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**Research On**

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Changing Perspectives Between Chinese Landscape Painting
Crafted Over a Decade: An Interview with Shi Deliang
Pranayama-Mantra: Oxygen of Life

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**Empowering Research**

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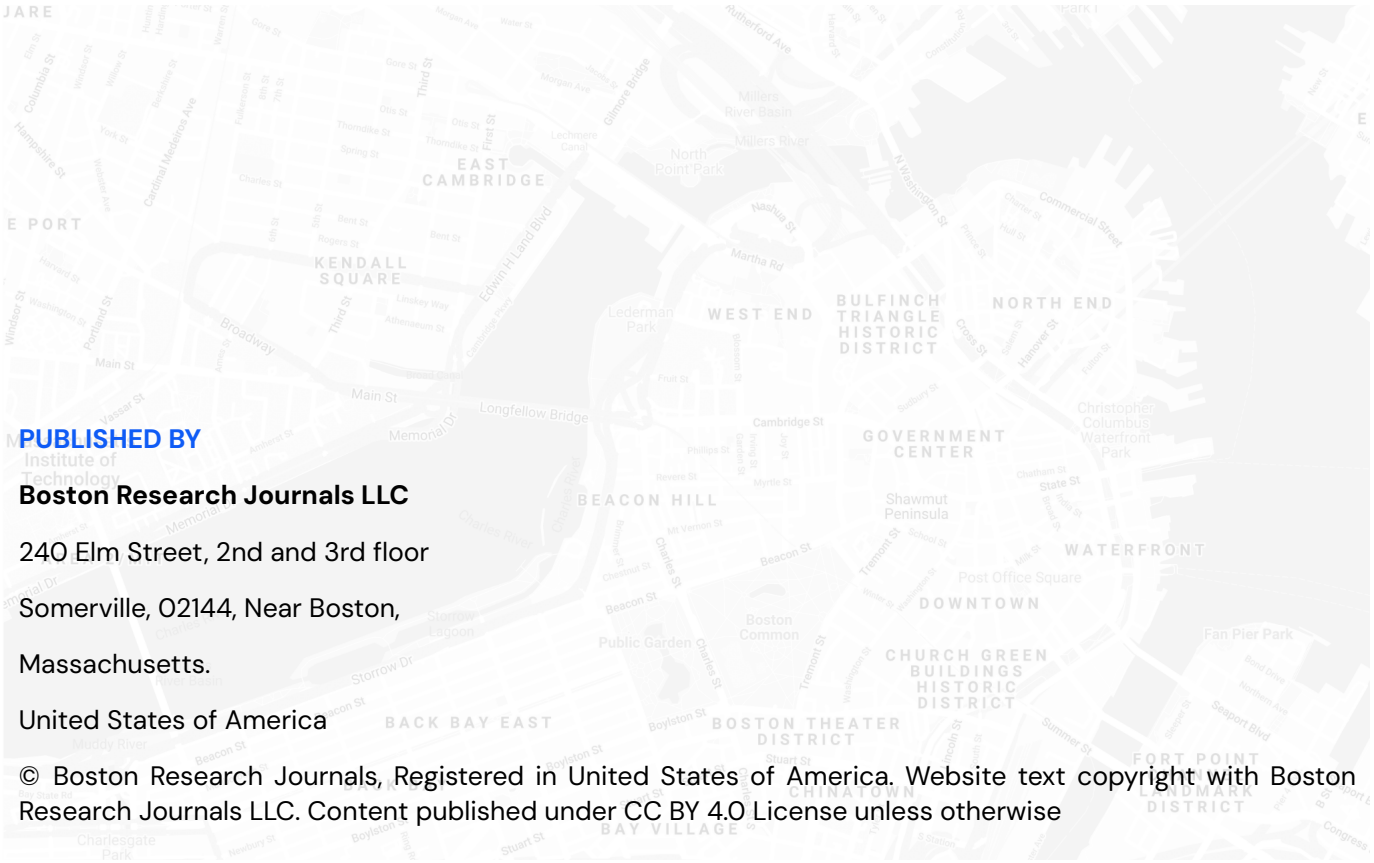



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Boston Research Journals

RESEARCH ARTICLE BY BOSTON RESEARCH JOURNALS, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

OPEN ACCESS

# A Comparative Analysis of Individuality in the Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Rajneesh

*Dr. Aravind Babu Chilukuri*[δ]

## ABSTRACT

*The concept of individuality, situated at the interval of philosophy, psychology, and education, functions as a transformative path toward existential freedom and inner fulfillment. This paper compares two profound visionaries—Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American transcendentalist, and Rajneesh (Osho), the Indian mystic—who each highlighted the importance of individuality as a vibrant force for personal growth. Through close textual analysis, this study validates that cultivating individuality enriches emotional resilience, critical thinking, and inner clarity. Both proponents rejected conformity and rigid dogma, advocating for experiential self-guided growth. Their insights offer a commanding, scientifically informed, and human-centered approach to holistic transformation in contemporary educational and developmental structures.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of individuality has been integral to the evolution of human thought and development. Individuals who embody true individuality transcend societal influences, rejecting doctrines, ideologies, and external circumstances that hinder personal growth. This study compares two luminaries—Ralph Waldo Emerson, an American transcendentalist, and Rajneesh (Osho), an Indian mystic—whose ideas on individuality provide unique philosophical perspectives.

