism are under great challenge. It is argued that culture is not a stagnant phenomenon and globalization has brought increasing homogeneity of cultures;\footnote{R. Stephen Parker, Diana L Haytko, Charles M Hermans, “Individualism and Collectivism: Reconsidering Old Assumptions,” \textit{Journal of International Business Research}, 2009. \url{http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5539/is_200901/ai_n39234753/?tag=content;col1} (accessed July 13, 2010); Jung-Soo Yi, “Individualism-Collectivism: A Study of College students in four countries,” \url{http://www.stamnet.org/journal/volume32/jungsooyi.pdf} (accessed July 13, 2010).} Chinese people are not as collectivistic as before and are becoming more individualistic; while Westerners are not as individualistic as before and may become more conscious of the community. As a matter of fact, early in the 1950s, Chinese Sociologist Fei Xiaotong (費孝通 1910-2005) had already stated that Chinese collectivism is not as simple as it appears. Chinese in fact have different understandings of ‘self’ in different settings. If Chinese are dealing with their own immediate family, ‘self’ may refer to an individual person; however, if they are dealing with other families, the ‘self’ may no longer refer to the individuals but expand to their immediate family. The ‘self’ may even expand to the whole community or the whole nation, depending on whom the Chinese comes into contact.\footnote{Fei coined this phenomenon as ‘Chinese social relations’ (Chaxu geju \\差序格局), refer to Xiaotong Fei, \textit{Xiangtu ZhongGuo} (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Company, 1991). This book has been translated in English, refer to Xiao-tung Fei, \textit{From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society: a translation of Fei Xiaotong’s Xiangtu Zhongguo, with an introduction and epilogue}, trans. Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).}

In other words, Chinese social relations work through social networks of personal relations, but
the individual self is still always at the center. Therefore, it is actually hard to conclude whether
Chinese people are individualistic or collectivistic, and it is also difficult to apply similar
conclusion to other groups and cultures. Perhaps human beings are in fact living in between
individualism and collectivism.

This ‘in-between’ state of individualism and collectivism, as a finding of the inner dialogue
in the present study, may be especially meaningful for the traditional Chinese who may always
feel obligated to ignore their individual interests for the goodness of the community. This
obligation has put many Chinese under long term stress and experiences of suppression; they
would feel very guilty if they attempt to pursue and develop their individual interests. However,
a renewed and nuanced understanding of co-humanity, as inspired by the theological
anthropology of Barth, may shed light for most Chinese Christians in terms of the relationship
between individuals and the community. The theological anthropology of Barth advocates that
human individuals should not make use of the others for self interest, yet human beings should
also not lose their own selves in the communal relationship. For Barth, every human person is
created by the Triune God and so he/she, on one hand, is accountable to God individually; but
on the other hand, he/she reflects the communal relationship of the Triune God. This divine
based view of humanity not only builds up the relationship between human beings, it also
maintains the individuality of human beings in the relationship of co-humanity. This would be
especially meaningful for traditional Chinese; it is not necessary for them to sacrifice their individual interest for the goodness of the others as if they are losing themselves in the communal relationship; yet at the same time, they are still able to live out the ‘co-humanity’ in the community. Besides, the theological anthropology of Barth is also important to conceive human difference in a positive way. People with different backgrounds, cultures could maintain their individuality, but they are also able to live out the ‘co-humanity’. In all, the theological anthropology of Barth gives a good theological account for the anthropological phenomenon of ‘in-between’ individualism and collectivism.

Thirdly, regarding the relationship between mind-soul and body within a human person, Barth and Xiong share similar opinions, though their rationales differ. Barth, with a deep belief that human nature is founded by the extrinsic relationship with God, affirmed the decisive position of the Holy Spirit in the constitution of human being; while Xiong, with a strong belief that human nature is founded by the intrinsic relationship within the human person, affirmed the internal creative power of human beings. The unanimous view of Barth and Xiong in terms of the relationship between mind-soul and body affirms a phenomenon of humanity - human beings are constituted by physical and non-physical beings and there is an internal order between them. The theme of ‘in-between’ discussed above is also found in this phenomenon of humanity; human beings are living ‘in between’ mind-soul and body, or in other words, they are
living in the tension of them.

