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**Dear workshop participants:**

This paper was originally written for Professor Ziporyn's seminar "The Philosophies of the *Yijing* (Book of Changes)." I'm just now beginning to hone it into shape to submit to several East-West Philosophy journals. I'm hoping to get feedback not only on my argument, but especially also on the methodology I'm running my argument through. Because I'm attempting to cross wires between two *prima facie* unrelated domains--on the one hand, sinology and the study of Chinese thought, and on the other hand, Hegel/Lacan-informed theory--I fear I'm at a double risk of alienating both a traditionally-minded sinology audience, and a critical theory audience unversed in categories of Chinese thought. With that in mind, I would greatly appreciate feedback on the following:

1. For those unfamiliar with Chinese, is there anything I could do to make the Chinese materials more user-friendly? For instance, is it reasonable to ask the reader to learn to differentiate between the ideographs for *yin* (陰) and *yang* (陽)? Do the line-by-line readings of the two hexagrams (未濟, 既濟) in section II present as trackable without more background in the *Yijing*?
2. For those unfamiliar with the Hegel/psychoanalytic materials, are there places in the argument where I seem to take an idea for granted, that I could stand to expand or even cut? For instance, when I invoke Hegelian devices like "the activity of the end" or psychoanalytic devices like "the logic of the drive" to characterize the way the sequence of 64 hexagrams closes itself out?
3. I lean heavily throughout on a discussion of sexual difference. It serves as an axis along which to situate different imaginings of the difference between both *yang* and *yin*, and eventually also hexagrams 63 and 64, *already-finished*, and *not-yet-finished*. Does this way of figuring the interface between Chinese and Western materials make sense?
4. Section I sketches out the contours of the problem of teleology in the *Yijing*. Section II presents a close reading of the line judgments on the two final hexagrams in the sequence. And Section III re-imagines the End of the *Yijing* in accordance with this close reading. Does this structure seem fluid/intuitive? Or would it be better to structure the paper in some other way?

Aside from these methodological concerns, I am of course also interested in responses to the argument itself. I welcome any questions, and hopefully suggestions too. Looking forward to the (virtual) conversation,

Tyler

## The *Jiji / Weiji* Dyad and the End of the Changes

### I

The spread of 64 hexagrams constitutive of the 易經 *Yijing*<sup>1</sup>, although itself a static thing, constitutes the native terrain of a series of Changes within the thick of which one cannot, right off the bat, wherever one steps, take refuge from the back and forth between, on the one hand, 陰 *yin* (feminine, dark, hidden, negative) and 陽 *yang* (masculine, bright, manifest, positive). There is no neutral ground on which to seek respite from this incessant pulsation. And so the Course (道) we must tread must take up *within* this pulsation. As Han Kangbo puts it, 一陰一陽之謂道 : *the reciprocal process of yin and yang is called the Course.*

But in what relation do 陰 and 陽 stand to one another? There's much in the traditional comprehension of the Changes that would support reading 陰 *yin* and 陽 *yang*<sup>2</sup> as the basically real inter-combinatory building blocks of a cosmology structured by fundamental opposition between two discrete elements. This universal metaphoricization of a basically fixed imagining of sexual difference opens up an inter-cosmological conduit between earth, man, and heaven; between microcosm & macrocosm, social Whole and cosmos. Those Changes in which man is wrought out are the very same Changes that set all things turning. All phenomena, earthly, humanly, heavenly, are likewise reducible at the bottommost level to some configuration of these

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<sup>1</sup> I'll refer to the 易經 *Yijing* from this point forward just with the Chinese ideographs. This is the name of the work in question, an ancient prognosticatory manual the most basic layer of which was composed as early as the Western Zhou (1000-750BCE).

<sup>2</sup> I'll refer to 陰 *yin* and 陽 *yang* from this point forward just with their Chinese ideographs. My apologies to non-Chinese readers. One way to remember which is which: 陰 is structured mostly with triangles, both on the top and bottom of the right hand bit—and 陽 has a 日 (which represents the sun) at the very top right.

constituents 陰 and 陽 that supplement each other, *complete* each other, which come together to form a whole. And it's consequently thought, in the grips of such a picture, that the whole formed in and through the exhaustion of all possible combinations of 陰 and 陽 is invested with properly cosmic import; such that "that all possible changes that can occur in the universe [are thought to be] antecedently fixed and encompassed by the 64 hexagrams" (Munro 87).

Is there not, however, also much in the 易經 & the tradition that surrounds it to furnish a different picture of the relationship between 陰 and 陽? Can the 易經 be thought to conduct another sort of difference than that within the above picture of the completion of the whole *vis-a-vis* the exhaustive combination of these two constitutive bedrock principles 陰 and 陽? Can we think, within the shifting landscape of the 易經, not an opposition between two separately constituted principles, positive and negative, 陰 & 陽, but rather a magnetic split which registers at every level all the ways up & down--including *within* 陰& 陽 themselves. Chengyi gives this comment on a most crucial 一陰一陽之謂道 *xicizhuan* passage<sup>3</sup>:

「陰陽雖殊」者,言陰之與陽,雖有兩氣,恒用虛無之一,以擬待之。

: *When it is said that: "yin and yang although distinct, there is no one with which to deal with them, dealing with them just with there not-being any such a one with which to deal with them, in and through the one of the not- of their being" he is saying that yin's being together with yang, although there are two modes, qi, it is by persevering in the function of the one of the void non-being that one draws up some such a dealing with them.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Full passage from the *xicizhuan*: 一陰一陽之謂道,道者何?無之稱也,無不通也,無不由也,況之曰道。寂然天體,不可為象。必有之用極,而無之功顯,故至乎「神無方,而易無體」,而道可見矣。故窮變以盡神,因神以明道,陰陽雖殊,無一以待之。在陰為無陰,陰以之生;在陽為無陽,陽以之成,故曰「一陰一陽」也。

<sup>4</sup> my tentative translation

What is this function of this one of the void non-being? The void non-being is not any positive substrate, not some higher unity possessed both by 陰 and 陽's with which mediation becomes possible. It is rather a *pure antagonism* which, while in a sense prior to the terms it differentiates, has no body whatever outside of the 'not-' in the heart of each of these basic constituents 陰 and 陽. Chengyi continues:

云「在陰為無陰, 陰以之生」者, 謂道雖在於陰, 而無於陰, 言道所生皆無陰也。雖無於陰, 陰終由道而生, 故言「陰以之生」也。「在陽為無陽, 陽以之成」者, 謂道雖在陽, 陽中必無道也。雖無於陽, 陽必由道而成, 故言「陽以成之」也: *To say, "residing in yin, it is the very work of there not-being any such a yin that yin, by this lack of itself, gives rise to"--what this is called is Dao, although it resides there within yin, is non-being within yin, the being within yin of its own not-. This just says that all to which Dao gives rise are without yin [that is, without a yin that doesn't simultaneously lack itself]. Though there is [its own] not- there within yin [itself], yin follows Dao \_to the very end\_ and thus gives rise to-. And so it says, "that yin by this lack of itself gives rise to-." To say, "[Dao]'s residing in yang, it is [just] the work of the lack of itself by which yang brings completion about"--what this is called is--Dao. Though it resides within yang, the center of yang must be without a Dao, with the without of a Dao; Though there is [its own] 'not-' there within yang, yang must follow Dao and thus bring about completion. So it is said that "yang, by way of this [lack of itself] brings completion about."*<sup>5</sup>

That is to say, right in the hearts of each of these *prima facie* bedrock elements 陰 & 陽 *themselves* resides an in-eliminable kernel of restless negativity, to the effect that each is respectively pulled to and fro between itself and not-itself in its very utmost self of selves. Even in the pull between 陰 and 陽, each pole is itself subtended by an antagonism that does not come upon it as externality, but rather is (always-already was) the internal condition of its functioning. Rather than any external difference which mediates between two independently consistent poles

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<sup>5</sup> my tentative translation

陰 and 陽, are we not dealing here with a difference in which 陰 and 陽 each of them stands in relation with and from *itself* as different?

As dawn's first light unfolds over the horizon of this unplummable antagonism what opens up respectively within 陰 and 陽 themselves--let us call up, as foil, a most recent iteration of the Maoist-fashioned strawdog of the Changes. In Zizek's excellent new book, *Sex & the Failed Absolute*, he reaches for the 易經 as an easy Maoist stand-in shape for the spiritual stagnation that takes hold of "pre-modern cosmology," in which the so-called difference of the sexes (alt: classes) isn't yet as *real* difference:

*We begin with the basic sexualized opposition (yin-yang) which is then progressively specified in more and more complex combinations of the basic opposed principles—the model of this procedure is the ancient Chinese “Book of Changes” with systematic series of combinations of the two principles (Zizek 142).*

In such a pre-modern cosmological configuration, pure difference remains ineffectuated, subordinated to the functioning of a privileged identity (陽), some element in the set which hold itself apart from *what* negates it (陰) as well as the negation of its own what(-ness). This is the fantasy of the self-identity of the 陽 masquerading as ground of the difference between 陰 and 陽. And furthermore, this figures the ideology of any fixable division between men and women's proper domains, spheres, essences, etc. Any such a position leaves something unthought: the position, allegedly neutral, from which this division is more or less covertly enunciated--is a masculine repressive mechanism; difference here is but the sleep tonic to sustain sweet dreams of man and wo-man, coexisting together as separate but nevertheless integral combinatorial units of a higher cosmic order, social Whole in which 陰 and 陽 each knows its place, etc.