Emerson (1841) writes, "Is the acorn better than the oak? Which is its fullness and completion?" This metaphor suggests the importance of standing firm in one's truth despite external challenges. Similarly, Rajneesh (1978) asserts, "A rose flower is a rose flower; there is no question of its being something else," highlighting the inherent nature of beings and the destructive nature of imitation.

Emerson and Rajneesh emphasize the need for individuals to live authentically, embrace the present moment, and confront adversity without succumbing to external pressures. Their ideas provide rich insights into the potential for human transformation and the enhancement of emotional and intellectual resilience through the cultivation of individuality.

This paper explores how Emerson's transcendentalism and Rajneesh's mysticism offer parallel yet culturally distinct pathways to cultivating individuality as a means for psychological resilience and educational reform.

Philosophical Roots of Individuality explores the foundational ideas behind personal uniqueness through both Western and Eastern lenses. Emerson's transcendental idealism emphasizes self-reliance, intuition, and inner divinity, advocating for moral independence and authenticity. In contrast, Rajneesh's mystical existentialism critiques societal impositions and promotes meditation and awareness as means to uncover the true self.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of individuality has been explored across various domains, from philosophy to psychology and education. Philosophically, thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre both highlight individual autonomy as central to human existence. Nietzsche (1886) challenged conventional morality, urging individuals to create their own values beyond societal norms. Similarly, Sartre (1943) emphasized radical freedom and personal responsibility, asserting that individuals must define their own essence through authentic choices. Both thinkers reject external authority in favor of self-determined identity.

Emerson, in his seminal work Self-Reliance, focused on the inherent value of self-trust and individual expression. He argued that society's norms and expectations stifle human potential, and only through self-reliance can individuals achieve true freedom.

Beyond Emerson and Rajneesh, Western psychological and philosophical discourses have contributed substantially to the idea of individuality. The pursuit of self-actualization is addressed by several influential thinkers across psychological, philosophical, and cultural traditions.

Carl Rogers (1961) conceptualized self-actualization as an innate human tendency toward growth and fulfillment, which thrives in environments that are accepting and supportive of individual exploration. In contrast, Michel Foucault (1975) critically examined how institutions such as schools and prisons influence identity formation through mechanisms of control and surveillance, producing what he termed "docile bodies." Martha Nussbaum (2011), through her Capabilities Approach, emphasized that genuine personal development requires environments that foster emotional, educational, and social freedoms.

Complementing these Western perspectives, Eastern philosophies, particularly as interpreted by Rajneesh, underscore the importance of meditative inquiry, inner silence, and present-moment awareness as essential pathways to realizing one's individuality.

Rajneesh (Osho), similarly, critiqued the rigid systems of thought imposed by societal structures, including religion and education. His emphasis was on achieving self-realization through meditation, inner awareness, and the rejection of external ideologies. While Emerson's focus was on moral independence, Rajneesh's teachings leaned more toward existential awareness and spiritual awakening. Both thinkers, however, shared a common goal: to empower individuals to reclaim their inner autonomy and authenticity.

Emerson's essay Self-Reliance (1837) advocates for a life of independence, self-trust, and nonconformity, asserting that authenticity is central to personal growth. He views individuality as a moral and creative necessity for both personal and collective growth. Rajneesh's teachings, on the other hand, critique societal conditioning and advocate for inner rebellion and meditative awareness. Rajneesh (1978) contends that true morality arises spontaneously from heightened awareness rather than adherence to moral codes.

Both luminaries agree on the importance of living in the present moment. Rajneesh (1975) emphasizes that the mind, shaped by past experiences, obscures the present, whereas Emerson (1836) challenges individuals to embrace the present, asserting, "Why should we hold only the dead corpse and leave out all the reality?"

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a comparative textual analysis of the works of Emerson and Rajneesh. By analyzing their writings, the study seeks to elucidate how each thinker conceptualizes individuality and its role in personal and societal transformation. Additionally, a practical intervention was conducted with 40 undergraduate students at an engineering college in Hyderabad to assess the impact of individuality-building practices derived from Emerson and Rajneesh's philosophies. The program spanned four phases and incorporated breathing techniques, visualizations, affirmations, and meditative introspection. Emotional and behavioral parameters—peace, calmness, relaxation, responsibility, and courage—were measured before and after the intervention.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the outcomes of a practical intervention conducted with 40 undergraduate students from an engineering college in Hyderabad. The intervention aimed to evaluate the impact of individuality-building practices, derived from the philosophies of Emerson and Rajneesh, on five emotional and behavioral parameters: peace, calmness, relaxation, responsibility, and courage.

