

University of Aberdeen

From the Selected Works of Jon D. Carlson

2010

The State of Nature: Chinese Sage Kings, Hobbes, and Challenge of Comparative Political Thought

Jon D. Carlson, *University of California, Merced*



Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/jondcarlson/8/>

The State of Nature: Chinese Sage Kings, Hobbes, and Challenge of Comparative Political Thought¹

ABTRACT:

This paper contributes to the growing interest in comparative political theory by examining hypothetical antecedents in both Chinese and Western political thought and how these thought experiments impact conceptions of ‘good government’ and political behavior. A fundamental starting point in Western thought is the ‘state of nature’, commonly characterized by competing visions provided by Hobbes and Rousseau. From each, one derives assumptions about the purpose of politics, society, and appropriate behavior with regard to government. Similarly, reference to the “Sage Kings” of Chinese antiquity plays a similar role in classical Chinese political philosophy. The reference invokes an idealized past, allowing for a consideration of basic qualities of humankind, principles of ‘good’ government, and it also establishes a means for assessing contemporary political behavior.

¹ An earlier version of this paper has been presented at the 2009 Western Political Science Association annual meeting and the 2009 American Political Science Association annual meeting. The author thanks the discussants at each for their helpful comments. Errors and omissions remain the domain of the author.

I. Introduction

The purpose of this work is fairly simple. First, it is to clarify the external applicability of a central concept in Western political thought – the notion of a ‘state of nature’ as described by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*. From this, we derive implications about the fundamental nature of humankind (*i.e.*, good or bad, selfish or social), as well as the responsibilities individuals have with regard to “good” or “just” government – also commonly referred to as the “social contract”. Conversely, government also has responsibilities to the governed in upholding its end of the bargain/contract, else government can be seen as lacking legitimacy. So, within this basic initial conceptualization (the state of nature), there lie tremendously powerful assumptions. From this starting point arise important questions about the fundamental nature of human behavior, basic questions of justice with regard to “good” governance, and evaluative principles of political legitimacy.

Second, I examine how others from outside the Western canonical/European Enlightenment tradition address the same topic. In doing so, I turn to the Chinese philosophical tradition, in no small part because it offers a well-established, lengthy, and discrete world-view, predating and originating independently from the Western experience. But also because in an initial reading of various Chinese thinkers, one finds there is a ready application for comparison, in the way reference is made to various “sage kings” of antiquity in the Chinese philosophic discourse. Essentially, I am hoping to start with an “easy case” of comparison, before moving on to more difficult cross-cultural comparisons. Finally, even should I fail in this endeavor, it should be worthwhile to argue for the greater inclusion of non-western thinkers into the discourse of political

thought, as the world does seem to be trending toward a more global marketplace of ideas. American – and Western – political theory should cease to be parochial, and strive to be a more ardent participant in this intellectual bazaar. So, this paper contributes to the growing interest in comparative political theory by examining hypothetical antecedents in both Chinese and Western political thought and how these thought experiments of an idealized ‘past’ impact conceptions of ‘good government’ and political authority.

What is the “state of nature”? Let me be absolutely clear here – the ‘state of nature’ *qua* Hobbes has never existed. It is, for Hobbes and those such as Rousseau who take issue with Hobbes, a “thought experiment”. As such, it is a *hypothetical precondition*, an imagined environment *prior* to known history, a ‘before time’, that Hobbes uses to ask the question, “Why government?” From this imagined starting point, Hobbesian assumptions – perhaps incorrect assumptions – develop to carry a discordant amount of intellectual weight in the way the state of nature is envisioned, in the way that the resultant social contract is portrayed, and in the depiction of appropriate or acceptable individual (and state) behavior. So in some regard, it is a false debate to speak of man (sic) in a ‘State of Nature’, beyond the mere recognition of this as a rhetorical device meant to simplify (allegedly) and illustrate a discourse about ‘good’ government. Yet in recognizing the ‘state of nature’ as a mere rhetorical device, one is able to investigate whether or not similar rhetorical devices are employed in other, cross-cultural philosophical discussions about politics and governance.

In comparing disparate cultural approaches to philosophy and political theory, one can look for similar ‘hypothetical preconditions’ such as the state of nature. But in addition to this, one is able to gain leverage in a consideration of the resultant assumptive

ontological elements of the precondition. In plainer language, this means that just as the Hobbesian state of nature carries assumptions about the fundamental nature of humankind, notions of justice in relations with government, and joint responsibilities between the governed and governing, so do parallel preconditions excavated in other, non-Western philosophic traditions. By looking at believed or hypothetical Chinese preconditions, or by finding an equivalent or rhetorical homologue to the Hobbesian thought experiment, one can compare conceptual frames for understanding human behavior, concepts of justice, and notions of “legitimacy” in government. This endeavor – to seriously embrace cross-cultural philosophic comparison – is what is at the heart of the emerging field of comparative political theory.

II. Comparative Political Theory – An Emerging Field

Concern for the study of political theory beyond the traditional western canon has become manifest in the emergence of a Comparative Political Theory Working Group at the American Political Science Association (APSA) annual meetings and is an agenda that is well-suited for development at future International Studies Association (ISA) meetings and regional associational meetings. This emerging field of study is reflective of a growing interest in contributions from Indic, Chinese, or Islamic thought (among others), which can be brought to bear on problems in political theory. The growth of the nascent field is in no small part the result of calls by scholars “to replace or supplement the rehearsal of routinized canons with a turn to global, cross-cultural (or ‘comparative’) political theorizing” (Dallmayr 2004, see also Dallmayr 1997). In some ways this also echoes APSA’s “Perestroika Movement” of the last decade and may be seen as preceding

and paralleling this disciplinary discontent. And as may be expected with a nascent sub-field, a discussion as to the merits and methodologies of comparative political theory has emerged (Godrej 2004, 2008, 2009; Bashir 2008; March 2007, 2009), and a canon describing comparative political theory as a research project is also coalescing (*cf.*, Parel and Keith 1992; Dallmayr 1998, 1999; Euben 1999).