Where is the blind spot in this happy nightmare? It is not, perhaps contrary to expectation, woman's identity; woman rather enjoys within the 陽 ideology a clearly discernible identity, affixed within the circuit of man's fantasmatic comportment to self-coincidence; and it just so happens (within this picture) that as such, she brings man to completion, time and time again; or so it goes. For the Maoist who rejects this picture, it is rather *difference itself--* antagonism itself, the exclusion of which founds the underhandedly homogeneous ideologic of traditional gender roles/class divisions--that must be foreclosed to inoculate us to revolutionary critique. That is to say, what the 陽 ideology must exclude is the traces of its exclusion of *difference as such* which is the very repressed structural hinge upon which man's entire fantasy of self-identity *vis-a-vis* difference turns.

This elevation of contradiction itself to the theoretical-practical dignity of the Thing, this "glorification of the contradictions in society," cannot, however, be brought about except by way of a supplement: these Maoists "are quick to condemn" the hegemony, throughout the history of Chinese thought, of allegedly anti-revolutionary ideals--"harmony, tranquility" and the like. Confucians will prop up "human nature," insofar as it "covers up class contradictions, since there is no class transcending nature"; Taoists will slyly dress the dialectic up such that "opposites disappear in the Tao," thereby obfuscating the productive, incessant labor of irreducible contradiction (Munro, 160-1).

It's easy to feel, empowered by the penetrating backward-facing gaze of this Maoist dialectic, that Zizek's sketch holds up more or less. Even Žižek formulates the 'after all is said and done' landing place of the arch-difference within the Yin-Yang systems, in a couple of moments, in terms that fashion to fit quite nicely over the frame of Zizek's 易經 Maoist

strawdog: *"A situation is "good" when Yang is master, is first, is controlling, is above, and Yin follows it, supports it, completes it, assists it"* (Ziporyn 239). Were this approximation to hold up, all of the ironical co-optings deployed within the yin-yang system to temper vulnerability to the charge of one-sidedness would, I take it, fall short of suspending the 陽 ideology's repression of this internal difference that would, if allowed to circulate freely, equally unseat the 陰 and the 陽 each from itself: in the end, the tradition *"reasserts the preeminence of Yang over Yin, while acknowledging the necessary presence of the latter"* (Ziporyn 250).

It's my impression that on Ziporyn's read, even the farthest meta-level reaches of the non-ironic mobilization of ironic negativity--for instance, "if the Yin-Yang structure informs the broadest concepts of contrast in the tradition," does this not generate a certain reflexive motion in which each stand-in for 陰 and 陽 within a given binary itself opens into further iteration(s), complications--of the split? e.g. "are 'complementarity' and 'conflictual' complementary, or in conflict?"--all this ultimately nevertheless fails the ironical litmus test according to which "the relation between a content and its opposite is a necessary component of coherence, which renders that coherence unintelligible" (Ziporyn 231). In the end, the tradition opts to lay itself on the line for the sake of the intelligibility of the 陽, corking up the watercourse of a difference which if allowed through the gates could not but disrupt the smooth-functioning of the 陽-ideology machine.

But are we so sure that the 易經 (and the accompanying commentarial tradition) fails this ironist litmus test? Are we so sure that the hegemony of the 陽 remains un-unraveled in the end of the 易? What if the site of the corking up of the watercourse of this absolute difference were to be seen to reveal a fundamental ambivalence? Musn't the site of its corking be the very same site

as the un-corking of this difference? What stops the meta-level reflexivity to which Ziporyn points us--short of opening into a fuller-fledged 'pure' difference--the 易經 as object shifting accordingly from object of desire to object of the drive? Let us assume, in an experimental vein, a charitable defense that the 易經 *does* fully furnish the charge of a difference logically prior to the terms which it differentiates, a properly ironic negativity which always-already unseats any identity which it invests with intelligibility from within, a universality which falls on the side of "*undermining* 'universality'" (Zupancic 28, my italics).

It's simple enough to think through how a move like the regressive 'simultaneous complementarity and conflictuality of complementarity and conflict' might just as well be offered in defense of the traditional logic of sexual difference: i.e. man and woman caught in eternal struggle, a constitutive everlasting tension in every resolution of which the entire cosmos, or social Whole is consummated with itself. It is, however, only at the site of the 易經's *aborted* self-closure--here in the end, 既濟 *jiji* and 未濟 *weiji*<sup>6</sup>, this fateful diad, that we will turn this pure difference loose from its identitarian shackles. My contention is that this closing dyad in which the Changes comes to an end evinces the drive logic of the "comic happy ending," which, as Zupancic puts it, is "not a sudden reversal of a previous misfortune or unhappiness," but rather exacts a joyful satisfaction from the very deadlocks, blockades, failures, mis-encounters, miscalculations, misplacements, mis-movements, misfirings, misjudgments, etc., from which it was hoped the end would grant reprieve (Zupancic 132).

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<sup>6</sup> I'll refer to these last two hexagrams in the sequence of 64, 既濟 *jiji* and 未濟 *weiji* from this point forward just with the Chinese characteristics. This pair is perhaps especially counterintuitive to memory, given the penultimate hexagram 63, 既濟 means 'already across' and the ultimate hexagram 64, 未濟 means 'not yet across'. One way to remember this: the character 未 *wei*, which means 'not yet' looks a bit like a building not fully constructed.



We can grant to Zizek's description that the 易經 indeed sequentializes the back-and-forth of these constituents 陰 & 陽. The Changes consists in the "systematic series of combinations of the two principles" (Zizek 142). But if indeed even these constituents themselves are marked by an imbalance that displaces them from themselves, revealing a back-and-forth at even this bedrock level, then the system (whether micro- or macro- level) constructed through the "combination of these two principles" is bound likewise to be traversed by the very same split which subtends the constituents themselves. Could we read the following Han Kangbo comment into this vein? When he tells us, in commentary to the *xicizhuan's* nebulous pronouncement that 吉凶者，貞勝者也--for which Lynn gives the somewhat questionable "*thanks to constancy, either good fortune or misfortune prevails*" (perhaps we could dis-disambiguate this a bit toward: "*good fortune and/or misfortune, constancy's winning out*") that

夫有動則未免乎累，殉吉則未離乎凶：Just as soon as there is motion, one cannot steer clear of entanglement. One may sacrifice oneself to good fortune yet in doing so never stay free of misfortune.

—it's as if the very laying oneself down in service of a fortunate end (吉) only ends up empowering this phantom of misfortune (凶)--generated precisely by the affixation to the fortunate ending (吉). This very purported hew to the 吉 is--in the converse of the Maoist scapegoating of traditional anti-revolutionary ideals of harmony, wholeness, etc.--likewise sustained by an necessary supplement: the very attempt to stay free of misfortune (離乎凶) imbues the misfortune (凶) with all the more powerful and resilient a charge—which, once let

loose, can only but cut through the fortune (吉) one clutches tightly to one's breast.<sup>7</sup> In order to stay afloat in these treacherous waters, one must hew only to the interchange, the back-and-forth itself rather than to either the one pole or the other. What does 子曰 (in this *xicizhuan* passage attributed to Confucius)?

危者，安其位者也；亡者，保其存者也；亂者，有其治者也。是故，君子安而不忘危，存而不忘亡，治而不忘亂： *To get into danger is a matter of thinking one's position secure; to become ruined is a matter of thinking one's continuance protected; to fall into disorder is a matter of thinking one's order enduring. Therefore the noble man when secure does not forget danger; when enjoying continuance does not forget ruin, when maintaining order does not forget disorder.*

Thus any 貞，正， or 一， any constancy, *unwaveringness*, oneness--worthy of the name(s) must hang not only to fortune (吉) as opposed to misfortune (凶), but rather to the course that 鼓之舞之, that '*makes a drum, a [flailing] dance of it*'--attuned not to any time signature, commensurate only to its positioning within the crossfire of antagonisms by which it is at once lacerated and propelled forward in the wind and bent of the Changes. But here we must tread carefully; we must look to discern something further in the sinuous turnings of the 吉 and 凶 back-and-forth than the mere temporary *back and forth* of the 吉 and 凶 to be delivered in time to come, once and for all, from the strain of their mutual opposition.

Let's entertain an analogy with comedy. The movement of comedy would not, *could* not turn on were it not for a dense rhythmic accumulation of impediments to this very movement. To move forward in accomplishing even the most naive and straightforward of ends--get the girl, land a job, chase the runaway pooch--we must cross a variegated minefield of fixations,

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<sup>7</sup> This perhaps calling to the surface a shadowy underbelly aspect of the 殉 in 殉吉則未離乎凶 *a la* 殉葬的殉, namely 'to be buried along with the dead'.

interruptions, passionate attachments causing us to swerve outside the line of our teleological vector. But *how* we end up standing with respect to all these *prima facie* hindrances to the accomplishment of the end in question will ride on how we come down on "the impasse involved in the relationship between desire and its satisfaction" (Zupancic 132). However frustrated we may have been leading up to it, the tail end of a comedy always manages to dot its *i*'s; and the end itself, even if we hadn't foreseen the tortuous course through which we were delivered up to it, always manages to "add up to everybody's satisfaction" (Ibid).

