I CHING: A SURVEY OF CRITICISM IN ENGLISH

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Ever since its first English translation appeared in 1870[1], the *I Ching* has occupied a peculiar position in sinological scholarship. Critical opinions are relatively scarce, and those who make the attempt find themselves confronted with the basic question whether to treat the book as a philosophical text or simply as a manual of divination. This problem is not new and, even in China, has never been satisfactorily answered. The dual possibility is probably one of the reasons that some scholars shun it entirely, regarding it as an ambiguous path in the fertile field of Chinese literature and culture. However, in the last one hundred years, numerous sinologists have, in fact, tried to analyze the book—mostly as a philosophical text—from various angles and offered a wide variety of critical interpretations. This essay will summarize and discuss in a roughly chronological order the important critical ideas which have become available in English, some of them translations from Chinese and German, from 1882 to 1972. The recent trend, starting around 1960, in popularizing the book for a broader public has produced a body of simplified interpretations. Many of them appear in book form along with partial or reprinted translations (by James Legge) or new adaptations. None of these popular interpretations will be discussed here.[2]

In his scholarly translation of the *I Ching*[3], James Legge also wrote a long introduction divided into three sections: the development of the book in China, the origin of the lineal figure, and the general content of the book, including the Ten Wings. Legge attributes different possible authors to the Basic Text and the Ten Wings. Possibly because of the scarcity of critical studies at that time, he boldly states that the Basic Text was written by King

Wen" in the year 1143 B.C. and his equally famous son, the Duke of Chou, in between thirty and forty years later" (p.6). Recent scholars are less dogmatic about the authorship of the book and far less confident about the date of composition. They tend to agree with Feng Yu-lang's assumption that the Basic Text is a collection or compilation of royal divinational records accumulated over a long period of time. As to the Ten Wings, Legge is more cautious, but still rather emphatic in his supposition: "I do not doubt, however, that they belong to what may be called the Confucian period, and were produced sometime after his death, probably between B.C. 450 and 350" (p.3).

In the second section, Legge goes into explaining the content of the Basic Text, the way in which lineal figures are formed, and the basic rules for interpreting the trigrams and hexagrams. He gives three traditional accounts of the origin of the lineal figures: 1) the theory that Fu Hsi devised the eight trigrams, 2) the Great Extreme (太極) theory, 3) and the Ho Map (that is, the Yellow River) theory. He also indicates that the second account is the true one (p.17). In his last section, Legge discusses the authorship of the Ten Wings and their general contents. Each 'Wing' is described in some detail and some examples are given. The idea of Yin and Yang is briefly mentioned and divinational method by using the stalks is discussed. On the whole, Legge's lengthy introduction is sound and well supported. It remains one of the few readable, general introductory essays on the *I Ching*.

Partly as a criticism on Legge's ignorance of Chinese cosmology in his introduction mentioned above, but more as a detailed study on the origin of Yin-Yang idea in China, Leopold de Saussure argues that this idea is very little understood "because the unity and the value of the astronomico-cosmological system of Chinese antiquity have not been sufficiently recognized."[4] Chinese cosmology has much to do with the daily, seasonal revolution but not necessarily with the sun and moon. De Saussure states:

> Just as the theory of the five elements does not derive from the five planets, so likewise the dualistic theory does not derive from either the sun or moon. The fundamental basis of the Chinese conception lies in the revolution of the seasons, in the alternation of heat and cold, of darkness and light. The two antithetic principles (whatever their original name may be) were later symbolized by the moon and the sun, just as the five elements (though one of them, earth, corresponds to the center) were afterwards symbolized by the five planets. (p. 459)

De Saussure insists that we cannot understand the *I Ching* correctly if we fail to recognize this cosmological concept. Astrology and changing cosmological revolution are exactly what the book is about. He also devotes several pages to criticizing Legge's lack of knowledge in this particular aspect. The article is concise and illuminating, especially clear in depicting the origin and development of the Yin-Yang in China.

One of the most intriguing but fascinating questions about the *Book of Changes* is the question whether Confucius ever seriously studied this book. In *Analects* VII, xvi, Confucius states that he will give fifty years to the study of the *I Ching* if possible. This remark convinces many scholars that the Great Master did study the book, Homer Dubs probes this question in an eloquent and convincing essay.[5] He analyzes the Master's attitude toward religious observances from the *Analects* and concludes that Confucius puts very little value upon divination,

> Confucius' attitude towards the popular religion was clearly one of agnosticism; refusing to attack it, but also refusing to do more than go through the prescribed ritual, and clearly indicating that he did not accept the religious superstitions which lay behind those practices. (p. 84)