Accordingly, the focus of this paper is to address a fundamental concept in political thought – the ‘state of nature’ – through a comparative and cross-cultural critical dialogue. Much of the Western canonical social contract thinking falls along lines identified with either Hobbes or Rousseau, with accordant debate over whether humans are good or bad, conflict prone or cooperative, what the limits of sovereign authority may be, and what constitutes ‘good’ political order. In an age of increased global interaction and potential civilization-based conflicts, this paper takes the rhetorical device of a pre-social contract ‘state of nature’ and seeks to address this concept with non-European thinkers and alternative cultural interpretations, specifically those from the ‘canon’ of classical Chinese philosophy. In doing so, this paper contributes to the work of the 2009 APSA working group on Comparative Political Theory, and serves as a model for how key political concepts may be addressed in a comparative and cross-civilizational manner, contributing to a richer and multifaceted mode of political theorizing. In addressing competing interpretations of the ‘state of nature’, the exclusionary hegemonic aspects of the Western canon are both exposed and potentially reconciled with alternative visions of political behavior, legitimacy, justice, and ‘appropriate’ social action.

As a means of accomplishing this cross-civilizational comparison, Anthony Parel’s work offers a good starting point. Certainly if one questions the universality

inherent in western political philosophy, one is left with the significant task of building a means of comparison with competing or “other” philosophical traditions. Yet, the problems of governance, good citizenship, and justice, are not discrete or unique problems. So we are able to examine, in context, how different civilizations have treated similar philosophical challenges. Knowledge, being built upon both insight and experience, is conditioned by the civilization – or cultural, linguistic, religious and social contexts – within which it occurs, and which can be discerned by studying culturally significant texts. So, as Parel (1992: 12) (referencing Eric Voegelin) argues, “A proper study of such texts, taken in their historical and intellectual contexts, would reveal that they contain differences as well as similarities with respect to key ideas and assumptions. Further reflection and analysis would reveal that the similarities are more significant than the differences.” From this, one can seek to distill the similarities, revealing *equivalences* between civilizational discourses.

The notion of *equivalence* in a political philosophical context could be seen as distinct from the notion of “moral equivalence” in ethics (as opposed to “moral relativism”), and instead is an attempt to identify similarities in culturally distinct traditions of dealing with common questions (*i.e.*, “What makes for a ‘good’ king?”). Still, the notion of parity, roughly speaking, between concepts remains. As such, a better field for clarification of the phenomenon – and one more fitting to the concern with texts and the spirit of ideas – is the field of linguistics, specifically translation. Here one is commonly presented with the difficulty inherent in accurately capturing an idea or feeling and having to accurately render it in an “outside” linguistic frame. Two main approaches in translation are “dynamic” (or functional) equivalence – in which the thought expressed

in a source text is the focus, even if necessary by changing word order, literalness, or voice – and “formal” equivalence, wherein the focus is on rendering texts word-for-word, even at the expense of fluidity in the target language. Clearly then, while there can be a spectrum of translational approaches between these two poles, the tendency for us is to lean heavily toward the dynamic, or functional, equivalence in political thought: What is the key thought? How is it best expressed? To what other thoughts is it most similar?

It is in this spirit that Parel offers a few examples, to which we add, in the Lakatosian spirit of progressing a research program. For example, Parel (1992: 12) offers that “the Aristotelian *politicos* and the Confucian *junzi*, Indian *dharma* and the pre-modern western notion of ‘natural justice’, the Islamic prophet-legislator and the Platonic philosopher-king, may usefully be considered as instances of ‘equivalences’.” Though, reflecting the ability of concepts to cross-pollinate even in historical times, the ordering of “Platonic philosopher-king” and “Islamic prophet-legislator” should be reversed, as Islamic political thought (*i.e.*, post-Mohammed) was heavily influenced by Plato and Aristotle. Nevertheless, the presence of ‘equivalences’ is what makes comparative political theory possible. And as Parel concludes with regard to the study of ‘equivalences’, it is “the process, first, of identifying the ‘equivalences’, and second, of understanding their significance. Such ‘equivalences’, if and when they are found, would both deepen one’s understanding of one’s own tradition and engender understanding and respect for the traditions of others.” It is with this in mind that I argue that philosophers’ reference to the Sage Kings in Chinese antiquity serve as an equivalent rhetorical device to the western “state of nature”.

Yet before we turn to this discussion, it is important to recognize that a comparative political theory approach carries with it some rather weighty disciplinary implications. These implications certainly impact the subfield of political theory, but also extend to include comparative politics, international relations, and by implication the rather insular, reflexive, and more self-assertively “scientific” field of US (“American”) politics. To illustrate rather briefly, the implications for theory are fairly straightforward. Comparative political theory poses a direct challenge to the supposed universality underlying the bulk of the modern western canon, and the historical political “experience” from which it is drawn. While a certain amount of relativity is interjected, recall that the search for equivalences seeks not to reduce everything to relativistic terms, it merely enriches the experiential debate. So the challenge for theorists is to recognize that Indic, Islamic, Chinese (and potentially African, and indigenous, and...) political traditions have much to contribute to the philosophical discourse. It is as if you thought you knew the contents of a library, only to find out that it has one, two, three or more additional floors of material that you can explore. This is both a daunting and exciting realization for political theorists to ponder.

In the field of comparative politics, one can easily conceive that a comparative political theory (CPT) research program has the potential of contributing to a rejuvenated research agenda on political culture. If national or civilizational culture matters, perhaps this is a means of illustrating how and why people think differently about individuality vs. collective responsibility, deference to tradition vs. emphasis on innovation, view of humans as inherently ‘good’ vs. humans as ‘bad’ (or “fallen”), and why people view their relationship with their government so variously. Furthermore, as research in the field of

democratization emphasizes, the notion of “democracy” is a widely interpreted spectrum of political activity, and one that is often at odds with the western ideal of individualistic, liberal, participatory democracy. So the additional research area of democratization -- and even comparative legal studies, regarding notions of ‘justice’ or property rights -- could benefit from the research program of comparative political thought.