However, regarding the rationale behind this phenomenon of the human ‘in-between mind-soul and body’ state, it is hard to conclude whether the internal order of physical and non-physical beings is maintained by either an external force like the Holy Spirit, or by an internal power of human beings. Barth and Xiong were arguing from different perspectives and with different presuppositions and socio-historical contexts. In addition, we should not make hasty conclusions that what Xiong meant by the self-regulative mechanism within human beings can actually be ascribed to the work of the Holy Spirit, or what Barth meant by the work of the Holy Spirit could be ascribed to a human self-regulative mechanism. Much further study and research, especially on the pneumatology of Barth and the metaphysical theory of Xiong, is needed to reach a prudent conclusion. As we aim at developing a Chinese theological anthropology in the present study, we should not depart too far from the theological perspective. It is therefore important to take seriously the theological perspective of Barth in the first place, yet at the same time we should not overlook the contribution to our understanding offered by Xiong’s anthropological perspective.

Fourthly, regarding human destiny and transcendence, different cultures have different perspectives; but the inner dialogue in the present study shows that the understanding of human destiny may draw significant moral and ethical implications. No matter how people understand
‘death’ and ‘after life’, there is a shared belief that people’s future destiny is closely related to their present lives and behaviour. For Barth, when human beings respond to the grace of God with faith and obedience, they are actually living out their destiny and determination as the covenant partner of God. The grace of God, as realized in the person of Jesus Christ, will lead them to an abundant life; thus the destiny of human being as the covenant partner of God orientates people toward the future as people are living in their present lives. For Xiong, a good destiny is always promised if human beings comply with the moral and ethical rules in their present life and some human efforts, like continuous self-reflection, in the present life may lead to a promising future and destiny. Barth and Xiong are different in their perspectives of human destiny; nevertheless for them, people’s present lives and behaviours are in fact influenced by their understandings of the future destiny. In other words, human beings are living ‘in-between’ the present and the future, they are in fact living in the tension of the present and the future.334

The state of being ‘in-between’ the present and the future is meaningful to both Chinese philosophical anthropology and also theological anthropology. Traditional Chinese used to stress more the present and seldom thought of the future, while some Christians (like the fundamentalists) usually emphasize the eschatological future but put less emphasis on the

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334 The tension of the present and the future is especially founded in the Christian eschatology, especially on the discussion of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is already, but not yet; it is both present and future. For on one hand, the divine reign has already inaugurated after the first advent of Christ; on the other hand, the consummation of the divine reign still awaits the second advent of Christ. Barth’s perspective of human destiny is very likely influenced by this eschatological view.
present. However, a good balance between the present and the future is meaningful and important to every human person, whatever their origins. On one hand, people should not neglect their present life and behaviour as if they are living in the future only; and on the other hand, the hope for a good destiny can become a positive guidance and basis for people’s present life.

All in all these examples, the theme of ‘in-between’ is found in the various phenomena of humanity when the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are put side by side for contrast. As a matter of fact, the concept of ‘in-between’ is not foreign to the Chinese. In traditional Confucian thought, it is believed that things will turn to the opposite side whenever it reaches an extreme; this is known as the principle of the ‘golden mean’ (zhongdao 中道) in the Confucian thought.  

Taking this logic, we should not make a simplified conclusion that human beings are either autonomous or dependent, as neither of these two claims reflects the true picture of humanity. Both human autonomy and human dependency are actually found in the phenomenon of humanity. According to the principle of the ‘golden mean’, when the phenomenon of human autonomy reaches its extremity, there will be a trend turning to its opposite – the phenomenon of

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335 ‘Golden mean’ or ‘mean’ can also be translated into ‘constant mean’ or ‘equilibrium and normality’. It first appeared in The Analects Ch. 6, ‘The virtue of the mean is indeed the highest of moral values, but its practice is seldom found for a long time.’ However, the Confucian did not further elaborate it. Later, in the commentary of The Doctrine of Mean (中庸), Zhu Xi (朱熹) stated that this treatise asks people always to be moderate; they should strike the appropriate mean between deficiency and excess in their lives. People should regulate their feelings and emotions in the state of equilibrium and harmony, so that they will be neither too extreme nor too restrained. Refer to Shang Xingguo and Chao Mingwang, eds., A Dictionary of Chinese Philosophy with English Annotations (Henan: The University of Henan, 2002), 148-150.
human dependence – and vice versa. Therefore, instead of claiming human beings are either autonomous or dependent, it is better to claim that human beings are in between autonomous and dependent and it is good for human beings to maintain equilibrium.