And so the question becomes: what is the status of all these discontinuities, misfirings, *punctuations*--through which the comedic movement *has* to self-interrupt so as to so much as be able to push through to the end? Were all these disturbances to appear as purely external to the bringing about of the end, then could we not simply dismiss them? It would be thought--they are but temporary, if admittedly necessary setbacks on the road to the end. But this half-way house admission of necessity falls short of appreciating not merely that such setbacks are indispensable to the end, but furthermore that the continuity of the comic sequence, its passage from beginning to end, is constructed throughout "with discontinuity," that the teleological vector is obliquely coterminous with its own torsion, with its own self-interruption, its own breaking from itself. (Zupancic 151).

If we can come to see that the sequence had been getting off all along in and through all these breaks and interruptions in the smooth surface of the plane of motion; that the forward motion hasn't been merely maintained in spite of, but was rather *caused by, turned on* by these very interruptions--then these very hindrances, which were before presented under the aspect of sheer externality to the end, begin to shine with a satisfactory glow, spilling out through every

crack and break, suffuse with the "activity of the end," to use Hegel's term--which for Hegel is just this sublation of the "illusory show" of the externality of the end. So in contrast to the stance which attributes a kind of begrudging necessity to temporary setbacks on the way (thus sustaining an implicit hew to the 吉), when the *xicizhuan's* Confucius says, 君子安而不忘危，存而不忘亡，治而不忘亂： *the noble man when secure does not forget danger, when enjoying continuance does not forget ruin, when maintaining order does not forget disorder*, what if we were not rather to 鼓之舞之, make a drum, a flailing dance of the back-and-forth between 安 (security) and 危 (danger), between 存 (continuance) and 亡 (ruin), 治 (order) and 亂 (chaos)? What if, following Hegel, we could see the variegated manifolds of 凶 stretched throughout the Changes, the discontinuity-stuff out of which its continuity is woven--all this that was at first "determined as external and indifferent to" the movement forward--for the very movement itself (Hegel 752)? What if we were to discern a back-and-forth in which the end came to settle neither the in the *back* or the *forth*, but rather if anywhere in the *-and-* of the back-*and*-forth itself?

And furthermore, this unity which is the function of the punctuation *-and-* in the 'between of the *back* and the *forth*' is no propagandist puppet of the *yang*, but rather the unity of the 無一以待之--the unity of the *not-* of being, the unity of the lack of any one with which to draw up the back-*and*-forth of 陰 and 陽. This oblique unity no longer relates to 陰 as to its external other in which it stands to be brought to completion. And indeed, this recast of the externality of motion's self-frustration, seeing in it the very motion itself constitutive of the Changes--this does not approximate to any kind of pseudo-dialectical reconciliation of opposites; motion in continuity does not emerge miraculously re-sutured and whole again on the other side of this self-recognition in discontinuity.

The punctuated unity of the 無一以待之 is rather only the oblique one(-ness) which "in identity with itself in this externality is also immediately again self-repulsion" (Ibid.) In other words, this is a one which has only a purely ironic identity; its only identity is that it isn't (straightforwardly) itself, or that it has no identity with which it could so much as converge or fail to converge--since this "identity as identity, as reflected into itself, is rather its other" (Ibid.) This is the one of 'the otherness of externality recognized as the internal condition of identity as such'. So what if fortune (吉)'s intertwinedness with misfortune (凶) were no mere temporary fetters, some necessary setback on the path to satisfaction in the 吉, but the very bondage into which the Changes locks itself up in order to secure its satisfaction, opening up only thereby the way through to the end? What if we were to imagine the 易經 with something like...a bondage fetish?

This course hews not in any one direction, but rather only 曲成萬物而不遺 : *follows along with every twist and turn of the myriad things and so [is not carried away by them]*.<sup>8</sup> How then can he who turns into this course avoid being carried away, losing himself in these ineluctable turnings on? We're told that 君子所居而安者，易之序也 : *what allows the noble man to find himself anywhere and yet remain secure are the sequences of the Changes*.

We are, in any given position, on some line within some hexagram in the sequence, pulled in innumerable directions at once--tangled in the fetters of a shifting field of intensities, each antagonistic vector with a peculiar bent commensurate only to itself. Caught up as we are in this ever-shifting virtual field, we are given *no ultimate principle* according to which we ought to

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<sup>8</sup> Bracketed part is my translation.

proceed : 不可為典要，唯變所適 : *[it is] something for which it is impossible to make definitive laws, since they are doing nothing but keeping pace with change.*

On the one hand--yes, we are dealing with a finite combinatory set; every hexagram consists in some sequential iteration of the elements 陰 and 陽, as well as the trigrams in which all the possible three-member sets of 陰 and 陽 are presented in groups, etc. But crucially, this combinatory does not unfold within a singularly determinable set of coordinates. Whether at any given nexus we're oriented primarily along a temporal axis, a gradient from inner to outer, private to public--whether the space of a hexagram is divided into three 陰陽 dyads, two trigrams joined at the hip, four interlocked trigrams stacked one on the other--or whether our gravitational bent is overdetermined by the narrative pull of whatever soprano on tenor drama happens to be fomenting between positions 2 and 5, so on and so forth. *"It is not that there are no rules; there are too many rules, and they form no consistent set"* (Ziporyn 242).

The overdetermination of the space within which the combinations constitutive of the Changes unfold makes for inhospitable ground to any non-ironical unity which would purport to act as a binding agent for any kind of a 'common space'. Hypothetically, if such a unity which would purport to hold to itself exclusive of the difference with which its very identity is invested--were it to be able to summarize the combinations according to its own constitutive metric, it could then set the stage for an ending favorable to its ideological narrative of self-coincidence. But again as the *xicizhuan* has it, 不可為典要，唯變所適 : *[it is] something for which it is impossible to make definitive laws, since they are doing nothing but keeping pace with change.* The overdetermined space will only repel the ordinariness of any consistent law. The Changes change along the lines only of the peculiar hyper-contortion of the nexus in question.

This multi-cross-mediated space within which the combinatory unfolds correlates to a thoroughgoing openness to reconfiguration which isn't *ipso facto* arbitrary. This is "an utterly impersonal creativity," an "irresponsible legislation," an "order without anyone giving the orders" (Land 183). The Changes register an oblique logic wherein the only One there could so much as be would have to be a punctuated one, a one which is its (any given) oneness's own self-punctuation--the strictly ironical Identity of the 無一以待之--of the lack of any such a one by which, and in the ideological dominion of which the difference between 陰 and 陽 could be dealt with definitively one way or another.

The contours of this on-the-ground movement in the Changes correlate to a certain wider cosmologic--here is Zhuxi's elaboration of the 繫辭's formulation of the 易--生生之謂易: '*in its capacity to produce and reproduce we call it the Changes*'.

某謂天地別無勾當，只是以生物為心。一元之氣，運轉流通，略無停間，只是生出許多萬物而已。 *The Cosmos has no other business--that its sole intent, its sole mind, is to generate things. The one original force operates and rotates, flowing unobstructedly, never stopping for an instant, doing nothing besides generating all the myriads of existing things.* [Ziporyn, Zhuxi paper, 9]

Even when this is presented negatively--'no business besides-', 'no intent or mind besides'--nevertheless, the problem of the one arises and will ever continue to arise to us here: What goes unspoken, is too obvious to speak: what sort of a being did or did not set the cosmos to turning? What sort of a being is it imagined there is or isn't? Whether such a being did or did not, is or is not--the necessary thought of such a being--one with business, one with intent, or mind to-, etc. as if the cosmos were one great heaving body, and the subjectivity of which 朱熹 tells us there isn't any such an instance--such a one like a puppeteer, organizing the cosmic body

according to its own designs, bending it to the shape of its every wish and whim; pulling the strings within, stationed at a level sequestered away from the mechanistic, deterministic level of the cosmic body itself.

We'll recall the basic contours of the conservative domestication of sexual difference: the eternal struggle between man and woman, 陰 and 陽, two poles fixed in their essence, which stand to be harmonized or reconciled into a higher unity. We're in position now to fill this picture out in a couple of respects. Firstly, 陰 and 陽 are fixed *vis-a-vis* their respective roles within the cosmic struggle. But these "indifferent determinatenesses" become "essential through the relation" not only to each other, but to an insidious "intelligence" that "determines the multiplicity," by a "unity that exists in and for itself." So, the relation in which 陰 and 陽 become essential is not, as it might seem, merely reciprocal; even though the struggle would seem to evince the play of struggle, opposition, difference, etc., this fixed reciprocity is nevertheless a puppet show. The fixed reciprocity between 陰 and 陽 is, on this picture, necessarily determined at once by a relation to a "purposiveness" which "shows itself in the first instance as a higher being" (Greater Logic, 736).