Perhaps because my own background lies in international relations theory, the implications for IR as a distinct ‘field’ appear to be most dire. This is perhaps surprising for a field predicated on understanding the interactions (or “relations”) between nations -- though what many IR scholars really mean are “states”, with all the corresponding assumptive inferences thereof. Should not international relations be best suited to an energized research program centered on civilizational difference and similarity? The short answer is, “maybe”. The slightly longer answer is, “not for realists, possibly for idealists, and certainly for constructivists” (as the three main ‘camps’ of IR are commonly divided). Realists, with their concern for power and state security-seeking behavior as central, may have a hard time reconciling alternative conceptions of human behavior (*i.e.*, the Confucian trend to view humans as good)² or non state-centered units of analysis (*i.e.*, civilization). But one imagines they will find accurate homologues (other Princes offering various recommendations on exercising power) and merely continue on undisturbed, even though their philosophical grounding is solidly within the western canon and which regularly invokes Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes as explanatory models for international political behavior. Or, one may merely ignore discordant philosophical contributions and reflexively carry on undisturbed.

² Which could be precisely why Western theorists sympathetic to realism tend to focus on the Legalist School of Chinese philosophers, as exemplified by Han Feizi. Yet Han Feizi is notable precisely because his work is an aberration from the moral outlook of the dominant Confucianist tradition.

The two main challenges that comparative political thought offers to the field of International Relations are more serious and deserve genuine consideration: these are the *epistemological* challenge and the *ontological* challenge. These will be only briefly outlined here, as each is likely to constitute an independent research program within CPT. March (2009) raises the epistemic issue, but most scholars as yet ignore the ontological implications. Epistemology, taken to mean our theory of knowledge about a given field, also includes considerations of not just what constitutes knowledge, but also how it is acquired and what people know. To reference Plato, it is the subset of that which is *both* true and believed. So epistemologically for international relations, CPT poses a challenge by presenting alternative spheres of beliefs that seek (and claim) to represent truth. The agenda of seeking out ‘equivalencies’, then, provides a mechanism of translating these alternate truth claims into the realm of shared knowledge. Yet to do this, IR will likely have to overhaul its dominant method of representing truth in the international environment, via the “levels of analysis” approach. At a bare minimum, IR needs to add a level of analysis to the individual/state/system triptych. If we take CPT seriously, then “civilization” as a distinct formative social environment must be accounted for. And fortunately, there are scholars whose work is conducive to treating “civilization” as a new Level of Analysis, such as Huntington (1993, 1996) [and the pro/con mini-industry around his thesis], work by Inglehart (et al.) with the World Values Survey (*cf.*, Inglehart and Welzel 2005), and civilizational work within the CPT frame (*cf.*, Dallmayr and Manoochehri 2007). So while the inclusion of “civilization” as a salient level of analysis offers a starting point for an epistemological reconciliation within

IR, though each distinct philosophical tradition also embraces contending truth claims, so this is likely to be an ongoing enterprise (*cf.* Godrej 2004, 2008).

Ontologically, however, Comparative Political Thought as a research program *qua* Lakatos (1970), if taken seriously, poses a more fundamental challenge to International Relations, one which constructivists are in a better position of managing than are traditional realists or idealists. Ontology here is taken to mean the study of the nature of being, existence, or reality in addition to the basic categories of being and their relations. Ontology deals with questions concerning what units, entities, or actors exist or can be said to exist, and how such entities can be grouped, hierarchically related, categorized and subdivided according to similarities and differences. As such, seeking “equivalences” per Parel is *inherently* an ontological enterprise. From a social science perspective, this is troubling because it means the very basis for the object of study is contingent, historically-contextual, and perhaps more “social” than “science”.

Different philosophers and civilizational philosophies then offer contending versions of basic ontological questions: Which entities are fundamental? How do the properties of an object relate to the object itself? What constitutes the *identity* of an object? Why does something exist rather than not? How do we determine what is said to exist? While these are mere examples of basic ontological questions, even the casual reader should start to be troubled for the social science enterprise of international relations, especially as the core assumption of the field are based on a *specific* socio-cultural, historic and cultural world-view: the European, post-Enlightenment rational-positivistic approach to understanding the world. This is fine and good for “hard” science like physics or chemistry, but more troubling for “social” science where the

object of study is primarily an agreed-upon one. Thus, social scientists need to be more honest about distinguishing “social facts” from “brute facts” (*cf.*, Searle 1995, 2007). To the extent that comparative political theory forces us to reconsider the foundational, social-fact assumptions (as distinct from objective scientific truth-facts) built in to international relations theory and consider alternative interpretations of social facts (which is most, if not all, of “politics”), we must become better acquainted with philosophy of science, in addition to alternative civilizational philosophies. Why? Because the very foundations of IR as a “discipline” are exposed as the historically contingent social constructs that they are (*e.g.*, the modern nation-state, the individual as the basis for political “rights”, ownership of and what constitutes “property” as an outgrowth of Liberal and particularly Lockean philosophy, notions of political “legitimacy” via a “social contract”).

It is also with this understanding that one can view the position of US (*i.e.*, “American”) politics as a subfield of political science -- though, comparativists often joke it is merely an overdeveloped, ultra-hermeneutic, one-shot case study. Precisely because the field of US politics is closed referentially and fully embraces a positivistic, empirical and overtly “scientific” approach to its undertaking, it can avoid the troubling implications of comparative political thought. Because US “political science” is closed referentially and inward-looking, it can avoid the disquiet offered by CPT and can deny the “ontological turn” that is being forced upon IR -- where claims to universality mandate an encounter with the “other”. There is no “other” in US political science, merely the allegedly objective “truth” of a (social) *science*. This allows for a false

ontological security, which in turn allows for the provision of a false and unquestioned notion of scientific universality. CPT is overt in calling this universality into question.

But again, issues of ontology and epistemology are likely to be the source of a future research agenda. In the meantime, it should suffice to say that CPT as a subfield offers rich veins of intellectual and philosophical ore to mine, for theorists, comparativists, IR scholars and other interested parties such as area studies specialists. I merely offer that this initial attempt to unearth a Chinese parallel to the western conception to the ‘state of nature’ *via* Hobbes is a step in the right direction.

