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JOURNEYS TOWARD MORAL LEADERSHIP

走向道德领导

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Moral leadership begins with moral education. But moral education often is reduced to compliance and legalist approaches. This tendency to equate morality with a duty to follow the rules—judging from what we see around us nowadays—is highly ineffective, if not counter-productive. The whip of indoctrination coercing support for ideological creeds just seems to provoke greater and better organized resistance. When official textbooks for schools aim to infuse “patriotic values” following a similar logic, the predictable failure seems programmed in advance as most students are likely to resist such intrusions into their conscience.

As the *Macau Ricci Institute Journal* aims to shape new concepts of Moral Leadership and Social Innovation it appears as most timely that this issue should begin with research focused on visual media and ethics. Within cultures that are more and more characterised by a strong visual orientation and by the impact of social media, there is a need for methods of analysis that can help us sort out our own questioning about the myriad of pictures and images we are more and more bombarded with. Dealing with this challenge is compounded by the apparent generation gap between those who did or did not grow up in the digital age. We need to encourage the development of different perspectives on how to recognize genuine moral values embedded in the use of symbols and images both past and present, emerging from the diversity of wisdom traditions and philosophies honored in China and East Asia.

Mark Bandsuch has developed the concept of “narrative analysis” as the basis for an alternative to compliance-based and exclusively legalist approaches to morality that tend to promote an individualistic perspective on ethics as opposed to communitarian approaches that are more in line with Asian cultures and their Confucian heritage. Bandsuch argues that narrative analysis will support approaches to ethics education that emphasise moral character by highlighting the questions that can be raised

in discussions of contemporary cinema, such as Zhang Yimou’s memorable film, *Hero* (2002). Narrative analysis of visual media presenting characters struggling with moral issues serves to create an experiential learning activity that focuses on stories and dialogues about people seeking to become virtuous. In today’s world, Bandsuch suggests, moral character can be cultivated, by challenging users of visual media to imagine becoming more fully human when they are confronted with the challenge of heroes who try to benefit the common good, rather than focusing only on their own personal benefit.

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As the popularity of films and other forms of visual media continues to grow, it is useful to remember the long standing Jesuit tradition, based on the so-called “application of the senses” in *The Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola, which encourages participants to visualise stories of the Bible so that they can gain insight into their own life decisions and vocation. Engaging the senses through a combination of images, sounds, and stories has a profound impact on the audience’s beliefs, knowledge and behaviours. Along the lines of the dynamics of *The Spiritual Exercises* Bandsuch’s application of narrative analysis thus allows stories to increase our moral and spiritual insight into events. More specifically, it investigates the story’s dimensions in order to understand the complex web of artfully presented

social, cultural, and moral insights that can shed light on personal experiences.

This tradition is well described in another project supported by the Macau Ricci Institute: Cristina Osswald has focused her research on Jesuit art and painting in China covering the period from 1582 to 1644 in Macau. She argues that Jesuit painting differed from previous Christian paintings in China because of its strategic role in missionary activity. The Jesuits envisaged a strategy to approach both the emperor and potential patrons in the imperial court, taking advantage of the curiosity and openness a Chinese audience might feel for Christian painting. The strong Chinese influence shown in Jesuit painting may further be linked, as Osswald argues, to a missionary strategy that accepted and worked with elements of the culture and spirituality of the local audience.

This intermingling between European and Chinese cultures through the missionaries was a hallmark of the awakening of reason (“*Aufklärung*”) in the period of the European “Enlightenment.” As Wladyslaw Zuziak points out, on the one hand, the Enlightenment enabled the successes of modern Western civilization, but on the other hand it precipitated a crisis of identity for Europe and the Europeans. Zuziak refers to the philosophers K.Wojtyla and J.Tischner in order to question superficial modernist conceptions that overemphasise the idea of progress while undermining the value of tradition. Given the difficulties of the concept of the individual that emerged from Enlightenment modernity, Zuziak explores the axiological crisis as a possible bridge between Western and Chinese cultures. He proposes a new analysis suggesting the mutual enrichment of both cultures, by acknowledging the values that they cherish, while indicating the dangers that they can avoid. “Existential personalism,” a term coined by K.Wojtyla and J. Tischner, emphasises the role of community and family relations in the integral development of human being, much like the traditions of Chinese cultures.