Dubs also points out that Confucius frequently, "quoting from the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*, recommended the *Odes*, the *Rites*, and the *Music*, but nowhere is it recorded that he speaks about the *Changes*" (p. 85), except, of course, that single remark in the *Analects*. Confucius also did not speak about extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder or spirit (*Analects*, VII, xx). Such was his character that we are not surprised to see that he makes no mention of the divinational manual. Furthermore, if Confucius really "has honored and admired it, we should expect that his disciples and followers would have likewise studied and spoken of it. On the contrary, they maintain a complete silence for centuries after his death" (p. 85). Even Mencius, who was more liberal, does not mention the *I Ching* at all in his *Doctrine of the Mean*. Dubs suspects that Confucius' single remark on the *I Ching* might have been interpolated by later Confucian scholars who wanted to

> validate the *Book of Changes* as a member of the canon, it would be necessary to have a saying of Confucius which would not be suspected of spuriousness by the sophisticated Confucians. So we find this extravagant

> praise of the *Book of Changes* in the middle of the one work which most certainly records the genuine sayings of Confucius, and just preceding a genuine saying in which he speaks of three other members of the canon. The interpolated saying contains only seventeen characters—not too much to be a great strain upon an ordinary person's conscience. (p. 89)

Dubs's study eloquently argues against the possibility that Confucius had anything to do with the *I Ching*. It is still one of the most important articles in this respect.

H. G. Creel, in an equally convincing study in his book, *Confucius and the Chinese Way*, further proves that the Great Master had nothing to do with the *Book of Changes*.[6] Adding to Dubs' arguments, Creel points out that the ideas of Yin and Yang, and Ti (earth), used metaphysically, do not occur in the Confucian *Analects*. Moreover, the commentaries to the *I Ching* are pervaded by a philosophy that is completely opposite to that of the *Analects*, and the whole philosophy of prognostication and the world view found in the *I Ching* are utterly foreign to the thinking of Confucius. Creel suggests that there are three possible reasons why Confucius was made the author of the Ten Wings: "(1) the great mass of later Confucians wanted Taoism, (2) they wanted divination, and (3) they wanted the blessing of Confucius on these things. In the Appendixes to the *Book of Changes* they get all three" (p. 202). Creel's argument further strengthens Dubs's earlier remarks and is in itself an excellent study on the topic.

In *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China*, Hu Shih devotes two chapters to the *Book of Changes* and its influence on Confucius.[7] Hu doubts that all of the Ten Wings were written by Confucius, but he expresses confidence that Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4 were written by the Master himself. He points out that the *I Ching* contains most of the basic teachings of Confucian logic and from that the trigrams are probably word-signs of a now extinct language dating before the invention of Chinese characters. The center of Hu's discussion—what he calls the 'logical doctrine in the *Book of Changes*' —is the idea of 'Hsiang' (象). Hsiang is an image or idea conceived for a thing,

> In the *Book of Changes*, the Hsiang is used in two slightly different senses. In the first sense, a Hsiang is simply a phenomenon noted or perceived in nature. Thus we read of the 'Hsiang of heavens' .... In the second sense, a Hsiang is an idea or notion capable of being represented by some symbol

or being realized in some activity or 'utensil.' (p.34)

Hu notes that it is in the second sense that the word Hsiang is most frequently used in the *Book of Changes,* from which "Confucius found a symbolic representation of the complexities of change in the universe" (p.31) because "all our activities, utensils and institutions, according to the Confucian logic, have originated in the Hsiang or 'Idea' (p.34). As to whence these ideas come, Hu quotes from the *I Ching,* saying that they started from the minds of the ancient wise men who received from the heavens the meaning of natural phenomena and thus the Hsiang or idea was conceived. This, he says, is how there came about the invention of plow share and canoes, religious rites of burial, mortar-and-pestle, etc.

Another important theory of logic contained in the *Book of Changes,* according to Hu Shih, is 'the theory of judgment,' which could indicate whether something is going to happen and tell the reader what is good and what is bad. Therefore, to the ancient Chinese the *I Ching* primarily served the same purpose as a scientific book in the modern age. It was a practical hand-book for almost all occasions; it enabling the user to make inferences and guiding his course of action in whatever he wants to do; it can tell him about the possible results of a certain activity so that he may choose the right course and avoid the underirable one.

The basic problem with Hu's interpretation of the *I Ching* lies in his premise, highly questionable as could be seen from the opinions of Homer Dubs and H.G. Creel discussed previously, that Confucius *is* the author of several sections of the Ten Wings. Attributing Confucius as the author and interpreting the ideas thereon may be convenient, but is hardly a persuasive approach. In this instance, he completely disregards the fact that the *I Ching* authorship remained to be settled. His idea of Hsiang as the origin of all human activities, customs, institutions and utensils is quite original, but not altogether convincing.