III. The State of Nature

Why should we have such concern with the “state of nature”? The reasons are plentiful. Not only does this imagined starting point – or hypothetical precondition – give us insight into basic conceptions about human nature, but it serves as a good example of just how socially contingent and insidious apparently “basic” concepts can be (*cf.* Jahn 2000). For example, the Hobbesian state of nature is renowned for being an environment in which the “natural condition” of mankind (*sic* – throughout) is one devoid of security, “where every man is enemy to every man”. In such a condition (or state of nature), “there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

From this hypothetical precondition of Hobbes' – one which Rousseau accurately notes is devoid of family and any sort of emotive or kinship ties, thus emphasizing the overtly hypothetical characteristic of it – we derive several subsidiary conditions. For example, mankind is self-interested and craves security, and from this the inherent 'nature' of man is seen as selfish, conflict-prone, or "bad". Man is solitary. Man exists without society. Man is fearful. In short, there is little good in this environment and all that we – as "civilized" humans take for granted – is absent. How does it come about? Through the social contract with a Leviathan, whose sole responsibility is to provide security in return for obedience. Out of this, order arises and humankind can develop notions of right and wrong (for nothing is unjust or wrong for Hobbes in the state of nature), become secure enough to become commodious, and society prospers. Thus we say that Hobbes has a negative view of human nature, directly derived from the hypothetical 'state of nature'. Yet simple biological fact informs us that such an existence is impossible – truly, no 'man' is an island! We also get a very limited conception of individual rights (*i.e.*, the right not to be arbitrarily killed),³ and a rather expansive vision of governmental power for the Leviathan, as a result of self-interested cooperation. All of this comes from the unspoken assumptions built into the thought experiment of Hobbes' rendering.

To what extent does Hobbes' vision have any basis in reality? Or rather, what informs his hypothetical worldview? Well, let us turn a constructivist gaze upon the man and his contextual environment. Much has been made about the fact that Hobbes published *Leviathan* (1651) while in exile during the English Civil War (1642 – 1651),

³ Such that Hobbes is, while not a 'Liberal' thinker in that he has a non-expansive view of individual rights, he is oft interpreted as a 'proto-Liberal' in that he acknowledges some basis for individual rights.

though it expands upon ideas he had prior to the outbreak of the conflict. Nonetheless, the political crisis resulting from the war provides the environment within which he was prompted to set forth his theory of civil government. It is no accident that Hobbes, an avowed Royalist, favors a powerful monarch or strong central authority as necessary to avoid civil war and political discord. Regardless of his political leanings, he is likely to be informed by the decade of destruction and the toll the war took on Britain (which resulted ultimately, with the loss of Charles I's head), and his treatise may be seen as a polemical argument for the defense of the crown (and presumably the head upon which it sits), rather than solely an objective philosophical rendering. Further, we should note that Hobbes was the son of a vicar and was strongly influenced by Anglican and Puritan thought, in particular with regard to his vision of 'human nature'. It is no stretch to argue that this adds fuel to Hobbes' view of mankind as 'fallen' or prone to baseness and evil.

Finally, it is worth noting that Hobbes was the first to translate Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* directly from ancient Greek into English (1629). This is noteworthy because Thucydides' excerpt of the Melian dialogue forms the basis for the "realist" perspective in contemporary International Relations, which is used to explain why modern nation-states should be fearful and behave as-if they exist in an anarchic parallel to Hobbes' "state of nature". In modern IR theory the link to Hobbes is overt and purposeful within the realist worldview, though usually without embracing the hypothetical actuality of Hobbes' thought experiment. For many IR realists, the 'state of nature' is all too real. Presuming that one tends not to labor to translate works one disagrees fundamentally with, we can say that Hobbes is well-disposed to view the world

fearfully, crave strong government, and believe human beings are essentially bad. In this regard, Hobbes is a product of his environment, and his intellectual contributions are, too.

All of this is to say that we should probably take the Hobbesian conception of a ‘state of nature’ with more than a small grain of salt. Other philosophers of the European canon take issue with it. Perhaps most notably, Rousseau’s more positive view of mankind in a ‘natural state’ offers a telling antipode. Though this is ‘positive’ in the pre-Romantic sense that animals and the natural world are positive; true virtue arises as a product of civil society for Rousseau. Human beings tend toward positive social behavior and are innately moral (in their response to witnessing suffering), and are corrupted by private property and other social ills. Nevertheless, what we should take from the preceding discussion of Hobbes and his ‘state of nature’ is a recognition of how tremendously beguiling it has been with regard to western political theory, visions of the natural disposition of humankind (*i.e.*, bad and fearful), and arguments regarding why we need government (*i.e.*, What is the “social contract”?). Inherent within Hobbes’ vision are basic ontological suppositions that may or may not hold when applied to other cultural systems, especially as Hobbes’ suppositions were (and are) actively critiqued within the Western canon.

IV. “Sage Kings” as a Chinese Equivalence for the State of Nature

Is there an equivalent reference point to the “state of nature” and the resultant “social contract” in Chinese political philosophy? Obviously, I argue yes, else there would be no need for this paper. Is there, as we posed with Hobbes, a *hypothetical precondition*, or an imagined environment, *prior* to known history? Is there a ‘before

time' that is used to ask the question, "Why government?" In fact, I assert there is. When first reading translations of Chinese philosophy, one is repeatedly struck by a continual reference to an apparently shared historical understanding of a set of "Sage Kings", or wise rulers from Chinese history. This type of reference recurs despite the philosopher one is reading, at least if one is reading from the set of classical, canonical Chinese philosophical writings from the "hundred philosophers" period and before. As such, I initially presumed that the Kings were clearly documented and historically well-known.

Yet this is not the case. The established archaeological record in China dates to *ca.* 1300 BCE, yet the period of the original "Sage Kings" dates to a time fully 900 to 1000 years *prior* to this (*ca.* 2357-2205 BCE). For western readers unacquainted with the scale of Chinese historical thought, this is as if philosophers writing 500 years prior to the time of Christ were talking about events more than 1500 years prior to *that* (which is still some 900 years before the *modern* archaeological record reaches). To contextualize, Watson (2003a, 2003b, 2003c) provides a summary of early Chinese History, which we can use as a "playbill" for our discussion of Chinese political philosophers, periods, and Sage Kings:

OUTLINE OF EARLY CHINESE HISTORY

(Dates and entries before 841 B.C. are traditional)