This issue of the *Macau Ricci Institute Journal* features a heart-felt commemoration of our friend and collaborator, Thomas Myers, who passed away just recently. Beyond recognizing his outstanding contributions on a wide range of issues, we pause to consider his final work, a handbook for coping with cancer. Rebecca Yeung recalls that Tom Myers was a prominent and successful figure in the financial field, a leader in business and public services, all the while he had been struggling with multiple cancers throughout his life. *Cancer as an Opportunity* presents Tom’s personal experience, which enabled him to develop his own protocol for self-transformation. Tom begins his book by telling a story about his father, who died of cancer while he was a teenager. Though his father had only a few months to live after the cancer diagnosis, he managed to deepen their bonding and communication, far beyond what they had experienced before. This gave Tom the conviction that life can be fulfilling even when it is short, and illness is terminal. In later years Tom wanted to share his insights with his many friends in China. He realized that his not being a believer of any religious creed might inspire them to accept the challenge of anxiety and depression that surfaces with the threat of terminal illness, and to see in it a unique opportunity to recognize more fully the value of life.

In a situation of existential anxiety, a cancer diagnosis can only intensify our fears and sense of helplessness, but as Tom demonstrates in *Cancer as an Opportunity*, mastering the techniques of visualized meditation practice can be very helpful in remaining open to life’s most rewarding experiences. Tom’s insights resonate strongly with my own experience with contemplation. Whether one discovers the techniques of emptying one’s mind from all negative thoughts and distractions, through the wisdom traditions of Christianity (“kenotic” prayer) or of Buddhism, Daoism, and Neo-Confucianism (“apophatic” inwardness), may one find peace, as our friend Tom now enjoys.

In the struggle to help people at risk of falling into irreversible depression, technology

may be a surprising force for good. Suicide is a significant problem in China. The causes are varied and interrelated. Teenagers and young adults have proven to be among the most vulnerable. The case study by Mark Pufpaff discusses the Tree Hollow Rescue Movement (THRM), a non-profit organisation that is fighting suicide through the use of artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms and online messaging applications. The aim of THRM is to reach out to vulnerable persons to provide them with alternatives to taking their own lives. But as Pufpaff shows, such a strategy also raises questions about intrusion into the private sphere: ethically, when is it justified to intervene so that a life may be saved?

The pathfinding book of Fr. Yves Raguin S.J. who founded the Taipei Ricci Institute,

most famous Northern European mystics and representatives of Asian spiritual traditions, where inherited concepts of religion could be left behind since all concepts of religion risk remaining narrow minded and inadequate. Raguin knew that his contemporaries among Zen masters already were more familiar with Western classics like *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Anonymous, mid-14th century), and writers informed by similar insights, than were Christians aware of the wisdom traditions of the East. Raguin's mission was to rediscover the classics of spirituality, both East and West, that might enable Christians to understand the presence of God beyond conventional pieties and precepts, at a deeper emotional level in the depth of our common humanity. As Criveller shows in his essay on Raguin's work, Meister Eckhart (1260-

The humble contributions featured in here, demonstrate our commitment to go beyond an obsession with *idées fixes* and prejudices and attempt once more to journey together toward truth, integrity, mutual trust, respect, and social harmony, as in the best Confucian traditions of the 君子 (*Junzi*), the morally refined person.

*The Depth of God*, was inspired by the student movements in Paris in 1968, when it appeared that Western civilization, with its Enlightenment ideals of justice and equality, was hopelessly corrupted, even and especially in its moral and spiritual presuppositions. As Gianni Criveller who met Fr. Raguin personally in the last months of his life recalls, the title was carefully chosen because the expression “the depth of God” resonated with Nietzsche's conclusion that “God is dead”. Raguin's was an attempt to explore a path away from the nihilism in which God seemed “dead” and humanity left behind in a destructive web of inauthentic relationships, to a notion of humanism which reveals and manifests God in the depth of the human being.

While deeply rooted in the Christian path of contemplation, Raguin envisioned a constructive encounter between some of the

1328) in particular, offers insights that strongly resonate with Buddhist and Hindu scriptures when it comes to the journey involved in letting the human soul be united with God.