And secondly, this insidious affixation to some externally positioned purposiveness is itself indexed to a certain imagining of the end. Some such cosmic puppeteer picture, whether its face is more or less visible, forms the elementary matrix for any ideology of divine providence, any 'one's envisioning of the coming about of the end in accordance with its own designs. Each 'one' gives a different account to the impetus behind the turnings on of history and change-- history and change turning on until, as it goes, the time comes to put an end to it, an end in which



all want will be filled in the παρουσία which brings the turning of time itself, the vicissitudes of change, to an end--all of course, in accordance with plan.

And this envisioning of the end of the sequence i.e. where it will have ended up is furthermore haphazardly affixed, as a teleological vector, to every moment in the sequence--what drives the motion and change on in the direction of the end in which all lack will be filled. This teleological directionality, even if it chiefly concerns the end, does not then simply mark the limit of the series; or perhaps we could say more precisely that the limit isn't simply localizable, but reveals a universal trace of being-toward-the-end throughout the entire sequence. It is the impetus of every movement in the series, that by which the motion of its turning on is carried out. And thus it is something which (within the scope of this largely unconscious picture) must have been in play from the very outset, without which we could never have so much as gotten out of the gates.<sup>9</sup> But if in fact, as the *xicizhuan* tells us, 夫變化之道，不為而自然, *the Dao of change and transformation does not act out of a sense of purpose but behaves spontaneously*--does there or doesn't there remain a telos of which to speak? Zhuxi again tells us,

心固是主宰底意，然所謂主宰者，即是理也，不是心外別有箇理，理外別有箇心：  
*Mind definitely means being master, but it is precisely the Productive Compossibilities that are the master here. It is not that outside this mind there is some other Productive Compossibility (理) of Productivity, or outside this Productive Compossibility (理) there is some other mind.*

Is it possible to think through a teleology corresponding to this mind (心) what is none other than “productive compossibilities” (理)? My contention is that the closing dyad of the

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<sup>9</sup> We'll see that this temporal short-circuit will remain to be accounted for, however, even once the contents of this picture have been thoroughly emptied out.

Changes, hexagrams 63 (未濟) and 64 (既濟) (see the figure below) in the series of sixty-four provides resources for just such a task. The names of these two hexagrams 既濟 (63) and 未濟 (64) consist in two interrelated modifications of the character 濟--which comprehends multiple interrelated shades of meaning, from 'ferry across,' 'cross the river' (e.g. 同舟共濟), to 'irrigate,' or 'bring relief to,' (e.g. 濟世安民), as well as to 'realize,' 'bring about the realization of-': 既濟 could perhaps be translated correspondingly along the lines of '*already across*' as encompassing all of the above; and 未濟 along the lines of '*not yet across*.' Let us think through a teleology which brings the sequence of changes to completion somehow all along the way--where this completion is unfastened from any conception of the end as a full stop (παρουσία), released instead into an end of another sort, released into a reckoning before the 既濟 / 未濟 dyad.

## II



By what sort of an end is the motion of the 易 is driven on? The dyad 既濟 / 未濟, of the crossed and the not-yet crossed, presents not two perspectives (from out) on the same configuration, but two views from *within* the ambit of this configuration, looking *out* onto this configuration itself. These two interlocked vantage points from within, looking out onto--the

series do not intervene from beyond upon an already existing field of antagonisms, tensions, incongruities. The 既濟 / 未濟 dyad does not deliver up the sort of satisfaction which these antagonisms, tensions, and incongruities would seem to demand, were they to remain enchained within the fetters of an externalized teleologic. The punctuation which the 既濟 / 未濟 dyad effects does not bring about the final once-and-for-all reconciliation between 陰 and 陽.

Rather the dyad 既濟 / 未濟 pushes the antagonism, by which every juncture in the whole series (including 既濟 and 未濟 themselves) is without exception traversed, to its zenith point. The 既濟 / 未濟 dyad stands for the internal limit of the series itself unleashed from its ideological shackles, this contradiction as absolute difference which has all throughout maintained its clandestine operation, driving the movement of the sequence on and conducting inter-sequential cross-referential sympathies. This vision of the end opens up a new horizon within which to convey the ongoing motion of the Changes.

This teleology corresponding to a 心外別有箇理，理外別有箇心<sup>10</sup>, to this peculiar impersonal master which is none other than the bent of productive compossibility--again bears analogy to comic subjectivity, which does not reside in "the subject making the comedy, nor in the subjects or egos that appear in it," but rather precisely in the "incessant and irresistible, all-consuming movement," inaugurated and sustained precisely by the lack of any external reference point, by the out-of-jointedness by which every position in the sequence is declined (Zupancic 8). The space laid out in the 易經 does not require the intervention of an Ego--rather it is the work of *no one*. Hexagrams are not static moments "made essential" within the machinic

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<sup>10</sup> "It is not that outside this mind there is some other Productive Compossibility (理) of Productivity, or outside this Productive Compossibility (理) there is some other mind."

operations of some transcendental consciousness. They obey the out-of-wack logic (滑稽) of this *prima facie* random comedic movement. They are, to use Hegel's term, "pure motions," which "impel themselves forward," like Chaplin's tramp, tripping head over tails into ever deeper and more intractably riotous complications.

The closing dyad in the sequence of 64 bears out this disjointed comedic logic through to the end. The 既濟 / 未濟 does not resolve the series of complications, but rather delivers the 易 經 up through itself into an end split in two: the judgment on 既濟 reads, 初吉終亂 : *at first, fortune (吉) prevails; and in the end, chaos*. But crucially for us here, the affective resonances of these two poles of the dyad are crossed. Common sense would dictate that the auspicious finality of 既濟 (finished crossing) be taken as cause for rejoicing; and conversely, that the calamity of the 未濟 be taken as cause for despair. But hilariously, the case is just the reverse--the 既濟 is the downer, and 未濟 the (overdose of) upper.

The Changes is delivered firstly into that configuration, 既濟 *finished crossing*, most perfectly in correspondence with its own envisaged notion: three (unbroken) 陽 lines each one come to rest in the three prototypically 陽 positions 1, 3, and 5; three (broken) 陰 lines each one likewise aligned into the three prototypically 陰 positions 2, 4, and 6. The two center spots, 2 and 5, within the two constitutive trigrams--離 (fire) beneath and 坎 (abyss) above, are occupied by a 陰 on bottom and 陽 on top, each of which is the only one of its kind within its respective trigram. And so because "a trigram with only one Yang line takes Yang as its ruler" (and vice versa), the 陰 on bottom hegemonizes the 離 (fire) and the 陽 on top hegemonizes the 坎 (abyss) (Ziporyn 234). Thus we have, not only as per the two center spots 2 and 5, but in the two trigram positions as well, a 陰-ruled trigram (離) followed by, grounded in, externalized through a 陽-

ruled trigram (坎). So although the hexagram 既濟, divided into pairs of lines to facilitate the bilateral interchange between 陰 and 陽 nevertheless proceeds, within each respective pair, with its best foot forward first, a 陽 upon which then the 陰 can ride--the hexagram considered as itself split down the middle, folding instead at the border the two trigrams represent to each other, carries out the externalization/manifestation of 陰-ruled 離 (fire) in the 陽-ruled 坎 (abyss).

Finally--after long last, the much anticipated self-coincidence in which all is where it ought to be. And yet, do things not feel uneasy as ever...? In the first 陽 which marks our entrance into the 既濟, we don't manage to make a proper courtly entrance to fanfare and applause, but rather—according to the line judgments—come plodding in wheels a'dragging, and tail a'dripping (曳其輪，濡其尾.) So we trudge on in hopes of finding respite in the center of the 離 trigram. But even here within the *prima facie* maximally stable configuration of the 既濟, the woman in the second 陰 (六二) suffers a serious wardrobe malfunction: 婦喪其茀，勿逐，七日得。 Her misplaced weave ought not be sought after, but rather simply entrusted to the agency of the fifth 陽 (九五) on the assurance of its return after a seven-day interval has elapsed--like Penelope left to fend with her ravenous suitors (first 陽 and third 陽). So, instead, we trudge forward to the third 陽 (九三), and once again into ever further dire straits, in spite of all expectation of relief: 高宗伐鬼方，三年克之： *when Exalted Ancestor attacked the Demon Territory, it took him three years to conquer it.* And so, a-freshly frustrated, told again that we must continue to hold up at the crossing point into the 坎 (abyss) trigram, we can only hold out hopes for the sweet satisfaction that will surely be ours come the next 陽 iteration in the sequence after this one, come the final center fifth 陽 (九五).

So then finally having made it through the demon breach, and out on past the threshold between the 離 (fire) and 坎 (abyss) trigrams, we must pass through one final fold of the 陰. But this passage is again far from easy-going. Wangbi adds, we find our 有隙之棄舟，而得濟者，有衣裯也： *the escape boat has a rent in it, managing to cross on account of the rag's* we've got to plug it up--and keep on our way in ever shoddier form. Wheels a'lurching, tail a-dripping, weave a-missing, bathed in the unholy blood of demons and halfway a-sunk in our boat-in-smithereens--we nevertheless trudge ahead into the much anticipated fifth 陽 (九五).