B.C.	Dynasty		
2852			Fu Xi, inventor of writing, fishing, trapping.
2737		Culture Heroes	Shen Nong, inventor of agriculture, commerce.
2697			Yellow Emperor.
2357			Yao.
2255		Sage Kings	Shun.
2205	Xia Dynasty		Yu, virtuous founder of dynasty.
1818			Jie, degenerate terminator of dynasty.
1766			King Tang, virtuous founder of dynasty.
[c. 1300]	Shang or Yin Dynasty		[Beginning of archeological evidence.]
1154			Zhou, degenerate terminator of dynasty.
	Three Dynasties		
1122			King Wen, virtuous founder of dynasty.
1115			King Wu, virtuous founder of dynasty.
		Western Zhou	King Cheng, virtuous founder of dynasty. (Duke of Zhou, regent to King Cheng)
878	Zhou Dynasty		King Li.
781			King You.
771			
722			
		Eastern Zhou	Spring and Autumn period (722–481). Period of the “hundred philosophers” (551–c. 233): Confucius, Mozi, Laozi (?), Mencius, Zhuangzi, Hui Shi, Shang Yang, Gongsun Long, Xunzi, Han Feizi.
551			
403			Warring States period (403–221).
4th to 3rd cent.			Extensive wall-building and waterworks by Qin and other states.
249			Lü Buwei, prime minister of Qin.
221	Qin Dynasty		The First Emperor; Li Si, prime minister.
214	(221–207 B.C.)		The Great Wall completed.

Image 1: “Outline of Early Chinese History”, Burton Watson (2003b: front material).

Notably, since the original “Sage Kings” (*viz.*, Yao, Shun, and Yu) that are referenced in Confucian (and later) writings date to a period a full 1000 years (give or take) before the beginning of archaeological evidence, I assert that we may treat this

reference as a hypothetical precondition, an imagined or “mythic” environment *prior* to known history, or a rhetorical ‘before time’. As such, it is used to pose the question, “Why government?” or “What is good government?” and corresponds as a rhetoric device to the “state of nature” as used in the western philosophical canon. Accordingly, we can look at how the “Sage Kings” are invoked or used in order to discern subsidiary assumptions about the “nature of man” in Chinese thought and the existence of a possible parallel for the “social contract”, just as different European philosophers developed contending visions of the state of nature, nature of man, and obligations under the social contract.

Briefly though, who are the Sage Kings, to the extent that they are treated as ‘legendary’ figures? The cast of characters is summarized in Figure 1 (above), but understanding the particular roles of each is insightful for not just understanding their apocryphal role, but also for their legendary status. The dates used are traditional. For example, Sage-king Yao (r. 2357 – 2257 BCE) is the first king, ruling a mere 500 years after the ‘culture heroes’ of Fu Xi (credited with inventing writing, fishing, and trapping) and Shen Nong (credited with inventing agriculture and commerce). Sage-king Shun (r. 2255 – 2205 BCE) follows Yao’s impressive hundred-year reign (which would be an impressive feat in any age!), and is notable for having a Minister of Agriculture (*viz.*, Hou Ji, “Lord Millet”) who supposedly becomes the progenitor for the Zhou royal line. Sage-king Yu (r. 2205 – 1766 BCE) is the supposed founder of the Xia Dynasty, who is also credited with making north-central China habitable for the Chinese people by taming the floods of the Yellow River. It is only after Sage-king Yu that we get the contrapuntal example of the “evil tyrant” or “degenerate terminator” King Jie (r 1818 – 1766 BCE),

whose incompetent rule results in the fall of the Xia dynasty (*cf.*, Slingerland 2003: xxvi – xxvii). Virtuous rulers found dynasties, whereas corrupt, degenerate, or evil leaders result in the termination of dynastic rule. All of this activity occurs *before* written historical records, and even before the archaeological record (of roughly 1300 BCE), which coincides with the Shang Dynasty, traditionally spanning 1751 – 1122 BCE.⁴

To the extent that the Confucian worldview is even addressed in modern political science literature, it is usually within the framework of a discredited ‘Asian Values’ debate on human rights (*e.g.*, communitarianism vs. individualism). Little actual effort has been made, *per* Parel and the CPT approach, to look for equivalencies between western and Chinese thought. Thus, a rich philosophical tradition has been largely ignored, overly simplified, or erroneously treated as parochial, quaint or outdated, and non-generalizable. Given the historical distance of the Sage Kings, the fact that there is no “real” knowledge about them, and since the era ascribed to their rule is effectively a thousand years prior to the beginning of the archaeological record, we can treat any reference to them as hypothetical, mythic, or conjectural. For these reasons, I assert that we can view the discussion of the Sage Kings similarly to the western discussion a state of nature, as a rhetorical ‘backstop’.

“So what?” a reader may well be prompted to ask. Well, one already sees the inherent dynamic of a state of nature, social contract, virtuous behavior, and preconditions for considering the Chinese conception of ‘good government’. First, we can treat reference to the Sage Kings as a stylistic device similar to Hobbes’ State of Nature, because they are legendary, mythic, and used to illustrate a lesson or desired

⁴ Notably, the founder of the Shang Dynasty, King Tang (r. 1766 – 1753 BCE), defeated the evil Jie and is occasionally referred to as a ‘sage king’ and virtuous ruler, but he is not on the same plane as the ‘big three’ that I am dealing with here, Sage Kings Yao, Shun, and Yu .

outcome. The underlying assumptions used to build the rhetorical device differ significantly, however. Another way to consider this parallel, or equivalence, is to ask, ‘how is the device used?’ So secondly, what are the lessons derived from the stories of the Sage Kings? What do they tell us about a Chinese political ethic? The first major departure from the western perspective is the underlying assumption, at least for most of the Confucian and post-Confucian philosophers, that man is moral and virtuous, and aspires to refine his virtue. Sage Kings are used as exemplars of virtue, toward which rulers should aspire; degenerate rulers result in the termination of stable dynasties, and as such serve as negative examples. While Hobbes views man negatively, as envious and brutish, the dominant strain of Chinese thought is more positive. While Laozi was notably silent on this, the dominant strand of Confucianist thought is positive. There are exceptions to this tendency, but they are notable precisely because they are exceptions (*viz.*, Xunzi, Han Feizi). Additionally, if one asks *why* Hobbes has such a negative view of humankind – and why this seems to be a dominant perception in Western thought – one begins to recognize that the culturally-specific impact of Christianity and mankind’s “fallen” status within this doctrine weigh heavily on the Hobbesian worldview.