1.3 The Contribution of the Method of Contrast to Christian Theological Anthropology and Chinese Philosophical Anthropology

In this study, it is argued that traditional Confucian thought may shed light on theological reflection. As we contrasted the anthropological perspectives of Barth and Xiong, the concept of ‘in-between’ offers an important theme for understanding humanity especially in the study of Chinese theological anthropology. In addition, the method of contrast, which originates from traditional Chinese philosophy of Book of Changes, also offers an important Asian contextual contribution of the present study. My argument is that an emphasis on contrast of differences in theological method would induce us to strive for a renewed insight into the universe. In the present study, the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong are put into contrast. As their cultural and academic backgrounds are very different from each other, differences and apparent contradictions in their perspectives should not be unexpected. Nevertheless, as the diverse views are put side by side for contrast and engaged by inner dialogue, some important phenomena of humanity, like the emergence of the concept of ‘in-between’ become apparent.

The contrast of the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong helps to construct a renewed
understanding of humanity. With regard to Chinese philosophical anthropology – the anthropological view of most Chinese – as represented by Xiong, is influenced by Confucian philosophy, yet the introduction of Christian thought helps to broaden the horizon of Chinese people on their understanding of humanity. Likewise, an interaction with Chinese Confucian thought also helps to expand the horizon of Christian anthropology. For example, many Chinese used to stress human autonomy, yet the interaction of Christian theological anthropology calls them not to neglect human dependence and limitation. For Christians who used to emphasize human dependence, the interaction with Chinese Confucian thought is also a good reminder of human autonomy. Besides, the relationship among human beings and the conclusion about the ‘in-between’ of individualism and collectivism reminds Chinese to maintain their individuality in a communal relationship. Furthermore, the ‘in-between’ state of now and future of the human condition is a helpful reminder for people to keep a good balance on the emphasis of the present and the future in their daily life.

The method of contrast, focusing on the study of difference, provided a good methodology for the development of Christian theological anthropology and Chinese philosophical anthropology. As it is argued in the Ch.2 of this thesis, the study of difference is valuable to many academic disciplines like the social sciences and theology. As a matter of fact, the study of difference has a long history of being used as a method of argument, not only in Chinese
philosophy but also in ancient Greek philosophy. In ancient Greece, Socrates advanced a method of enquiry which helps people to prod into their underlying beliefs and extend their knowledge by posing a series of questions. By cross-examining others’ assertions, it is believed that a better hypothesis could be achieved by identifying and eliminating the contradicted claims.³³⁶ Later, the study of difference is further elaborated by Kant and Hegel; the triad - thesis, antithesis and synthesis - is often regarded as the legend of Hegelian dialectical thinking.³³⁷ However, unlike the Hegelian dialectic, the method of contrast does not assume that different perspectives of a phenomenon are necessarily contradictory of each other. As different perspectives are put side by side for contrast, the differences and also the complementarities of these perspectives are recognized and then by means of the dynamic contrast, a renewed understanding of the phenomenon can be achieved. In addition, different from phenomenological research which seeks to describe with ‘deep’ information and perception,³³⁸ the method of contrast not only describes, but also prods into the differences and the complementarities and yields a renewed understanding of the phenomenon.

³³⁷ Walter Kaufman stated that Hegel himself has only mentioned the triad (thesis-antithesis-synthesis) once, though it is usually recognized as ‘Hegalian dialectic’. Hegel in fact attributed this terminology to Immanuel Kant. Walter Kaufman, Hegel: A Reinterpretation (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978).
³³⁸ Early phenomenological research seeks to describe a perspective free from hypotheses and preconceptions; however more recent humanist researchers refute the possibility of starting without bias and presuppositions and start to emphasize the importance of how subjective interpretations have been placed on different perspectives and views. For early research on phenomenological research, refer to E. Husserl, Logical investigations, trans. D Carr (New York: Humanities Press, 1970) and for recent studies, refer to K. Plummer, Documents of Life: an Introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic method (London: Unwin Hyman theology, 1983); quoted by Stan Lester, An Introduction to Phenomenological research, http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf (accessed February 28, 2011).
2. Possible Implications for the Study of Chinese Contextual Theology