Arthur Waley approaches the book from a completely different angle– the folk-beliefs revealed in the Basic Text.[8] His thesis is that the *I Ching* is "an arbitrary amalgam of two quite separate works: 1) an omen or 'peasant interpretation' text . . . 2) a divination text probably of later date and certainly of far more sophisticated nature " (p.121). He further classifies the omen text into three categories: 1) subjective omens concerning inexplicable sensations and involuntary movements (feeling, twitchings, stumbling, belching, and the like; 2) omens concerning plants, animals and birds; 3) omens

concerning natural phenomena (thunder, stars, rain, etc.) (pp. 121-122). Waley quotes from the *I Ching* to illustrate these three classes. Occasionally, Western folk-belief is introduced to show how different cultures come to have the similar traditions. He indicates that the book shows mixture of four different divining techniques:

> 1) What is called by anthropologists 'peasant interpretation,' the use of natural phenomena, chances, feelings, etc., as omen. 2) Divination by plant-stalks, through a 'score' of odds and evens arrived at by the shuffling and counting of such stalks . . . 3) Divination by marks on the heated carapace of the tortoise. The vocabulary of the interpolated clauses is largely based on that of tortoise divination . . . 4) Divination-tablets, representing objects of omen. (p.140)

Waley's examination of folk-belief in the *I Ching* provides a useful direction for later scholars to pursue. Waley cautiously suggests that the Basic Text could date from between 1000 and 600 B.C.; and more precise dating of the *I Ching* might be possible from its linguistic and structural patterns.

In Chapter 15 of his *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, Feng Yu-lan discusses the *I Ching* in some detail.[9] Feng's primary thesis is that it is a book of divination, not philosophy. He argues that divination by tortoise shell was used in the Shang dynasty and that the eight trigrams and the sixty-four hexagrams were formed to similuate the cracks which appeared when the tortoise shell was heated. "The *I Ching*'s trigrams and hexagrams thus would seem to have originally been made as pictorial substitutes for the cracks formed in the tortoise shell " (p.379). The diviner would then read the cracks and interpret its message. However, the method was imprecise because

> The cracks thus formed . . . were numerous and intricate and hence difficult to interpret. Consequently the prognostications based on these were also complicated and difficult to remember. The use of the divining plant in conjunction with *I Ching*'s diagrams, however, put an end to these difficulties. For the diagrams of the *I Ching*, formed of broken and unbroken lines in such a way that they bore a certain resemblance to the cracks, were at the same time limited in number to sixty-four combinations, with the result that their prognostications were likewise limited. Thus . . . a standard prognostication could always be obtained corresponding to which ever hexagram or line in the hexagram happened to be encountered, and the meaning of the prognostication could then be applied to the situation at hand. (p.380)

This theory of the origin of the *I Ching* diagrams is the most convincing one offered so far, but the exact process of how the tortoise cracks were transformed into a trigram of broken and unbroken lines remained to be answered, because the eight trigrams are highly logical and the resulting sixty-four hexagrams are rather mathematical, too. The assumption that divining plants took the place of tortoise shell is more plausible, because the shell is not easily available anywhere and because the heating process is troublesome. Feng also strongly refutes the idea that Confucius had anything to do with the Ten Wings.

Feng then discusses the relationship between the eight trigrams and the idea of Yin and Yang. There is no way of knowing whether any meanings were attached to the eight trigrams in the beginning; but later on, their implications were so elaborate that each came to represent a certain idea. Feng describes the process as follows:

> Once the fixed meanings had become attached to the eight trigrams, the present cosmologies in the *I Ching* were written. Those based their speculations upon the origin of life as it is seen to occur in the case of human beings, and extended this by analogy to apply to the origins of other things . . . a human being is produced by the union of man and woman, and so by extension, the universe is also considered to have two prime principles: the male or Yang . . . and the female or Yin . . . Heaven and Earth are the physical representations of these principles. (p.383)

Feng notes that this system existed independent of the Five Elements theory during the Chou dynasty. However, the two schools were mixed by the Han dynasty.

Feng then concentrates on the idea that ". . . all things in the universe follow a definite order according to which they move everlastingly " (p.388). This order goes always in cycles; therefore, whatever comes will go eventually, and anything that reaches its height must fall accordingly. By analogy

> Good and bad fortune are the invariably concomitants of any movement, and all phenomena in the universe consist in movement of some kind. Hence it is inevitable that there will be evil in the world. (p.390)

This idea of revolution is central in understanding the book and should be kept in mind when we try to interpret it.

In his last section, Feng summarizes the relationship between the

hexagrams and human affairs. Since everything—through its development and transformation—follows a definite order, or 'the universal laws,' as Feng calls it, the simple diagrams were used to represent the laws and served as a model for human behavior. "In other words, the *I Ching* is a reflection in miniature of the entire universe"[9] (p.390). Feng's discussion of the idea of change in the *I Ching* is most thorough.

In his monumental *Science and Civilization in China*, Joseph Needham devoted a long chapter to the system of the *I Ching*. Divided into five sections, Needham's book begins with a discussion of the origin and structure of the book and suggests a possible time of compilation" which might be as old as the -7th or -8th century but did not reach its present form before the end of the Chou Dynasty."[10] He refutes Legge's rather dogmatic dating of the book and follows Waley's theory that this text is essentially an amalgam of omen and later developments as a divinational text. He suggests that the *I Ching* would be strictly an auguristic text if Ten Wings were lacking.