In addition to this primary departure with regard to the fundamental nature of humankind, which is huge – imagine what type of government one needs depending on whether or not you envision rulers and ruled as predominantly virtuous or as predominantly corrupt and in need of redemption – there are other lesson-elements within the Sage King discourse. The mythic discourse emphasizes an idealized history and its reflection of peace, order and social stability. This sense order is dual: both familial and hierarchical within patrilineal lines, and also hierarchical and deferential outside the

family grouping. Notable here in the mythic discourse is the lack of political turmoil except that which is created by degenerate rulers. In some ways, rulers that allow turmoil and disorder are by definition degenerate. Thus, the discourse reemphasizes the importance of political stability, observance of existing rituals as important for maintaining social order, and the underlying desire to emulate the virtuous. As such, this is an especially attractive counterpoint to the Warring States period (ca. 403 – 221 BCE), which runs largely coincident with the “hundred philosophers” period (ca. 551 – 233 BCE). Thus, by looking at a few of the most notable philosophers of the time, one may see how they view order, assumptions about the role of government, ‘proper’ human behavior with regard to being governed (*i.e.*, a ‘social contract’), as well as the discursive role that reference to the Sage Kings plays. While these references are often interspersed with other historical figures or stories about historically contemporary rulers that are ‘sage like’, our main focus is on the “Big Three” Sage Kings of old (Yao, Shun, and Yu).

Kongzi (b. 551? – d. 479 BCE), or Confucius, is perhaps the most well-known classical Chinese philosopher. For Kongzi, human nature is good, and kingly rule is virtuous. Order is obtained by the non-coercive influence of the morally perfected person. This is achieved not through force, governmental regulation, or coercion, but by emulation. Illustrating this relationship in *Analects*, Book 2, “The Master said, ‘One who rules through the power of Virtue is analogous to the Pole Star: it simply remains in its place and receives the homage of the myriad lesser stars.’” (Slingerland 2003: 8). The point being that the harmony in the natural world (the more literal Chinese state of nature) is to be the “model for the human ruler, who – in a *wu-wei* fashion – will bring the world to order silently, inevitably, and unselfconsciously through the power of his

perfected moral Virtue” (Slingerland 2003: 8). Note here, too, one sees a *very* different conceptualization for the notion of individual agency and action, which speaks to the ontological nature of these conceptions.

Wu-wei is a reference to the daoist notion of non-action, literally meaning “non-doing”, which serves as both an individual spiritual ideal and a political ideal for Confucius. While it can be translated as “effortless action”, *wu-wei* refers not to what is (or is not) being done, but rather the manner in which it is done – spontaneous, unselfconscious and perfectly efficacious. Wu-wei reflects harmony between inner disposition and external movements, as well as a state of harmony between the individual and Heaven, thus reflecting Virtue. In the political realm, for Confucius, *wu-wei* refers to ruling by means of Virtue, which “is therefore an effortless form of rulership in which the ruler merely makes himself correct and thereby wins the spontaneous fealty of everyone in the world” (Slingerland 2003: 243).

Thus, mankind is good and desires to be better, political order obtained via moral perfection to the point of effortless (non)action, which inspires emulation, and which is also an outgrowth of filial piety. The harmony of nature is to be a model for the human ruler; nature is conceived as *harmonious*, not conflictual. Conversely, natural disorder (or disaster) reflects lack of attention to rites or lack of virtuous development. Therefore, virtuous rulers come to reflect the ‘Mandate of Heaven’ in accordance with proper ritual practice, moral development and resulting social order and peace. Kings of lesser virtue, less attentive to the demands of propriety, ritual and order lose the Mandate of Heaven (presumably because they are engaging in selfish acts and not properly nurturing their kingdom, by storing food from the harvest in case of famine, preparing levees for the

rainy season, keeping social conventions, ensuring maintenance of domestic relations and the like). By losing the Mandate of Heaven, evil or degenerate kings effectively violate this Confucianist ‘social contract’. From a CPT perspective, then, we can identify within the Sage King discourse (if the Sage Kings are treated as an equivalent to the ‘state of nature’), a subsidiary assumption about the nature of humankind (generally good, tending toward virtue), and a resultant parallel for treating the “Mandate of Heaven” as a Chinese ‘social contract’.

Later thinkers also pick up on these Confucianist themes, or engage them from a diverse perspective. For example, Mozi (ca., 400 BCE) is an anti-Confucianist who is highly critical of observing ritual for the mere sake of ritual and condemns such mindless social propriety. Mozi also introduces themes of utilitarianism (*‘li’*, or benefit) in understanding social behavior, yet still uses references to the Sage Kings as a means of understanding just government. He emphasizes a rulers’ need to honor the worthy, noting that “the sage kings of ancient times took great pains to honor the worthy and employ the capable, showing no special consideration for their own kin, no partiality for the eminent and rich, no favoritism for the good-looking and attractive” (Watson 2003b: 23). Furthermore, it is the will of Heaven that righteousness be reflected in rule, for “where there is righteousness there is life; where there is no righteousness there is death. Where there is righteousness there is wealth; where there is no righteousness there is poverty. Where there is righteousness there is order; where there is no righteousness there is disorder.” (Watson 2003b: 82). Order is desirable, and in many ways its own reward, as order attracts support and followers.

If we extend the social contract argument – as a subsidiary element of our state of nature discussion - to be roughly equivalent to the Mandate of Heaven, Mozi is also informative as to what this mandate - or “will of Heaven” - entails: “He who obeys the will of Heaven will regard righteousness as right. He who disobeys the will of Heaven will regard force as right.” (Watson 2003b: 85). This is directly applicable to the ongoing idealist/realist debates within IR, and also a reason why CPT offers tremendous value-added as an emerging subfield of political theory, especially to International Relations scholars. Mozi’s interpretation regarding righteousness carries over to the behavior of states and politics. When one regards righteousness as right, “If one is in a large state, he will not attack a small state. If one is a member of a large family, he will not bully a small family. The strong will not oppress the weak; the eminent will not lord it over the humble; the cunning will not deceive the stupid.” (2003b :85). To be in concordance with the social contract, then, means to observe the proprieties of order and peace, because it is through the observance of this that benefits accrue to “Heaven on high, to the spirits in the middle realm, and to man below”. Conversely, one who regards force as right (*i.e.*, the classic ‘might makes right’ argument of realism) will attack small states, bully those he can, and lord it over the humble and deceive the stupid. No benefit will accrue to Heaven, the spirits, or to man below, and because none of these three types of benefits are realized, this ruler will be called an evil king. More to the point, the people are then justified in abandoning such a ruler.