2.1 The Unavoidable Tension in Contextual Theology

As outlined in Chapter 1 of this thesis, tensions are unavoidable between the Christian tradition and a new cultural system like Chinese culture. As the Christian tradition encounters culture, differences and tensions are consistently discovered and it is the concern of contextual theology to deal with these differences. Contextual theology, on the one hand, needs to maintain the faithfulness to the Christian tradition and on the other hand, it has to respectfully engage the values of the Chinese cultural system. In the past, many attempts have been suggested to resolve the tensions between Christian tradition and Chinese culture; these attempts, just as discussed in Chapter I, are categorized under various typologies. Critiques have been pointed out that some of them favour too much of the Christian tradition, while some cling too much to the cultural system. Some may take a pragmatic approach by focusing on moral or ethical activities only, yet I submit here that these attempts are not the ideal way to deal with the tensions found in contextual theology. Rather, as demonstrated in my thesis above, the method of contrast, as demonstrated by the contrast of the anthropological views of Barth and Xiong, provides a meaningful way to dialogue with the differences and convergences.
2.2 Further Implications for Contextual Theology: the Value of Studying Differences by the Method of Contrast

Whenever a tension becomes apparent between Christianity and culture, it is important to make a close and genuine examination of the differences that appear in the first place. The contexts, background and presuppositions of the diverse perspectives must be carefully examined, otherwise the different views would not be understood as well as they should be. After that, the differences should be placed side by side for contrast. Out of this process a renewed understanding of that phenomenon may be made apparent and this could be a mutually enriching development and advancement for both Christianity and the new cultural system. In the past examples of contextual theological approaches, people with different concerns (or with different religious identities)\(^{339}\) may more strongly adhere to either the Christian tradition or the cultural context, as they try to develop their contextual theologies. The major concern of such theologians may focus either on maintaining the integrity of Christian tradition, or accommodating the Christian gospel to a particular cultural context. My argument here is, instead of simply focusing the Christian tradition or the cultural context as two poles, theologians may more profoundly probe into the issue or phenomenon concerned, with an open attitude towards a renewed understanding of the issue that may become clear after a detailed analysis.

\(^{339}\) This is the typology adopted by J. Dadosky, people focused on ‘Christian tradition’ stress the ‘specific identity’ in their interpretations of religious identity; while those focused on cultural context’ emphasize on ‘general identity’ in their interpretation of religious identity. There is a more detailed discussion of the work of Dadosky in the chapter 1 of this thesis.
examination of the background, presuppositions, and the process of contrast.

As we review past attempts of Chinese contextual theologies, many theologians try their best to look for the similarities between the Christian tradition and Chinese culture, with a hope that the Christian tradition could then be compatible with the Chinese culture. However, as they are busy looking for the similarities, they may miss the profound and illuminating differences of Chinese values and ideas from the Christian tradition, since the contexts and the presuppositions of formulating these cultural assumptions, values and perspectives are fundamentally different. People may be afraid that too much emphasis on the difference may hinder the formulation of contextual theology. However, I submit here that it is necessary and beneficial to look into the differences by means of the method of contrast to enable an even more profound dialogue towards formulating a credible contextual theology.

I have demonstrated the method of contrast applied in this way by exploring the differences between the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong. It is significant for contextual theological methodology that this method is inspired by the Chinese traditional wisdom of ‘yin’ and ‘yang’. By rooting the examination of cultural and tradition in an indigenous methodology, this approach facilitates an alternative way of doing theology. The interaction of ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ reveals the bipolarity, complementarity and dynamic development of myriad things in the world. Therefore, whenever there are differences or conflicts, it is good to contrast the differences by
putting them side by side so that we could identify the complementarity among the differences or the continuity among the discontinuities. The dynamic interaction of ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ reveals that the myriad things could finally work together well, although they may at first contrast with each other. In the formulation of Chinese contextual theology, tensions may seem unavoidable when the Christian tradition encounters the well-established Chinese cultural system; yet the exercise of contrast, originated from the Chinese traditional wisdom, helps to culturally authenticate the examination of the difference between the Christian tradition and the Chinese cultural system. In the process of contrast, both the Christian tradition and Chinese cultural system are taken seriously and I submit here that it is a necessary and important step for the formulation and development of Chinese contextual theology.