But to our already tested dismay, we're yet again denied release. The fifth 陽 cannot but read, to my eye, like something of a tease, a false summit: 東鄰殺牛，不如西鄰之禴祭，實受其福： *The neighbor in the east slaughters an ox, but this falls short of the yue sacrifice of the neighbor in the west, which really provides that one with blessings.* Even here, in the center fifth 陽 of the most centered (with respect to itself) hexagram (63) in the sequence, we are nevertheless *de-centered* from the site wherein the true blessings are to be reaped. In contrast to the reliable, yet nevertheless formidable ox-slaughter practiced to the East, how does the Westernly 禴祭 enact its sacrificial logic? The traditional scholarly parse takes the *yue* sacrifice as a sacrifice of, paradoxically since we're told of its superiority, some meager grains. Shaughnessy and others put forth a different interpretation that dispenses somewhat with the strangeness of the first: namely, that the 禴 refers to the sacrificial blade by which the Zhou would sacrifice war prisoners to the ancestors (Shaughnessy, 137).

Here, rather than opting for one reading or the other, could we not rather wager to read them in convergence? If we grant the surmise that the fifth 陽 in this 既濟 hexagram is in fact de-centered from the site within which the true blessings to come are to be reaped, might this not

point us ahead to 既濟's neighbor to the West, 未濟 (and in particular, its corresponding fifth 陰 yet to come) which marks that final horizon over which the Changes set? Here in the place of the end we had thought we'd been headed for, we're relocated into the end's simulacrum plane (未濟), the corresponding center of which, where the true blessings will finally be reaped, figures in both as something measly, almost negligible, and simultaneously something which for whosoever possesses it, secures a hegemony won through the bloodshed of one's enemies.

Everything the 既濟 tells us about itself is consistent with this spirit. The Commentary on the Judgments puts forward an ominous premonition, 終止則亂，其道窮也： *But if one ends up stopping [here in the 既濟], then chaos will ensue. For its Dao will peter itself out.*<sup>11</sup> The movement of the changes cannot find respite from itself in the 'already-having-crossed' of the 既濟. Try as it might, it seems, even here in that place than which there is none more fitting, it just can't get no-relief from itself no-how. Wang Bi tells us in commentary to the Commentary on the Images, 存不忘亡，既濟不忘未濟也： *He who survives should not forget about the threat of perishing, and one who enjoys a time of Ferrying Complete should not forget about the threat of Ferrying Incomplete.* There's no time to rest our weary heads; no, we've got to get a move on at once! In fact, it's the very head in the line statement on the sixth 陰 (上六) that spells trouble: 濡其首，厲： *this one gets his head wet, which means danger.* The Changes, at the threshold between 既濟 and 未濟, are pulled headfirst into that configuration most flagrantly out of whack with the cookie-cutter resonance attained to in 既濟 *finished-crossing--*之於未濟，則首先犯焉： *as one proceeds into [not yet across], the head is the first to violate the bounds of 既濟： already across.*

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<sup>11</sup> My translation

This visceral sense of being *on edge* within the 既濟 leads us finally out onto the very edge in question, at the border separating the two poles of the dyad, 既濟 and 未濟, the site of the barrier between the one and the other. Or...we might also think of this edge as the site of the barrier between the end (濟 : *crossing*) and itself--between the 既濟, and its own doppelganger which is not but the redoubled aspect of its own (in-)completeness, (un-)savability, (un-)realizability (未-)濟 registered in the form of an objectal supplement of 'not-'. Seng Zhao tells us, 逆之所謂塞，順之所謂通： *what he who goes up against calls a barrier, he who slides along with it calls an opening up and a passing through*. And so it is that we do not stop at or turn back from the bounds of the 既濟 *already crossed*.

There is yet a beyond out past the outer bounds of the *already crossed, yet another obstruction to make open up, to itself open up through*. Here in the nebulous threshold space between 既濟 and 未濟, between the end and its reduplication, out over which we stretch our necks, we cross *beyond* the 既濟 : *already across*. At the site of the border that each represents to the other, the spitting image (既濟) spills over itself into the simulacrum (未濟). But what would it mean to open up through, out across a border not between two independently differentiated (something of an oxymoron) poles of a dyad--but rather a border between the end (既濟) and its own symptom, the end and the spillover beyond the end which marks both its standing in excess of--*and also* its constitutive inadequacy to, its ever *falling short of*--itself. Dwelling on the edge between the two hexagrams 既濟 and 未濟, we're in position now to see that the set {濟} : 既濟，未濟 betrays a fundamental ambivalence with respect to the number of its elements. How many are the 陽-ruled 既濟 : *already across* together with the 陰-ruled 未濟 : *not yet across*? The answer to this question will come down to how, with respect to the 既



濟, the 未濟 counts. Here, the dyad is crossed with itself to yield both a 既濟 dimension of the pair 既濟 / 未濟 as well as a 未既 dimension of the pair 既濟 / 未濟. 既濟 and 未濟 are more than just one--at the very least, irreducibly more than one; this is their 既濟 aspect. And yet 既濟 and 未濟 taken as a pair are nevertheless *at most* not quite yet (fully) two; that is their 未濟 aspect. The set : {濟} of 既濟 , 未濟 can't quite land on either side of having one or two elements without either overshooting the one or falling just short of adding up to two--since in the latter case we have not two fully constituted elements of the set {濟}. But rather we have the 濟 and its symptom, the fox and its tail.

And so accordingly the 未濟, this out-beyond of the 既濟, is *itself* in the very middle between (a) hanging off from the end of the end and yet (b) coming just short of finishing it off. The Judgment on the hexagram 未濟 states that although 無攸利 : *there is nothing at all fitting here*, nevertheless there is a 亨 : *prevalence* to be won. More specifically, we stand to win the prevalence of 小狐汔濟 : *the small fox [that] uses dry conditions to get across*, but which emerges 濡其尾 : *having gotten his tail wet*. The little fox doesn't quite get across without that part of himself, the end that hangs off his end--getting caught. In the Commentary on the Judgment, we're told further that 小狐汔濟 , 未出中也 : *the little fox uses dry conditions to get across, but does not go beyond the middle*<sup>12</sup> and that it correspondingly 不續終也 : [is such that it] *cannot carry on to the end*.

The fox gets stuck in the middle, we must first ask, between what and what else? Somewhat obviously, first of all, the middle between the 陰 and the 陽, as the Commentary on the Judgment tells us itself: 雖不當位 : *although [未濟]'s positions are all out of whack* 剛柔應

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<sup>12</sup> My translation

也 : *the hard and strong and the soft and weak nevertheless cross-resonate*, and 故可濟 : *only thus is crossing made possible*. That is to say, the wavelength at which the field of cross-resonances operates is attuned to and sustained by a powerful multi-fold antagonism. Ziporyn envisions the possibility of this 易經 with a bondage fetish; he tells us that "when harmony is disturbed, it is first-order anti-value. However, this disequilibrium itself can be a value" (Ziporyn 239). So in what sense are things (out-of) whack in the 未濟? It's out of whack in exactly all of the ways the 既濟 is "in the whack," so to speak. Whereas 既濟 putatively corresponds with its ideally apportioned position—whereas the back-and-forth between 陰 and 陽 proceeded, in 既濟, with its best foot forward (陽), here in 未濟 it walks with a heavy limp, its better unbroken foot (陽) catching its weak broken foot (陰) in every stride, after every successive step once again on the brink of collapse. Within the 未濟, three broken 陰 lines awkwardly stationed in the three prototypically 陽 positions 1, 3, and 5; three unbroken 陽 lines each one likewise aligned into the three prototypically 陰 positions 2, 4, and 6.

The two center spots, 2 and 5, within the two constitutive trigrams--坎 (abyss) beneath and 離 (fire) above--are accordingly occupied again by flagrant misfits, a 陽 on bottom and 陰 on top; thus a 陽-ruled (坎) trigram is grounded in, externalized through a 陰-ruled trigram (坎). And this transition, within the 未濟, between a 陽-ruled and a 陰-ruled trigram in turn represents the arch-transition of the 既濟 / 未濟 hexagram dyad, which likewise makes the disadvantageous transition from a 陽-ruled hexagram into a 陰-ruled hexagram. It would have been better, surely, to have set out first from within the dampish pent-up womb of the 陰, growing upward and outward into the externality of the subsequent 陽 phase. But instead, both (a) the 未濟 *qua* dyad

of 坎 (abyss) and 離 (fire) trigrams as well as (b) the 既濟 / 未濟 hexagram dyad itself (and by extension the whole sequence of 64 Changes) end with a 陰-ruled -gram.