Mozi’s ethic of good rule extends beyond merely trying to be righteous, as he recognized that there were certain to be unjust rulers in the world. This is a dually important point of departure for Mozi from the Confucianists: instead of being blindly

obedient to tradition, Mozi asserts the need for usefulness to be considered and he has a more active vision of the role of government than mere *wu-wei* effortless action. But still, these recommendations are cast in terms of the sage kings, “Therefore the ancient sage kings issued statutes and published laws, providing rewards and punishments in order to encourage good and prevent evil” (Watson 2003b 124). Righteous kings should guide and incentivize the general population, not just passively accept the ‘fatalism’ proposed by Confucianists.

When faced with the unrighteousness of warfare, Mozi is notable not just for his condemnation of offensive warfare, both in economic and moral terms, but also for his recommendation for collective action and third-party intervention. “Now if only there were someone who would conduct his diplomatic affairs in good faith ... who, when a large state attacked a small one, would go to the rescue of the small state along with others; who when the walls and fortifications of the smaller state were in poor condition, would see to it that they were repaired” (Watson 2003b: 62-63). In his discussion of offensive warfare, Mozi distinguishes between offensive warfare and appropriate responses to it (again in context of sage kings), noting “if we examine the cases of these three sage kings, we will see that what they did was not to ‘attack’ but to ‘punish’” (Watson 2003b: 61). Speaking to the efficacy of a CPT approach, in addition to our discussion of the state of nature, the social contract, and the inherent qualities of ‘good’ rule, Mozi also offers some insight for those interested in just war doctrine and early conceptions of collective security.

Mengzi (b 372 BCE), or Mencius, also uses the Sage Kings a reference point for behavior, and is notable for being one of the first to actively assert that “man is by nature

good” (Thomas 1927: 12), but merely apt to be corrupted by a corrupt society or unrighteous ruler. In this, he is at least passingly reminiscent of Rousseau. Mengzi also gives us additional insight into the Chinese social contract, extolling the obligations the ruler has to those he rules and actually discussion the satisfaction of the people as a key obligation. Ivanhoe (2009: xiii) observes that Mencius is one of the first thinkers anywhere to assert that rulers and states existed to serve their people, and that the “people are the only tangible indicator of good governance.” Interestingly, those rulers who failed to serve the people lose, according to Mencius, the mandate to rule and can be removed by those more qualified. Despite this insistence on looking to the welfare of the people as an indicator of the mandate to rule, Mencius did not include any discussion of the right of the people to revolt or assert that the people should elect those who govern, merely that other righteous elites that were qualified could remove the corrupt, ineffective rulers. Mengzi is generally seen as the distillation of much of the political thought of the Zhou period, most of which uses an interpretation of the Sage Kings as a reference point for legitimate behavior.

Contradicting the Confucianist world view, there are additionally thinkers who depart (sometimes radically) from the basic vision expounded by Kongzi and his ardent supporter, Mengzi. Two such thinkers are Xunzi (310 – 220 BCE), and his student Han Feizi (280 – 233 BCE). Xunzi is still considered a Confucian, but departs in his consideration of human nature. For Xunzi, mankind is not necessarily predisposed to be good, but rather needs education and moral training. Without such education and training, a king is likely to be degenerate and amoral. In this, Xunzi may be seen as an early social constructivist. Yet even Xunzi still refers to the role of sages as instructive

(in multiple ways). Watson (2003c: 5) notes that “the end of this process of education, the proper function of the sage, is to govern. Once he has become not only a sage and teacher, but ruler as well, he may, as Xunzi explains in his chapters on political science, economics and ritual, set about ordering the state on the basis of proper moral principles and insuring peace and prosperity to the world.” Xunzi invokes not just the reigns of the Big Three sage kings Yao, Shun and Yu, but also cites the reign of King Tang of the Shang dynasty and Kings Wen and Wu of the Zhou dynasty as examples of these desired periods of ideal peace and order (which is a departure from earlier writers and how Sage Kings were usually invoked).

The student of Xunzi, Han Feizi (280 – 233 BCE), takes Xunzi’s departures even further. Han Feizi is notable in that he asserts that man is actually bad. From this, we can view him as a fallen-Confucian, and should also note that it is Han Feizi who gave rise to the ‘Legalist’ school of Chinese thought, with its emphasis on power, strength of the state, punishment as an effective tool of kingly rule, and emphasis on ‘*shu*’, or the art of rule. It is of little surprise, then, that Han Feizi is tremendously popular with western realists and that he is often compared to Machiavelli in this regard. Legalism rejects all appeals to religion and morality, instead couching ‘good’ government in terms of what is best for the ruling class. To the extent that sages of the past are referenced, it is usually derisive or as a way of pointing out the folly of blindly following such examples. For example, Han Feizi critiques Confucius and Mozi, noting that “Confucius and Mozi both followed the ways of Yao and Shun, and though their practices differed, each claimed to be following the real Yao and Shun. But since we cannot call Yao and Shun back to life,

who is to decide whether it is the Confucians or the Mohists who are telling the truth?”

(Watson 2003a: 119-120). Furthermore,

If we cannot even decide which of the present versions of Confucian and Mohist doctrine are the genuine ones, how can we hope to scrutinize the ways of Yao and Shun, who lived three thousand years ago? Obviously, we can be sure of nothing! He who claims to be sure of something for which there is no evidence is a fool, and he who acts on the basis of what cannot be proved is an imposter. Hence it is clear that those who claim to follow the ancient kings and to be able to describe with certainty the ways of Yao and Shun must either be fools or imposters. The learning of fools and imposters, doctrines that are motley and contradictory – such things as these the enlightened ruler will never accept (Watson 3002a: 120).

Yet within this critique, Han Feizi remains notable precisely *because* of his departure from the canonical approach to understanding government that had dominated the preceding hundreds of years.