The method of contrast is not only helpful for the development of Chinese contextual theology; it may have potential for the development of other contextual theologies. It has been argued that Christian theologies are contextual, and Stephen Bevans has even claimed that “there is no such thing as ‘theology’; there is only ‘contextual theology’.” The assumption of a contextual theological approach is that our understanding of God and the Bible is always under the challenges of time and context. We are always asked to re-examine our understanding of God and the Bible in the light of the present time and culture. This means that the study of contextual theology cannot be separated from epistemology and method. The way and the

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340 Bevans, 3.
attitude we employed in knowing things will affect our understanding of the world and also the development of our contextual understanding of theology. In the present study, the method of contrast provides an epistemological method rooted in Chinese tradition for the study of contextual theology. As I argued earlier, contextual theology should always strive for a good balance between the Christian tradition and the cultural system it engages, especially when striking differences are discovered. Whenever difference appears, a paradigm of contrast can be discerned. Structural contrast helps to have a re-examination of these different views and dynamic contrast helps to develop a renewed understanding of the difference. Sooner or later, this renewed understanding may even become a part of the Christian tradition. As time unfolds, these insights will be challenged again and again by new contexts and lead to new and creative processes of contrast. In this way the paradigm of contrast will continue and lead to continuous progress and development.

3. Potential Implications for Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue

Just like contextual theology, interreligious (or interfaith) dialogue need to deal with the tension between maintaining the integrity of one’s religion and being open to other faiths and religions as well. Similar difficulty is also found in the ecumenical dialogue within Christianity, in which different denominations attempt to resolve their diverse theological perspectives. In
developing a definition of ‘interfaith dialogue’, Wesley Ariarajah stated:

Basically, interfaith dialogue was understood as an encounter between people who live by different faith traditions, in an atmosphere of mutual trust and acceptance. Dialogue did not require giving up, hiding or seeking to validate one’s own religious conviction; in fact, the need for being rooted in one’s own tradition to be engaged in a meaningful dialogue was emphasized, as were common humanity and the need to search in a divided world for life in community. Dialogue was seen as a way not only to become informed about the faiths of others but also to rediscover essential dimensions of one’s own faith tradition. The benefits of removing historical prejudices and enmities as well as the new possibilities for working together for common good were recognized and affirmed.\(^{341}\)

Thus, interreligous dialogue requires a strong rootedness in one’s own religious tradition; yet at the same time, this tradition has to be challenged in the process of dialogue. On one hand, a meaningful dialogue would not be carried out if the dialogue partners are unable to assert themselves. On the other hand, if all the dialogue partners keep tight grasp on their own convictions, it would be difficult for them to listen to the others. Such tension seems to be inevitable; however the method of contrast may contribute to resolving such tension.

In a meeting of interreligious dialogue, all dialogue partners bring their own religious convictions to the table and will be given a chance to share in the meeting. Their original religious convictions can be regarded as their ‘past experience’ on the religious issues; as they listen to the sharing of the others, others’ faiths and religious traditions will then become their new experience. If this ‘new experience’ is different from their ‘past experience’, a tension

\(^{341}\) Ariarajah, “Interfaith Dialogue.”
arises and people would have to resolve it. At this time, the three processes of the method of contrast may apply. First, they need to re-examine their own tradition, which is their past experience. Secondly, they need to explore the views of others’ faiths, which is their new experience. Finally, they need to compare and contrast these differences and may finally have a renewed understanding of the tension.

In the process of interreligious dialogue, a structural contrast can be made by putting the differences of various faiths and religious traditions side by side. All dialogue partners in the meeting may re-examine their own traditions and try to explore the faith traditions of others. After re-examination and exploration, a dynamic contrast can be made in a form of inner dialogue, which happens within every dialogue partner. This ‘inner dialogue’ (or ‘interior dialogue’ another similar term suggested by Redington), is a process of “the interaction, the testing and with the help of grace, the reconciliation within one’s personal faith of the beliefs, symbols, and values of the different faith systems which one is deeply considering.”342 Dynamic contrast, in the form of inner dialogue or interior dialogue, is actually a process of interaction, testing and reconciliation; it not only helps the dialogue partners to resolve their inner tension, but also helps to broaden their horizons and fields of vision.