There isn't a single dimension of the *yi*(易)-ometry of the 未濟, that isn't aslant of how it ought to be. And yet there is an oblique harmony that stands to be won, commensurate with the 亨 : *prevalence*, which takes hold of this 濟 : *end* completely out of whack with, gone awry of--itself. And now perhaps we're in position to discern another interrelated shade of this 中 : *middle* which represents the fox's *unsurpassable* limit. The fox also gets stuck, let us imagine, in the middle between the two aforementioned aspects of the 未濟, the two modalities in which it might count with respect to the 既濟, stuck, like its own tail, between (a) hanging off of the end (of 既濟) and (b) that on account of which it falls ever short of getting all the way across. The fox wins its 亨 : *prevalence* not only in the in-between crossfire of the 陰 and 陽 which even in this fully topsy-turvey arrangement, this most dire of straights, cannot *but* get off on each other--but also in the in-between of these two compossible modalities of counting the 未濟 with respect to the set {濟} : 既濟 , 未濟--as (a) excess and as (b) lack.<sup>13</sup> The first 陰 (初六) repeats the Judgment's pronouncement verbatim: the fox, we can well enough presume from the repetition of the characters, 濡其尾 : *gets his tail wet*. But the Commentary on the Images elaborates, 亦不知極也 : *and thus is his not-knowing brought to the limit*.<sup>14</sup> As we've already seen, the fox's tail

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<sup>13</sup> From this, we can perhaps extend the analogy between the 未濟 and the 既濟 / 未濟 abyss itself in at least one other respect: if we read the trigrams through their *shuogua* (說卦) parses, the 未濟 transition from the 坎 (abyss) to the 離 (fire) trigram repeats, somewhat sketchily and only with regard to certain contours, the transition between 既濟 and 未濟: where 既濟 presented a kind of miserable trepidation toward-the-edge, 坎 is, 其於人也 : *with respect to people*, like the ones who 為加憂 , 為心病 , 為耳痛 : *are increasingly anxious, sick in the heart, the ones with earaches*. 離, on the other hand, bears out these two very compossible modalities in which the 未濟 counts with respect to the 既濟--namely, excess and lack: we're told, again that with respect to people, 離 is like the ones that 為大腹 : *have big bellies*, protruding--and just like the fox in the 未濟, stuck up in the middle. But on the contrary, 其於木也 : *in respect to trees*, 離 is like the ones that 為科上槁 : *the hollow ones with tops withered*, empty on the inside and cut short on the top.

<sup>14</sup> My translation. Alt. Lynn: "for he does not know that he has reached its limits."

stands in for the place of the 未濟 in the broader sequence of 64 hexagrams. So it stands to reason that it is not only the fox, but also the 易經 itself standing at the limit of not-knowing in its (first line within the) very last hexagram, 未濟. The fox's tail, and by extension the 未濟 in the sequence of 64, betokens the undigestible, unsurpassable limit to getting completely across (既濟).

And as Wangbi points out, just as the sixth 陰 of the 既濟 points ahead to the first 陰 of the 未濟 (既濟道窮，則之於未濟), the opening of the 未濟 comes immediately to bear on the last line of the 既濟, comes immediately *on the tails of the head* we had stuck out over the edge: 未濟之始，始於既濟之上六也： *Ferrying Incomplete begins in such a way that it starts where Ferrying Complete [Hexagram 63] leaves off with Top Yin.* The wet head in 63 and the wet tail in 64 stand in mutual regard for one another. Or we might think, the same 陰, split between itself, stands in regard to precisely itself as split from within. The 既濟 and the 未濟 are resultantly conjoined by this common 陰 (which is not itself self-identical, but rather split between heads and tails). It is that by which which they meet on a single curved plane. The two elements (既濟, 未濟) in the set {濟}, are bound together not at the hip, but rather ass to mouth, strung together by these two inverted hangings off from the end of the former and the beginning of the latter. Thus, Wang Bi continues, the last 陰 in 63, though 濡其首猶不反： *it gets its head wet, still it does not turn back.* The 既濟 does not, or could not retreat back into itself; rather, the destiny of this yin resides precisely in the inverted, heads-to-tails jointure it facilitates, by way of its peculiar de-centerment from itself, between the end--既濟 and the internal limit which disrupts the 既濟's very self-transparency, the limit of its non-knowing (不知之極) (未濟) which prevents the end from ending (不可以濟者也).

We'll recall that the first 陽 in the 既濟 encompassed both a wetting of tail and a dragging of wheels. Here now, in the second 陽 (九二) of the 未濟, the aspect among these gone as-of-yet un-presented in 未濟's first 陰, is here given a full line to itself--曳其輪 : *this one drags his wheels*. Thus, the first 陰 together with this second 陽 repeats, stretched out over two lines, the logic encompassed fully within the 既濟's single first 陽. This further lays bare a shoddy symmetry between the 既濟 and 未濟, a single {濟}, more than one and less than two, as if reflected back and forth across a bent mirror. Wangbi comments on the second 陽 saying, 靖難在正，而不違中 : *[the way to] deal with calamity lies in an un-waveringness that does not betray the middle*. We see here again rather conspicuously: that with respect to which we must not waver is a measure fixed not to one-side or the-other, but which is precisely rather the immeasurable quantum of the in-between, the middle again between both 陰 and 陽, but also between the two compossible quantitational modalities in which the 未濟 comes to bear on the 既濟--as (a) excess and as (b) lack.

And the third 陰 follows on the heels of this very un-wavering affixation to ambivalence: 未濟，征凶，利涉大川 : *Not Yet Across is such that to set out to do something here would mean misfortune, but it is fitting to cross the great river*. Here we're told, in the line judgment, that despite the sprawling calamity which this 陰 faces in a 陽 spot, within which so much as setting out would surely mean downfall, nevertheless, an auspicious current, causally irreducible to any of the concrete specs of the configuration, nevertheless carries us ever onward. Or perhaps we might think, since this third 陰, as Wangbi comments, 載二而行 : *rides atop the second 陽*, which wavered not from the in-between, the crossing of the great river is made in keeping with

the second 陽's very same un-waveringness from the immeasurable medial axis of the 正而不違中.

So we cross over the gulf between trigrams once again--but fittingly the conditions of our crossing have been somewhat inverted. We cross not from 陽 to 陰, but from 陰 to 陽, not from 離 : *fire* to 坎 : *abyss* but rather in the opposite direction, from 坎 : *abyss* to 離 : *fire*. And due to the lag introduced by the warped repetition of the 既濟's first 陽 over the course of 未濟's first 陰 and second 陽 together, we encounter the demon realm now on the other side of the trigram gulf: 震用伐鬼方，三年有賞于大國 : *as a burst of thunder, this one attacks the Demon Territory, for which after three years he is rewarded with a large state*. The 既濟 transition from third 陽 to fourth 陰 had entailed a three-year campaign, from whose bloody shores we only just narrowly managed to take flight into our shoddy, leaking escape vessel the ruptures within which we've got only just enough cloth to plug up for long enough to make it across to the other shore.

But here in the upside-down order of the 未濟, crossing from third 陰 to fourth 陽, events take a different turn. Whereas the trigram cross in the 既濟 was made only with great effort despite the rent in our craft, here we do not so much as even set out (征凶), and yet nevertheless we encounter conditions beneficial to our crossing (利涉大川). And then rather than fleeing from the demon realm into the trigram gulf, here now we go ashore on the other side, and immediately begin cutting our way through demons. However, here in the fourth 陽 of 未濟, we wield a mighty new weapon: with what power does the quake 「震」 in the line-judgment 震用伐鬼方 endow us? We need only look to what the 震 hexagram says about itself. The judgment on 震 : *quake* (51), which itself consists of two 震 trigrams, reads that 震來虩虩，笑言啞啞 : *When*

*Quake comes, they shake with terror and afterward whoop it up with laughter and babble.*<sup>15</sup> The 震 : *quake* endows fourth 陽 with nothing less than the power to induce the coming of the end, to announce the comic happy ending fifth 陰 (六五), over just the next horizon.

We are swept up in fits of laughter and slips of dribble from baby's babble into this misfit end to end all misfits--a 陰 in a 陽 position surrounded on either side by two 陽s in a hexagram in which there is no stable foothold, out above or beyond the out-of-wack, from which to take respite from it. Things have really never looked worse, and yet we nevertheless secure this most fortuitous triumph: 貞吉，无悔，君子之光，有孚，吉： *Constant, auspicious! Free of regret, the noble one's radiance, it is that what inspires confidence...ah, now that's auspicious!*<sup>16</sup> Is this not the very height of inanity? What rule could possibly provide an explanation for this paroxysm of stupid positivity?

The satisfaction in the comic ending of the 未濟's fifth 陰 "thrives on things that do not exactly add up...thrives on these discrepancies as a source of pleasure rather than pain" (Zupancic 132). It does not set right or reverse the out-of-wack, the misfortune, the calamity; but rather pushes this very activity born of antagonism, this very current that has swept us along through the Changes, through into this end of ends, face to face with its own internal

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<sup>15</sup> From this, we can perhaps extend the analogy between the 未濟 and the 既濟 / 未濟 abyss itself in at least one other respect: if we read the trigrams through their *shuogua* (說卦) parses, the 未濟 transition from the 坎 (abyss) to the 離 (fire) trigram repeats, somewhat sketchily and only with regard to certain contours, the transition between 既濟 and 未濟: where 既濟 presented a kind of miserable trepidation toward-the-edge, 坎 is, 其於人也 : *with respect to people*, like the ones who 為加憂，為心病，為耳痛 : *are increasingly anxious, sick in the heart, the ones with earaches*. 離, on the other hand, bears out these two very compossible modalities in which the 未濟 counts with respect to the 既濟--namely, excess and lack: we're told, again that with respect to people, 離 is like the ones that 為大腹 : *have big bellies*, protruding--and just like the fox in the 未濟, stuck up in the middle. But on the contrary, 其於木也 : *in respect to trees*, 離 is like the ones that 為科上槁 : *the hollow ones with tops withered*, empty on the inside and cut short on the top.