In the first section, Needham briefly examines how omens become abstract concepts. He particularly mentions Wang Pi (226-241 A.D.), who was the first to treat the book as philosophy, not as a divinational manual. Needham then goes into the scientific aspect of the book. He indicates that because "each hexagram has its abstract significance attached" (p.307), Chinese scientists of medieval times had what amounted to a repository of concepts to which "almost any natural phenomenon could be referred" (p.322). Needham compiles several interesting tables and diagrams to show the contents of the *I Ching* in terms of scientific application. One diagram shows the hexagrams arranged in relation to time, space, and motion. One tables classifies the sixty-four hexagrams by categories, such as concept of involving motion, of imobility, etc.; another table lists the inventions mentioned in the *I Ching*. Needham's third section cites examples of the applications of trigram and hexagram symbol in later Chinese scientific achievement, particularly in the field of chemistry, acoustics, biology, medicine and physiology. For the subsequent Chinese scientists, the *I Ching* symbols, namely *kua*, "come to be visualized not only as abstract formulations of all kinds of natural processes, but as invisible operators and causative factors" (p.329).

In the next section, Needham says that the *Book of Changes* has exerted influence upon Chinese minds for a long time, but the mystery behind it is not easy to explain:

> Was the compelling power which it had in Chinese civilization due to the fact that it was a view of the world basically congruent with the bureaucratic social order? Could one even describe it as the 'administrative approach' to natural phenomena? . . . The point to be made is that the system of the *Book of Changes* might be regarded as in a sense the heavenly counterpart of the bureaucracy upon earth, the reflection upon the world of nature of the particular social order of the human civilization which produced it. (p.337)

Though divination has always been an integral part of Chinese society—the royal family and common people, especially on important occasions such as marriage, funeral, planting time, coronation, hunting, etc., —no specific application of the *I Ching* system in administrative process has been reported. Needham's assumption is rather conjectural in nature and further evidence is required. By the Ch'in dynasty, the Chinese governing system had been fairly well established and it was possible that some of the Ten Wings, which are responsible for developing the Basic Text into a philosophical text, might not yet have been written then. Another important reminder: though the text now belongs to the Five Classics, it did not become get placed there until the Han dynasty. Needham's inference here should be read with caution.

The fifth section in Needham's discussion covers one of the most unusual aspects of the history of the *I Ching*, namely the discovery of binary arithmetic in the hexagrams by Leibniz, who first proposed the binary system in 1670. By accident, a Jesuit missionary in China, Fr. Joachim Bouvet, found that the *I Ching* hexagrams could be interpreted as one way of writing numbers according to the binary system, if the unbroken lines (Yang hsiao) are taken to represent the mathematical '1' and the broken lines to represent '0'. If the hexagrams are arranged according to the Fu Hsi system, instead of the usual Wen Wang order, then "there is a methodical progression with a gradually increasing number of unbroken lines, exactly as required for Leibniz's notation" (p. 341). Leibniz was amazed that the ancient Chinese had already discovered the rather abstract binary system. Needham quotes several recent studies to show, however, that there was, in fact, no mathematical significance to the hexagrams in China and no quantitative calculation was ever associated with an *I Ching* diagram.

Needham's major contribution in this chapter is the discussion of scientific applications of the *I Ching* ideas by Chinese scientists. However, his assumption that the system of the *I Ching* might be regarded as the heavenly counterpart of the Chinese bureaucracy is rather doubtful.

David Mungello also touched upon the subject of Leibniz and the *I Ching* in a paper published in 1971.[11] He argues, as some sinologists now believe, that Leibniz deliberately tried to draw a parallel between his binary system and the reading of hexagram order as mathematical, finding that this "presents an instance of where the projection of his own system may actually be an overprojection that leads to a nonexistent parallel" (p.15). Mungello's argument is that Leibniz had always been interested in China and Chinese culture; the discovery of the identical binary system in China means a great deal to him because it represents:

> 1) confirmation at the other end of the world for his own work in the binary system, and
> 2) a further basis on which to build a natural religion foundation of understanding among other peoples. (p.16)

The second point carries great implication for Leibniz, because he had always been looking for an avenue to unite East and West. This discovery certainly gives him a very convenient weapon, as Mungello elaborates:

> Leibniz's aim was to impress the Chinese, and particularly the K'ang-hsi Emperor . . ., that China and Europe share this binary system of progression, which for Leibniz had religious overtones. With this impression established, he would next attempt to convince the emperor that the essentials of Christianity and Chinese thought and religious practices are commonly held in both cultures in the form of the basic principles of natural religion . . . Leibniz's attempt to reach the emperor through the universal language of mathematics reflects . . . a philosopher's aim based upon a diplomat's familarity with the situation. (p.19)

Mungello's projection theory offers an explanation of Leibniz's immense interest in Chinese culture. The interpretation is difficult to prove because nothing further happened. It was true that Leibniz's correspondent in China, Fr. Bouvet, became a tutor to the Emperor in geometry. But that was as far as it goes.