342 Redington, 247.
Conclusion

Differences and possible tensions seem to be unavoidable in the study of contextual theology or ecumenical/interfaith dialogue. In the study of contextual theology, people always need to deal with the tension of maintaining the integrity of their religious tradition and, at the same time, accommodating their religious tradition to the context. Different people may adopt different ways to deal with the tension, some may adhere to the tradition (like the counter-cultural model) and some may cling to the context (like anthropological model). In ecumenical/interfaith dialogue, some may have strong conviction on their own religious tradition and disregard other religious traditions; while some may be open to others’ religious tradition and make light of their own religious traditions. However, neither of these attitudes helps to resolve the tensions found and a good method is surely needed.

In the present study, the method of contrast is proposed as a good method to deal with the tension that may be found in the study of contextual theology and ecumenical/interfaith dialogue. It contributes by offering a new perspective in the study of differences. Instead of simply looking for some apparent similarities and parallels, the method of contrast induces us to strive for a renewed understanding of the universe by contrasting different worldviews. It helps us to prod into our underlying beliefs and extend our horizon by engaging into the others’ view. Here the contrast of the anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are taken as an example to illustrate how
the method of contrast helps to deal with the differences in the contextual study of Chinese theological anthropology. As argued in the last chapter, this method also demonstrates both potential for the development of contextual theology and for interfaith dialogue. By contrasting the differences of various views on a particular phenomenon, researchers are induced to discover the mutual similarities and continuities, while at the same time respect all the differences and discontinuities. This operation of contrast may then bring the researcher to a renewed understanding of the phenomenon. Besides, the method of contrast, which originates from the traditional Chinese philosophy of Book of Change, is particularly meaningful for the study of Chinese contextual theology and it is proposed that it may offer an alternative to Western methodologies that are often employed in dealing with cultural challenges.

Apart from the methodology, the present study also intends to find some main themes of study for the development of Chinese theological anthropology. Here the contrast of Barth and Xiong’s anthropologies is carried out firstly by an introduction of their biographies and contexts. The anthropologies of Barth and Xiong are then reviewed and examined with respect to several important aspects of humanity, namely, human origin, human existence (including the relationship between human beings and the mind-soul body relationship) and lastly human destiny. On account of the different cultural and academic backgrounds, no one would be surprised to see the differences of Barth and Xiong. However, when their anthropological views
are put into contrast, it becomes apparent that their views are not as contradictory as it appears.

There are similarities among differences and also differences among similarities. In particular, Barth and Xiong do share some similarities in the observations of some phenomena of humanity; they just adopt different perspectives to interpret these phenomena. However, it is also argued that parallels should not be easily drawn, lest the long lasting traditions of Christianity and Chinese philosophy would be overlooked. Nevertheless, in the light of the inner dialogue performed in the present study, the contrast of Barth and Xiong’s anthropological views leads to a theme of ‘in-between’, which is proposed as a significant characteristic of Chinese theological anthropology. Under this theme of ‘in-between’, we acknowledge that human beings are in fact living between various extremes, like the extremes of autonomous and dependency, the extremes of individualism and collectivism, the extremes of mind and body and also the extremes of the presence and the future. This theme of ‘in-between’ is familiar to Chinese, as it is in line with the traditional Chinese wisdom – ‘The principle of golden mean’. The theme of ‘in-between’, especially in the aspect of individualism and collectivism, is particularly meaningful to traditional Chinese who always feel obligated to give up their own individual interest for the goodness of the community. Chinese Christians, inspired by the theological anthropology of Barth, may no longer feel guilty on any pursuit of individual interest; yet they can still maintain a good communal relationship with the others. Besides, the ‘in-between’
between the present and the future may also shed light to many traditional Chinese who usually stress more the presence and seldom think of the future. The eschatological view of humanity, especially founded on Christian theology, is of great significance to Chinese in Mainland China, where severe moral issues are a big concern now. A good balance between the present and the future is without doubt important for everyone, yet the hope of destiny will be especially significant for Chinese Christians as a positive guidance and basis for the present life. All in all, with the help of this Chinese theological anthropology, it is hoped that Chinese Christians may have a renewed understanding of humanity and may enjoy a better life as a Chinese and, at the same time, a Christian.
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