<sup>16</sup> My translation. alt Lynn: "Constancy results in good fortune, and thus this one avoids regret. The glory of the noble man is due to the sincerity he has, which brings good fortune."

limit. The end of the Changes in 未濟 is rather "perfectly in line with" every last snag and smidgen of joyful rancor in every last line in every last hexagram; and what's more, as we can see here in the epicenter of the end of it all, the end is-was-will be coming about in these very multifold of mishaps.

Might we not feel disappointment that this is how it has all got to end? This sense of coming up short in the end must be broken through by the retrospective gaze that sees, looking back, the coming about of the end in this shimmering field alight with the fragile radiance of the noble one (君子) which resides in the fifth 陰 of 未濟. The 陰-radiance of the end in 未濟 is like a fire dependent on the fuel to which it must cling (Ziporyn 233). The end is not but the reticulating trace of being-toward-the-end which unfurls backward from the post-end afterglow in which we now bathe, an end which we now see had always been coming. In this same vein, Wangbi tells us, the fifth 陰--付與於能，而不自役：*entrusts it to the capable, and does not itself take charge.*<sup>17</sup> The end does not put an end to the motion that brought us all along into it, but rather opens up facing backwards, to the the end always-already coming.

So just like that, "all things enlinked, enlaced and enamored" in the backwards-facing afterglow of the end (Nietzsche, 954). And the final sixth 陽 (上九) rides on the heels of the 有孚's rollicking in from fifth 陰, 于飲酒：*and so drinks wine*; but it figures that this very post-end (sixth line) of the post-end (未濟) doesn't know when to stop, and so 濡其首，有孚失是：*wets his head, loses his cool*. Nevertheless, this drinking to the point simultaneously of excess and oblivion is but an extension of the ending's joy. So rich is the joy which this end exacts, "this irrepressible, blessed joy," that it thirsts even for "woe" and "failures"--"for failures, longs all

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<sup>17</sup> My translation. Slightly altered from Lynn's alt: "he entrusts responsibility to the capable and does not attempt to take charge of everything himself."



eternal joy" (Nietzsche, Ibid.) And so we fall literally heads over tails past every imaginable standard of apposite sobriety: 未濟之極，則反於既濟： *here at the limit of 'not yet across' there is then a turning back into already across.* The 既濟 and the 未濟 enchain together on a single curved surface, not only mouth to ass, but now also ass to mouth. The limit of the 未濟 resides precisely in this turnabout, in the identity of the sixth 陽 of 未濟 and the first 陽 of 既濟, in the "ring's will" that "resides in it" (Nietzsche, *ibid.*) Chengyi tells us further that 未濟則無極而自濟之理： *The Incomplete is then without a limit, and thus the spontaneous coursing(s) of completion.*<sup>18</sup> The 既濟 and the 未濟 locked together, and at once the 既濟 locked together in embrace with its own internal limit, mouth to ass, ass to mouth--a bent ring turned about precisely by the rift in its very self-coincidence--the 'already' of the coming of the end never to win out over its 'not-yet-', the 'not-yet' ever unrelentingly frustrating and *only thereby bringing about--the coming of the end.*

### III

Just such an end is announced in the *xicizhuan's* declaration that 易窮則變，變則通，通則久。 The Lynn translation gives this somewhat clumsy dialectical-sounding parse (everything that is merely stipulated, that isn't explicitly in the Chinese, I've bracketed):

[As for] *change*, when [one process of] *it reaches its limit*, [a] *change* [from one state to another] *happens*. [As such,] *change* [achieves free] *flow(s)*, and [with] *this* [free] *flow*, [it lasts] *forever*.'

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<sup>18</sup> My Translation.

Take out the brackets, substitute '[the] Changes' for 'Change' as a parse on 易 to distinguish it from 變, and with a little added sparkle, we get this:

*'When the Changes reaches its limit, change happens. Change flows, and [just] this flow, forever.'*

What would it mean to lay ourselves on the line for such an end? We would have ourselves to come to course within this unfolding and re-unfolding--opening into the cracks and crevices of each and every straight of the sequence, through the shifting landscapes of antagono-erotic configurations; sometimes crooked, sometimes straight; sometimes fortune (吉) sometimes unfortunate (凶); sometimes contracting (屈), like the measuring worm (尺蠖)--so as to better stretch itself out (信), sometimes stretching out (信) right before contracting right back up in, like a great scaly yawn before the serpent's slumber (龍蛇之蟄).

How does the 既濟 / 未濟 dyad bring about the completion of the 易?<sup>19</sup> The telos of the sequence cannot be the place where it was going to have stopped. So let us instead speak of a telos which does not foretell (but rather frustrates) the coming satisfaction of any such an external purpose, which does not foretell the intervention from the outside of a continuity in which all shall be bound together, unified beneath the underhanded heaviness of some divine purpose. The continuity (always already) inaugurated by that mind (心) that is none other than productive compossibility (理)--operates at the level of the discontinuities themselves. Ziporyn tells us in the Zhuxi essay, "the only telos is that of the single unconscious (but also secondarily

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<sup>19</sup> See Scholium C.

but indispensably multi-conscious) process of production," each stage of production within which it reaps a "completion," an "unconscious self-satisfaction" (27).

In this way, we can begin to rethink the fragile unity in difference of process and telos. Can then this inner telos unburdened from any 心 that is other than a 理 be fulfilled? And if so, how? Can there ever come an end to all of this, an end to such an 'all' as this? Here, we can call upon an idea of Gregor Modor's (the basic template of which is his teacher's, Mladen Dolar): namely, the end comes "only when we have already bathed ourselves in the ether of the organic totality which hides in its ultimate fruit only the path back to its renewed growth and development" (Modor 80). What does this amount to? The telos is fulfilled in understanding telos as the (ever again freshly laid) path of its fulfillment--not the result revealed only in the end, but the entire path, drawn up by each and every individual completion. He who follows the bent of this course, 知周乎萬物，而道濟天下，故不過： *his knowledge rounds the circuit through all things, and his course brings everything under heaven to completion, therein not exceeding 'the everything'*.<sup>20</sup> The whole greater field within which antagonisms, competing tensions, etc. play out--gives rise to an unbounded mobile teleologic. This is a teleologic which "ends" by reversing its course--here, in the end, having discharged the sequence's potential energy, this force now floats free unyoked from any transcendental supplementary, free to liberate future possibilities of actualization--free now to generate new antagonisms, new (re-)orientations, new combinations--new changes. As Malabou puts it, this mobile "structure of

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<sup>20</sup> My translation, Lynn's alt: *As [a sage's] knowledge is complete in respect to the myriad things and as his Dao brings help to all under Heaven, he commits no transgression. Such a one extends himself in all directions yet does not allow himself to be swept away.*

competing tensions" is not the "work of individual consciousness," and is no longer dependent "on a single center" (Malabou, 185).

And recast under the retro-activated shimmering of the 濟濟 / 未濟 dyad, every nexus within the sequence ever and ever again shines anew as this combination-production machine, sparked by the establishment of ever new contact points, repeats and ever repeats again its failure to congeal once and for all in one shape or another. The movement of this structure, "in reciprocal action with itself," as Hegel puts it, is "itself double--and a first is always a second also" (Greater Logic, 752). It is only by way of "the contingent excess of its repetition" that it brings about its shoddy ever-anew degenerate and regenerate, regenerate and degenerate "closure" (Zizek 222). And in the course of this re-duplicated failure to bring its end about, just "beginnings and finishes" such that "no finish is possible" (Ziporyn 242).

What then *does* it mean that 易窮則變, that the Changes come to an end, and then change changes / changes change? Another crucial moment in the *xicizhuan* has this:

非天下之至變，其孰能與於此。易无思也，无為也，寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故  
: *The Changes has to be the thing most capable of change in the world, for what else could possibly be up to this! The Changes is without consciousness and is without deliberate action. Being utterly still, it does not initiate movement, but when stimulated it is commensurate with all the causes for everything that happens in the world.*

Just the Changes (易), taken on its own, in all its variegated teleological swervature, is at once altogether still and motionless, out of time--and yet is at once, in its givenness to being stimulated into response, *commensurate with the teloi* of all things under heaven. This is an infinity already at work, a telos which is commensurate to the unguided-from-beyond workings out of the teloi of the ten-thousand things under heaven 萬物--from and within every finite

configuration. Mao puts this nicely--矛盾和鬥爭是普遍的、絕對的，但是解決矛盾的方法，即鬥爭的形式，則因矛盾的性質不同而不相同：*Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions.*

But in contrast to any picture within which an end is imagined which would cancel out the difference of antagonism, here there will be no deliverance, once and for all, no time-ending, change-halting παρουσία which would bring about the satisfaction of God's external purpose, the inauguration of His continuity. Rather, the very failure to realize any purpose so conceived, the infinite frustration of this desire to satisfaction--all of the deadlocks and impasses and misfirings, all of this is on the contrary reflected in upon itself and is in turn re-wired into a roundabout circuit to satisfaction. It's only thus that we, to borrow a turn of phrase from Laozi 18--復歸於無極：*return back into the limitless*. To come to an end is here just to return to course with the endless, headless drive which subtends every nexus in the sequence. The place of the end turns up empty in the end--or as Laozi again tells us, 虛而不屈、動而愈出：*empty, but without giving in--the more it moves, the more it comes*. The end that can never come is, precisely in its impotence to deliver itself up, always *coming*, can't stop itself from keeping on coming.