Hellmut Wilhelm, son of Richard Wilhelm, who translated the *I Ching* into German, delivered a series of eight speeches on the *I Ching* in Peking in 1943 during the Japanese occupation.[12] The first lecture, "Origins," gives the general content of the book and most of the terminology. Wilhelm is very cautious in discussing the possible origin of the book; he indicates that the

oracle system ". . . was not born overnight, but must have been preceded by a coherent idea of the cosmos, a definite system of the image of life, that is, a picture of the world, which was then laid down in the *Book of Changes*" (p.9). He is equally cautious in placing the date of composition, saying that he is uncertain "whether the *Book of Changes* and its picture of the world antedated oracle-taking and, as many persons still think today, did not originally serve the oracle system" (p.9). Wilhelm does point out two often neglected factors of the divinational system peculiar to this book:

> [Firstly] the oracle of the *Book of Changes* uses as its key the forces of vegetable rather than animal life. It was a plant growing in sacred places, the yarrow, whose stalks gave access to the oracle when manipulated in a certain way. [Secondly] it makes the questioner independent of the mediumistic gifts, or intuition, of an oracle giver. Thus all sorts of influences to which an oracle priest may be exposed were eliminated. It was not a human medium that was consulted but a collection of texts whose authority and value the oracle seeker accepted unquestioningly. (pp.8-9)

In the second chapter, "The Concept of Change," Wilhelm first studies the word, 'I,' (易), from the point of view of its etymology, and finds three ancient meanings for it, namely, 1) 'lizard,' 2) a fixed relationship between above and below, 3) a combination of sun and moon. However, this word has also been used for a long time with the following meanings: "the easy, the simple, in contrast to what is difficult; the firm and quiet in contrast to what is endangered; change or alternation" (p.14). Wilhelm interprets the first meaning by saying that most things or events described in the *Book of Changes* are commonplace, things everybody would come across in daily life, and thus easy to understand. The third meaning of the word, change or alternation, is very important. He defines it as follows:

> The important step carried out in the *Book of Changes* is the application of this concept of change to the organic forms of life as well. And with this step the book becomes valuable in the philosophical sense . . . . To recognize that man moves and acts, that he grows and develops, that is not deep insight, but to know that this movement and development takes place in typical forms and that these are governed by the law of changes, from which there is no escape, this is the knowledge that has fostered in early Chinese philosophy its gratifying integrity and lucidity. (pp.18-19)

As to the origin of this idea of change, Wilhelm admits that it is difficult to

present in concrete form. He describes it rather philosophically:

> The concept of change is not an external, normative principle that imprints itself upon phenomena; it is an inner tendency according to which development takes place naturally and spontaneously. Development is not a fate dictated from without to which one must silently submit; but rather a sign showing the direction that decision takes. Again, development is not a moral law that one is constrained to obey; it is rather the guideline from which one can read off events. To stand in the stream of this development is a datum of nature; to recognize it and follow it is responsibility and free choice. (p.19)

Wilhelm's discussion of the second meaning of the word 'I' (易) –firm, secure or constant–has not been touched upon by critics. In the book, it is used as the opposite of the word 'danger,'

> Danger is the unknown, the mysterious, from which misfortune can arise just as easily as good fortune. Safety is the clear knowledge of the right stand to be taken, security in the assurances that events are unrolling in the right direction. (p.20)

Closely related to this self assurance is the idea that "change is not something that is carried out abruptly and irrationally. It has its fixed course in which the trends of events develop" (p.21). The constancy or stability of change confirms human expectation and gives rise to continuing human virtue as the only basis of survival.

Wilhelm's third chapter, "The Two Fundamental Principles," discusses the development of the *I Ching*'s from the idea of polarity. It is the contrast of above and below, or heaven and earth, that lays behind the text,

> . . . the polarity of these two concepts is built into the system of the *Book of Changes* and posits the structure in which an ordering principle is latent . . . Polarity here does not mean rigidity, nor a pole around which the cyclic movement turns, but a 'magnetic field' which determines the change, indeed invokes it. (p.27)

The antithesis can be seen from various human and natural phenomena; masculine and feminine, father and son, king and common people, sun and moon, day and night, dragon and mare, etc. The whole range of conception is symbolized in the *I Ching* as Yin and Yang, literally dark and bright. The basic line configurations used in any *I Ching* diagram, an undivided line which

represents the Yang and a divided line which represents the Yin, carry the latent meaning from their origin.