The disillusionment of students so vivid in memories of that symbolic year of upheaval of 1968, not only left a strong impression on Raguin, but it also challenges us even now to renew our efforts to rethink moral leadership and where we are going on our journeys through life. Today's students often rightly feel that their education inadequately equips them to face the vital challenges that lie ahead. The ambiguous cry of the student movement of 1968, “*Le vent se lève, il faut tenter de vivre*”—inadequately translated as “The wind blows - it is necessary to try to live”—hints at the need for a paradigm shift on so many levels. But while the new paradigm is struggling to be born, we must continue to live. This issue

of the MRIJ thus includes some testimonies from those who are learning to live, by transforming educational institutions that feel acutely the blowing winds.

The interview with Jenny Elmaco, Director of Silliman University's Office of Strategic Partnerships, shows not only what is possible but also what obstacles remain if women's empowerment is to come into its own in any new paradigm. She testifies to some promising developments, one of which is in the achievements of women entrepreneurs in the Philippines. As she informs us, Rags2Riches (R2R), is a social enterprise company that shows how innovative business practices may empower women coming from impoverished communities. R2R's value proposition is striking in that it is developing an eco-friendly, ethical fashion brand that provides sustainable employment to artisans in Metro Manila. Every R2R piece is handwoven by artisans using overstock, upcycled and indigenous fabrics that would otherwise end up in a landfill. The women artisans, having created a cooperative in which they own shares, receive about 40 percent of the retail price for each item. The cooperative also provides them with training in personal finance, health insurance and nutrition. In R2R we find a business model that gives us hope that the social principle of subsidiarity, which encourages mutual help on the lowest possible level, can be realized.

Beyond the interview with Elmaco, this issue of the MRIJ also contains an encouraging report by Silliman University's President, Betty Cernol-McCann—who is the wife of the MRIJ co-editor, Dennis P. McCann—on what can be done when significant institutional change is undertaken within a mid-sized private university. As her report testifies, Silliman is Christian in its inspiration, foundation, and ongoing commitment; but now it is reexamining collectively its mission, policies and practices to respond affirmatively to the looming threat of environmental catastrophe. Silliman University's campus is but a stone's throw from the harbor at Dumaguete City, and not at all immune to

rising sea levels and the risk of devastating inundation. Rather than simply give up and move to higher ground, Silliman is attempting to make environmental "care for our common home" a top priority in all phases of its operations. Ironically enough, as the leading Protestant university of the Philippines, Silliman is taking a leadership role in implementing Pope Francis' concrete proposals, outlined in his memorable encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (2015), which urges us to renew and mutually reinforce the links among our spiritual, ecological, and Christian commitments.

Such reports confirm the picture of the profound change of personal and institutional attitudes to which Pope Francis points in his recent announcement of an agreement between the Vatican and the People's Republic of China (22 September 2018). Dennis McCann's book review of an important collection of perspectives, *La Chiesa in Cina: Un futuro da scrivere*, edited by Antonio Spadaro, S.J. (2019), foregrounds the hope shared by Spadaro S.J. and his colleagues by examining not only the legal issues involved in the agreement on the appointment of bishops, but also the long-term changes in the Church's pastoral strategy that it may open up. The agreement shouldn't be read as simply a clarification of the nominating process for the proper appointment of Catholic bishops in China. As the various essays—including my own "*La Dottrina sociale della Chiesa in Cina: Un riferimento per l'etica degli affari*"—make clear, it also paves the way to transform moral education in support of authentic pastors following Pope Francis' model of servant leadership. The agreement thus is prospective, seeking to secure a pragmatic path toward a future in China yet to be written, with the intent of contributing to the benefit of the larger society with the needs of its most vulnerable members in mind.

The journeys toward moral leadership featured in this issue of the *Macau Ricci Institute Journal*, in diverse ways, are meant to help to inspire hope especially for the youth of China. When we consider the present crisis in Hong Kong, we may quickly conclude that there is

no hope and no solution in sight, as different layers of society seem to be profoundly divided. Obviously, this Journal cannot and will not take sides in the political crisis unfolding across the Pearl River estuary. But I hope that the essays featured here will encourage all concerned to take up the work of mutual understanding and reconciliation, inspired by the deep friendship Matteo Ricci S.J. and his successors managed to develop with the Chinese people. The humble contributions featured in here, demonstrate our commitment to go beyond an obsession with *idées fixes* and prejudices and attempt once more to journey together toward truth, integrity, mutual trust, respect, and social harmony, as in the best Confucian traditions of the bumpy roads the 君子 (*Junzi*), the morally refined person, should have the courage to walk. This process will shape new paths that require innovations in moral leadership inspired by different wisdom traditions.



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