But here the Changes seem to exhibit a pseudo-capitalist logic--namely that by which the pressure of antagonism or resistance only amplifies the movement of capital--that we might think shouldn't sit well together with a certain Maoist logic: 我們是戰爭消滅論者，我們是不要戰爭的；但是只能經過戰爭去消滅戰爭：*We are advocates of the abolition of war--we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war*. Is this not the fundamental law of dialectics, that 物極必反：*everything reverses at the point of its limit*? Pushing a thing to its limit brings

about its abolishment *vis-a-vis* reversal--could such a principle be thought to tolerate an exception? Does the Changes (易), when pushed to its end, change? If so, does this change of the Changes only deliver up more change? Or are we to think that a change occurs somehow with respect to the very state of change itself?

If we can read the Changes against Zizek's pronouncement that this so-called "traditional pre-modern Wisdom" is inadequate to the "unique circularity of the dialectical process"--if the Changes is recast (or at least in principle re-castable) under the axis of such a pure differential contradiction as opposed to an opposition between 陰 and 陽 couched in *yang* 陽-ist propoganda--then we no longer *need* to bring it to an end. And what's more--not only *need* we not. We *cannot* even conceive of the overcoming of this pure differential contradiction since it is the very source of our capacity for overcoming.

The perspicacious reader will sense a biting irony in this: on the one hand, we can no longer conceive of bringing about an end to Change; but in this recognition of the impossibility of the putting of an end to it, it is brought to the inevitable conclusion implicit from the start. History reimagined through the prism of this emptied out teleology which has "sublated the illusory show of externality," this coming to an end in the the endless--is nevertheless a conception of the end of history (Hegel 747).

Here we tread upon a dangerous line indeed. The theoretical-political landscape of the 21st century is littered with post-human, meta-human, post-capitalist, post-gender fantasmatic reifications of, and *ipso facto* failures of true fidelity to, just this very project of coming to end in the endless--perhaps, one might think, this very paper, having come around to its own end,

included. This pure differential contradiction has a precious knack of ever eluding, by its very principle, any figuration oriented to it *qua terminus*.

I don't mean to suggest that the Zizekian strawdog of the 易經 is altogether inaccurate. This is probably in large part consistent with the conscious discourse which the tradition, in certain of its strains, has tended to propagate (or, what amounts to the same, which the 易經 has tended to propagate, in and through the tradition, about itself). But, as Munro tells us with an admirably sober tone, "it is well to distinguish the conscious philosophical legacy from the unconscious one" (Munro, 162). What if we were to break with the party-line stance toward the 易經--to open ourselves into the trace of this subterranean current of joy which flows beneath the steady feet of the petit bourgeoisie 易經? I also don't mean to suggest that this unconscious ironical supplement, this roundabout satisfaction, is the truth of the Changes, as *opposed* to the perhaps more officially accepted ideological picture in which difference remains enchained within the 陽's hegemonic gravity. But nevertheless, if indeed we *can* discern a dynamic of pure antagonism, difference, etc. in the 易經--this cannot (can't it?) be a matter of strict indifference to the ideological position in the cracks of which it stands to be discerned. And just as these cracks are bent to the pre-existing lineaments of the surface of this ideological position, just so as the *xicizhuan* has it, 「必有之用極，而無之功顯。」 --"it is only when the functioning of being is pushed to its limit that the accomplishments of non-being shine forth." Or as Wang Bi puts it, 「夫無不可以無明，必因於有。」 --non-being cannot be illuminated strictly by way of non-being *alone*, but must rather follow from--be followed within being itself.

All I mean to suggest is that there is a peculiar ambivalence in the 易經 *qua* object, which is not merely subjective (as in, a difference which registers merely in how it appears to

subject(s))--but rather an objective ambivalence--an ambivalence in the very objective status of the Changes. Once we adjust our vision to these parameters, much of what can only have appeared before as calamity cannot but begin to dawn under a new aspect--perhaps somewhat like a joke within which various portentous details in the set-up begin to shine suffused with a proclivity to reversal. In this shift, what it *is* that shifts is not the calamitousness of events per se.

Rather, we're capable of undergoing an affective shift (affected in motion) with respect to the site of calamity itself; where before it can only have meant pain and ruin, the very same is now the site of the production of a joyous comedic surplus which is, and here we must turn the speculative wrench, not merely a strictly *affective* complement; my contention, on the contrary, is that the joyous surplus produced (or as I hope to have shown here, at minimum *producible*) in the ambivalence around the site of calamity has a bearing on what the 易 is in itself, and on the energetic apparatus by which the Changes are born out. Circumambulating and re-circumambulating this site of calamity, we're in position to discern the subterranean energetics of an infinity born from pure antagonism, unveil the monism of the 無一以待之 : *there not being any one with which to proceed*—from within this *prima facie* static and immovable thing itself, the 易經, the sequence of 64 hexagrams which exhausts the finite combinatory of 陰 and 陽. This is such that it is, like a Rodin sculpture that springs into motion as the gaze drifts along its circumference, at once totally stationary and yet nevertheless comprehensive of a continuum of movement that breaks forth from the rift that seems to wrench the object out from itself from within its very self of selves.

Once more, we'll recall the *xicizhuan's* formulation: 寂然不動，感而遂通天下之故：  
*Being utterly still, it does not initiate movement, but when stimulated is commensurate with all*



*the causes for everything that happens in the world.* Which means that the 易經, even if fully em-plained within the ideological coordinates of some 陽-ist re吉m, ends up reaping a satisfaction in excess to this very party-line stance. The motion set about by the introduction of this surplus is effected not by eliminating, but by reveling in--the fetters. Ziporyn tells us that this "possibility for turnaround," would "seem to be related to the unpredictable judgments of the lines in the hexagrams, which often come in the wrong place and time...and yet are judged to be auspicious" (Ziporyn 239).

So when the 易經 finally comes around to the end, we can see clearly as day how it must have been needing to get off all along. It's as if the 易經, which had been set to finally lay itself down over its own notional imprint in the 既濟, can't really quite *get there* unless it displaces itself minimally from the place of the projected end in which all will be, it is imagined, as it ought to be. This is the place where the "loose-end surplus," the heads-and-the-tails which conjoins the two *nearly* symmetrical poles of the 既濟 / 未濟 dyad, starts to function as "that which allows the comic movement to move on, to continue (in what might be an unexpected direction)" (Zupancic 144).

This moment in the end is, perhaps, exemplary. But the truth of the end's unconscious satisfaction can be read back into each and every junction in the sequence. Just as "comic satisfaction" thrive[s] on things that do not exactly add up," the 易經 stands to be read back again from the top, with an eye now to this joyful satisfaction that lives in and through--all the seemingly arbitrary or meaningless, often totally unexpected excesses; the inopportunistly timed pleasures, the structurally inexplicable sufferings. All this that will seem on first pass to

disqualify the 易經's claims to systematic unity or transparency--all of it seen to be suffused, now and again, with the shifting patchwork circuitry of a subterranean satisfaction.

This shift ought to be let to come to bear on what it means, or could so much as possibly mean, to think the 易經 through to its end. To those of which there would surely be some who would sharply rebuke the thought of even the mere possibility of the interconnection or interpenetrability between the 易經 and this sort of Hegelian/Lacanian teasery, I would say this: Implicit in any charge of the appropriateness or inappropriateness of drawing such a connection is some nested standard for the bounds within which the 易經 ought to be considered alone. But to presume that the horizons which the 易經 encompasses in the span of its self-relation (感而遂通天下之故) are somehow set in Ancient China, or anywhere, anytime else for that matter, is to act against the spirit in which it speaks of itself (in the *xicizhuan*): 生生之謂易 : *in its capacity to produce and reproduce we call it 'change'*. We can perhaps think here of Benjamin's concept of a translation the objective of which is not "fidelity to the original." Translation, we might think with Benjamin, is not a project to approximate or restore the unity of "the broken vessel," but is rather the "very act of" the vessel's "breaking," which is at once its "opening to its restoration" (Zizek 334). Let's let the Changes change then, let the 易經 into this strange twenty-first century theoretical light, to uncover, to construct and dismantle and rewire again--all in the very same gesture, the 易's as-of-yet un-actualized erogenous reticulum.

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