Thus, Xunzi and Han Feizi may be seen as exceptions that prove the Confucian, Mohist, and Mencian rule. At least up to the advent of Legalism, the moral outlook of man is generally seen as good (or fluid for the Daoists). The dominant vision of nature and a ‘state of nature’ is harmonious, and this is evident in repeated reference to the Sage Kings Yao, Shun and Yu. From this, one can derive a rough equivalence for the ‘social contract’ in the conceptualization of the Mandate of Heaven. It is only during the discordant era of the Warring States period that serious revisions to this vision of a state of nature and resulting social contract arise. In this way, Han Feizi and Xunzi also offer a ready parallel to Hobbes (writing during a period of civil war, when his side is losing) and a salve to western realists who seek a self-affirming version of Chinese philosophy as a means of claiming universalism without having to engage the other, dominant Chinese philosophical conceptions of power-seeking as “bad”. Yet where social contract theorizing in the west is a product of a negative vision of human kind, the predominant

counterpoint in early Chinese thought is largely positive. Despite this significant underlying assumptive difference, we can view the Sage Kings as an equivalence to the western concept of a 'state of nature', and note that it is one that calls for very different conceptions of what constitutes 'good government' and desirable individual behavior. Furthermore, the Mandate of Heaven (and its predication on the maintenance of social order) can be viewed as an equivalence to a 'social contract'.

It is hoped that by approaching Chinese philosophical writings with such a comparative political thought approach, we can engage in productive cross-civilizational theorizing. While most discussion of the social contract has been built around the divides within western thought, it is the intent of this piece to at least provoke and inspire an engagement with philosophical traditions outside of the canonical western one. There is a wealth of alternative concepts that can be used to address the problems facing the modern world. Comparative political thought as a research agenda offers a means of supplementing our intellectual tool-chest, and as China is oft cast as a rising 'challenger' to the west (as is Islam), perhaps we are well past due in trying to legitimately understand the fundamental concepts of these alternative philosophical traditions. Furthermore, international relations scholars are perhaps best suited to face the ontological challenges such an undertaking entails. It is sincerely hoped that this work is a step in that direction, and that some scholars can draw inspiration from it.

References

Acharyam, Amitav and Barry Buzan (2007). “Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction” *International Relations of the Asia Pacific*, (August 7).

Bashir, Hassan (2008). “Comparative/Global Political Theory: Scope, Progress and Promise” *Paper prepared for the 58th Political Studies Association Annual Conference, Swansea University, Wales, UK.* (April 1 - 3).

Bloom, Irene (2009). *Mencius*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Brooks, Thom, Ed. (2008). *The Global Justice Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Dallmayr, Fred (1997). “Toward a Comparative Political Theory” *The Review of Politics*, 59: 3, pp. 421-427.

Dallmayr, Fred (1998). *Alternative Visions: Paths in the Global Village*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Dallmayr, Fred, Ed. (1999). *Border Crossings: Toward a Comparative Political Theory*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Dallmayr, Fred (2004). "Beyond Monologue: For a Comparative Political Theory", *Perspectives on Politics*, 2: 2 (June), pp. 249-257.

Dallmayr, Fred (2007). "Political Theory and Civilizational Dialogue", in Dallmayr and Manoocheheri, Eds., *Civilizational Dialogue and Political Thought: Tehran Papers*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 3-5.

Dallmayr, Fred and Abbas Manoocheheri, Eds. (2007). *Civilizational Dialogue and Political Thought: Tehran Papers*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Euben, Roxanne L. *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic Fundamentalism and the Limits of Modern Rationalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Godrej, Farah (2004). "Interpreting the 'Other': Toward a Hermeneutics of Comparative Political Thought", *paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association*, Chicago, IL.

Godrej, Farah (2008). "Towards a Cosmopolitan Political Thought: The Hermeneutics of Interpreting the Other", *Polity*, (advance online publication), 8 December.

Godrej, Farah (2009). ""Response to 'What Is Comparative Political Theory?'" *The Review of Politics*, Vol 71, No. 4, (Fall) pp.567-582.

Gray, Stuart (2009). "Domesticating Difference: A Comparative Perspective on India's Ancient Political Thought", *paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference*, Chicago, IL.

Huntington, Samuel P. (1993). "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer).

Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Ibrahim, Anwar (2006). "Universal Values and Muslim Democracy" *Journal of Democracy* 17: 3 (July), pp. 5-12.

Inglehart, Ronald and Christian Welzel (2005). *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. (2009). "Introduction", in Irene Bloom, *Mencius*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. ix-xxii.

Ivanhoe, Philip J. and Bryan W. Van Norden, Eds (2003). *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Jahn, Beate (2000). *The Cultural Construction of International Relations: The Invention of the State of Nature*. New York: Palgrave.

Lakatos, Imre (1970). "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge, Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 91-196.

March, Andrew F. (2007). "Islamic Foundations for a Social Contract in Non-Muslim Liberal Democracies" *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, pp. 235-252, (May). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1168642>

March, Andrew F. (2009) "What Is Comparative Political Theory?" *The Review of Politics*, Vol. 71, No. 4, (Fall) pp. 531–565. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1262832>

Parel, Anthony (1992). "The Comparative Study of Political Philosophy", in Anthony J. Parel and Ronald C. Keith, Eds., *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies under the Upas Tree*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, pp. 11-28.

Parel, Anthony J. and Ronald C. Keith, Eds. (1992). *Comparative Political Philosophy: Studies under the Upas Tree*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sajjadpour, Seyed Kazem (2007). “Dialogue of Civilizations and International Relations” in Dallmayr and Manoocheheri, Eds., *Civilizational Dialogue and Political Thought: Tehran Papers*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, pp. 63-67.

Scharfstein, Ben-Ami (1998). *A Comparative History of World Philosophy: From the Upanishads to Kant*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Searle, John R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Searle, John R. (2007). *Freedom & Neurobiology: Reflections on Free Will, Language, and Political Power*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Slingerland, Edward, transl. (2003). *Confucius – Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Thomas, Elbert Duncan (1927). *Chinese Political Thought: A Study Based upon the Theories of the Principal Thinkers of the Chou Period*. New York: Prentice Hall.

Watson, Burton, Transl. (2003a). *Han Feizi: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watson, Burton, Transl. (2003b). *Mozi: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Watson, Burton, Transl. (2003c). *Xunzi: Basic Writings*. New York: Columbia University Press.