Closely related to this chapter is the next one which discusses how the Yin-Yang lines develop into trigrams and hexagrams. Wilhelm warns that we should think of this line representation as being very concrete because

> In a magical world view, a thing and its image are identical. We need not be taken aback because these images have taken on so rational a form as that of a divided and an undivided line instead of being presented more fancifully. The infinite complexities of phenomena have been invested in a rational form accessible to man's intellect and power of action in order to indicate that aspect of phenomena which may lead to insight and action . . . the linear images completely contain the world, they are its embodiment. (p.35)

Then Wilhelm continues to explain how the trigrams and hexagrams are formed. He cautions that there was a possibility that the hexagrams might be the "original images from which the trigrams were later abstracted and that the configurations of double lines are derived from a still later analysis" (p.37). Support for this theory comes from the fact that two and six were often emphasized in ancient Chinese numerical system. Wilhelm also explains each trigram in detail, pointing out its structure and what symbolic attribute each contains. Hexagrams are then introduced as groups, indicating their structural principles and their lineal significance.

Instead of giving each hexagram a close scrutiny, Wilhelm uses the first two, Ch'ien and K'un, as examples in his next chapter to show the wide range of ideas in each hexagram by a detailed structural analysis. To explore various strata of its implication, he quotes from the Ten Wings, which he discusses in Chapter Six. These commentaries or Appendixes, as some critics call them, were not written or edited by Confucius, he says, but rather a clumsy compilation added to the *I Ching* Basic Text toward the end of Chou era. While Wilhelm makes only brief remarks on the Ten Wings; he expresses his view fittingly on the three-fold value of the *I Ching,*

> Devotion to the system of the Changes imparts the repose and joyous freedom characteristic of the superior man. Meditation on its images and judgments imparts the knowledge that arms him for all situations, and the augury given him by the oracle imparts the decision on his action. (p.68)

Wilhelm's seventh chapter touches upon "The Later History of the *Book of Changes.*" He discusses the *I Ching's* development in the Han and Sung dynasties, its relationship with the system of Wu Hsing (or the Five Stages of Changes), and Wei (or the Eight Apocrypha.) Important *I Ching* commentators, such as Wang Pi, Shao Yung, and Chou Tun-I, are mentioned and their contributions also evaluated. Wilhelm's last chapter describes the two common *I Ching* divinational methods: the yarrow stalks and the three coins. He explains each method step by step and shows how to use the accompanying text. His eight lectures cover all the important aspects of the classic in great detail. It is by far the best full length study on the *I Ching.*

Hellmut Wilhelm also has an important paper discussing the time element in the *Book of Changes.*[13] He contends that the sixty-four hexagrams represent sixty-four situations in life. The situations are not merely manifestations of temporal events; instead they come to bear an archetypal character. "Historical recollections are used to illustrate the archetype but never to tie it to a particular manifestation. Thus the system of the text appears timeless, or even above time" (p.214). He points out that the time element does not receive equal emphasis in the sixty-four hexagrams, although it is always present and siginficant, but never dominating. The word *shih,* or 'Time' in Chinese, as used in the *I Ching,* means 'sowing time,' or 'season' in general. Therefore it

> means a section of time set apart for a certain activity. Thence its meaning was extended to the four seasons . . . and many of the characteristic attributes of time can be traced to this heritage. Thus it is often said that the seasons do no err and that therefore the great man takes them as a model for his consistent behavior. They derive two of their most important characteristics from the ordered revolution of heaven and earth. From it they derive their unremitting changes as well as their consistent continuity. (p.224)

This unquestioned reception of season as an unerring guide for our conduct also leads to a somewhat pessimistic view of life. Man is, in one sense, only a tool for the time to carry out what has been done before and what will be done later on. So

> A man's relation to time . . . may be taken as a task or as fore-ordained destiny. In some situations one can assume a correct or a wrong attitude toward time, while in others one must accept the time as fate. The most

advantageous relation to time is naturally that of harmony. (p.227)

Whatever we do, if we act in harmony with time, we will not encounter unnecessary difficulty. Wilhelm also discusses several hexagrams in which the time element is important to a situation.

C. G. Jung also wrote a very interesting forward for Richard Wilhelm's translation of the *I Ching*,[14] elucidating "the psychological phenomenology of the *I Ching*" (p. xxxix). Jung begins by citing one peculiar fondness of Chinese people, namely the belief in coincidence.

> The Chinese mind, as I see it at work in the *I Ching*, seems to be exclusively preoccupied with the chance aspect of events. What we call coincidence seems to be the chief concern of this peculiar mind, and what we worship as causality passes almost unnoticed. (p. xxii)

Jung notes that the Western causalistic interpretation of reality is not favored by the *I Ching:*

> The moment under actual observation appears to the ancient Chinese view more of a chance hit than a clearly defined result concurring causal chain processes. The matter of interest seems to be the configuration formed by chance events in the moment of observation, and not at all the hypothetical reasons that seemingly account for the coincidence. (p. xxiii)

Therefore, when using the *I Ching*'s divinational methods such as throwing three coins or counting the forty-nine yarrow stalks, the moment of observation itself has a significant meaning, and the hexagram thus derived "was the exponent of the moment in which it was cast . . . as the hexagram was understood to be an indicator of the essential situation prevailing in the moment of its origin" (p. xxiv). Jung calls it 'synchronicity,' meaning

> a concept that formulates a point of view diametrically opposed to that of casuality . . . . Synchronicity takes the coincidence of events in space and time as meaning something more than mere chance, namely, a peculiar interdependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the subjective (psychic) states of the observer or observers. (p. xxiv)

The major difference between causality and synchronicity is that the former tells the sequence of events while the later takes up the coincidence of events. Jung gives an example by asking the question: Should he introduce the book

to Western readers? The answer he derives after consulting the book is a definite 'Yes.' He also advises that the *I Ching* is good "only for thoughtful and reflective people who like to think about what they do and what happens to them" (p. xxxiii). It is not suitable for immature and frivolous people. To work through the *I Ching* requires patience and intelligence; it will not give you a result automatically, but will reward you only after you have tried and discovered its intricate inner workings.

Somewhat echoing Jung's idea of synchronicity, but approaching from a different angle, is a paper on "Synchronicity and the *I Ching*" by Wayne McEvilly.[15] He attempts to analyze the *I Ching*'s synchronicity from a philosophical point of view, while Jung's study aims at the psychological aspect of the phenomenon. McEvilly quotes Jung's, saying that synchronicity is "the simultaneously occurrence of two meaningfully but not causally connected events . . . . The one event is empirical, the other ontological" (p.140). Through dual concepts of Yin and Yang, the *I Ching* encompasses every empirical co-existent. Each hexagram, taken as an archetype, stands for a Platonic idea, but a much clearer one, because Plato's notion of what can and cannot be Idea is rather vague, while the hexagram is definite and unmistakable. McEvilly claims that the *I Ching* is one of the "earliest and most logically consistent attempts to make sense of the notion of synchronicity as an acausal connective principle" (p.148). It is not merely a divinational manual, but a great treatise of creative philosophy, which is full of wisdom.

Attempting to analyze the *I Ching*, particularly the Basic Text, as a philosophical work rather than a divinational manual, Kuan Feng and Lin Lu-shih probe the book from a materialistic viewpoint.[16] They contend that we should first of all regard it as a book of sorcery and that any attempt to study it from the phisolosophical angle

> will reveal that it was a product of the times when philosophy was conceived under the overwhelming pressure of religious superstitions; it grew deviously as the embryo of primeval materialism and simple dialectics. (p.28)

According to the authors' interpretation, the book contains three basic ideas: 1) that there is coordination between embryonic scientific thought and religious superstitions; however, the coordination is internal, not external, and it is impossible to distinguish the religious superstitions from primeval materialism and simple dialectics; 2) that there are several levels of abstract

thinking and "the embryonic growth of a scientific link between cause and effect began therein" (p.30); 3) that there are here factors of primitive materialism and simple dialectics. They point out the following facts:

> First, there was a tendency to try somewhat to probe objective systemation, as well as the concept in which the objective link between cause and effect was contained. Second, there was the thought of developmental change . . . . Third, there was the thought of unity of such opposites as odd and even, positive and negative, going and returning, high and low, strong and weak, progress and retrogression, propitious and disastrous, etc. Fourth, special methods were used to approach the problem of subjectivity and objectivity, thus showing the tendency of the embryonic development of materialism in the seam of religious superstitions. (p.38)

Kuan and Lin conclude that the basic text of the *I Ching* is "still not philosophy, though it had made a big stride. It approached the level of philosophical thinking and contained the embryo of philosophical category " (p.40).

Though by no means scholarly, Raymond Van Over writes an inspiring essay discussing some of the reasons why Western minds are attracted by the ancient wisdom of the *I Ching*, and what the book can do for modern man.[17] The problems confronted now by the Western minds, especially the young and the intellectual, are poignant and real, and could not be identified and solved easily:

> For how does one attack a loss of values of identification with the world at large or the society one lives in? How does one demark the battle ground when it takes place in one's inner being where boundaries become blurred? Alienation is not resolved by superficial identification. That only brings greater separation and anxiety. One can find only temporary relief through identification with transient values. (pp.13-14)

By manipulating the yarrow stalks or coins

> *I Ching* then becomes a device whereby the inquiring mind of the questioner can find road signs that lead him to his destined place in the world ... helps one avoid dangers by advising the questioner about the conditions that prevail; it aids the inquiring mind to expand its perimeter, to reach out intuitively to learn that which it already knows but is yet unaware of. (p.16)

Van Over thus concisely sums up the reasons of the recent revival of interest

in the *I Ching*, particularly in America.

Conclusion

The foregoing survey of the *I Ching* criticism clearly suggests it has not been easy to categorize this Chinese classic strictly as either divinational text or a philosophical treatise alone. This undoubtedly gives the *I Ching* its singular appeal to scholars and laymen alike. There is still a great deal to be said about this book, such as the problems of authorship, date of composition, the relation between the Basic Text and the Ten Wings, not to mention the origin of the binary system in the arrangement of the hexagrams. One major area that has not been touched upon here is the tremendous impact of the text upon the Chinese people, intellectuals and laymen alike, as well as influence upon other countries, especially Korea and Japan. With few exceptions, most Western scholars have not utilized the vast amount of studies done by Chinese scholars over the past 1500 years. A recent collection of the *I Ching* texts and criticisms up to the end of the Ch'ing dynasty contains fourty-four titles, which represent only the major contributions.[18] To make these materials more available, it is desirable that some of the most important ones be translated. The *I Ching* is indeed a difficult book to digest, but it is also one of the most important books in the history of Chinese thought, for the ideas of Yin-Yang, Hsiang, etc., first appear there, and their influence permeates later ages.

Notes

1. The first English translation was *A Translation of the Confucian Yi King, or the Classic of Changes*, by Rev. Canon McClatchie, published in Shanghai, 1870.
2. The following is a selected list:
   Edward Alberton, *I Ching for the Millions* (Los Angeles: Sherbourne Press, 1969).
   Alfred Douglas, *How to Consult the I Ching* (N.Y.: Putnam and Sons, 1971).
   Willard Johnson, *A Beginner's Guide to the I Ching* (Berkeley: Shambala, 1969).
   Y. Hayashi, comp. *I-Ching: Fortune Telling and the Book of Changes* (San Francisco: Japan Publishing., 1972). (a game)

Diana Hook, *The I Ching and You* (London: Routledge, 1973).
H. Y. Li & Sibley S. Morrill, *I Ching Games* (San Francisco: Cadleon Press, 1971).
Frank J. MacHovec, tr. *I Ching: The Book of Changes* (Mount Vernon, N.Y.: Peter Pauper, 1971).
Joseph Murphy, *Secrets of the I Ching* (West Nyack, New York,: Parker, 1970).
R.G.H. Siu, *The Man of Many Qualities: A Legacy of I Ching* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968).
———— , *The Portable Dragon: The Western Man's Guide to the I Ching* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968).
Clae Waltham, *I Ching, the Chinese Book of Changes* (New York: Ace Books, 1969).
Ken White, ed., *I Ching: A Philosophical Prophecy* (Anaheim, Calif.: Dynamic Design Inc., 1972). (a game)

3. James Legge, *The Yi King,* vol. XVI of *The Sacred Books of the East,* edited by Max Müller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1882).
4. Leopold de Saussure, "On the Antiquity of the Yin-Yang Theory," *New China Review* 4 (1922), 457-463.
5. Homer Dubs, "Did Confucius Study the *Book of Changes* ," *T'oung Pao* 25 (1928), 82-90.
6. H. G. Creel, *Confucius and the Chinese Way* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).
7. Hu Shih, *The Development of the Logical Method in Ancient China* (New York: Paragon Books, 1928), pp. 28-45.
8. Arthur Waley, "The Book of Changes," *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 5 (1933), 120-142.
9. Feng Yu-lan, "The Appendices of the *Book of Changes* and the Cosmology of the Hwai-Nai-Tzu," *A History of Chinese Philosophy,* tr. Derk Bodde, vol I (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1952), pp. 379-395.
10. Joseph Needham, "The System of the *Book of Changes," Science and Civilization in China,* Vol. II (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1956), pp. 304-345.
11. David E. Mungello, "Leibniz' Interpretation of Neo-Confucianism," *Philosophy East and West,* 21 (January, 1971), 3-22.
12. Hellmut Wilhelm, *Change: Eight Lectures on the I Ching,* translated from German by Cary F. Baynes (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).
13. Hellmut Wilhelm, "The Concept of Time in the *Book of Changes," Man and Time: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks* (New York: Pantheon, 1957), pp. 212-232.
14. C. G. Jung, "Forward" to *The I Ching or Book of Changes* (The Richard Wilhelm edition) translated into English by Cary F. Baynes, 3rd ed., (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. xxi-xxxiv.
15. Wayne McEvilly, "Synchronicity and the *I Ching," Philosophy East and West* 18 (July, 1968), 137-149.
16. Kuan Feng & Lin Lu-shih, "Thought of the Yin Dynasty and the Western Chou," *Chinese Studies in Philosophy* II, 1-2 (1970), 24-40.
17. Raymond Yan Over, "Editor's Introduction," *I Ching* (New York: New American Library, 1971), pp. 13-41.
18. Yi-hsüeh *ts'ung-shu,* 16 vols. (易學叢書 , 16 冊), *& Yi-hsüeh ts'ung-shu hsü-pien,* 30 vols. (易學叢書續編 , 30 冊), (Taipei: Kwang Wen Book Co., 1976).