Participants engaged in a structured experiential program over four phases involving breathing techniques, visualizations, affirmations, and meditative introspection. Initial observations during Phase 1 revealed symptoms such as restlessness, fear, aggression, and low responsibility levels. By Phase 4, however, a clear enhancement was recorded across all selected metrics.

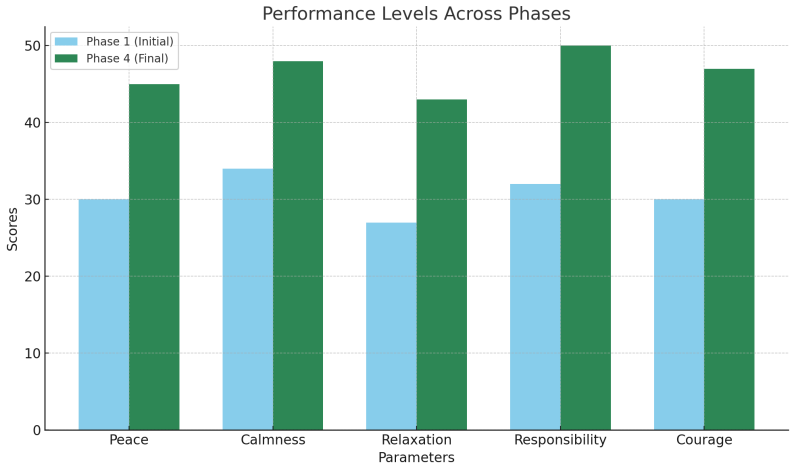


Fig 1: Performance Levels across Phases: A comparison of participant scores on five key emotional and behavioral parameters between Phase 1 (Initial) and Phase 4 (Final).

As seen in Figure 1, scores for each parameter increased significantly:

1. Peace increased from a baseline value of 30 to 45, indicating a significant enhancement in inner tranquility.
2. Calmness showed a rise from 34 to 48, reflecting a notable improvement in emotional stability.
3. Relaxation improved from 27 to 43, suggesting a substantial reduction in psychological tension.
4. Responsibility advanced from 32 to 50, marking a considerable growth in personal accountability and ownership.
5. Courage progressed from 30 to 47, denoting a strengthened ability to face challenges with confidence and resilience

## V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research addresses a pivotal gap in the intersection of philosophical insight and educational practice by examining how the philosophies of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Rajneesh (Osho) can influence the development of individuality in learners. In the current educational climate—where conformity, credentialism, and standardization often dominate—this study proposes an alternative, experiential model rooted in self-exploration, self-trust, and intuitive growth.

By comparing Emerson's transcendentalist views with Osho's existential and meditative framework, the research repositions individuality not as a luxury, but as a foundational element of personal and societal evolution. The inclusion of a practical intervention with higher education students further extends the study's impact, translating abstract philosophies into real-world applications and measurable outcomes.

The study's significance also lies in its potential to reshape pedagogical strategies, equipping educators with transformative tools that align with global calls for life skills, self-awareness, and learner-centered education as emphasized by bodies such as WHO, WEF, and India's NEP 2020. Ultimately, this research contributes to the discourse on holistic education by suggesting that cultivating individuality through the philosophies of Emerson and Rajneesh can not only enhance learner capabilities but also build more conscious, creative, and responsible global citizens

Table 1: Comparative Analysis of Individuality: Emerson and Rajneesh

| Theme | Ralph Waldo Emerson | Rajneesh (Osho) |
|---|---|---|
| **Metaphor of Individuality** | "Is the acorn better than the oak? Which is its fullness and completion?" (1841) | "A rose flower is a rose flower… never tries to become a lotus" (1978) |
| **Present Moment Awareness** | "Why should we hold only the dead corpse and leave out all the reality?" (1836) | "Mind is nothing but an accumulation of past… the present is life." (1975) |
| **Authenticity & Morality** | "Character teaches above our wills… virtue emits a breath every moment" (1837) | "Real morality has not to be cultivated; it comes as a shadow of being aware." (1978) |
| **Grief and Transformation** | "I grieve that grief can teach me nothing" (1842) | "Sadness will be there… Remain with it… This will be meditation." (1978) |
| **Solitude and Nature** | "If a man would be alone, let him look at the stars" (1836) | "Truth of life is possible only in absolute silence and aloneness" (1980) |
| **Education and Knowledge** | "The scholar is the delegated intellect… Man Thinking" (1837) | Critiques second-hand knowledge; values experiential learning (2010) |
| **Belief and Experience** | "A man bears beliefs, as a tree bears beauty" (1860) | "A belief simply means you don't know—still you believe" (1985) |
| **Authority and Obedience** | "Obedience alone gives the right to command" (1939) | Differentiates between obedience (social) and surrender (spiritual) (1978) |
| **Duty and Responsibility** | Responsibility is freedom from dependence (1860) | "Never do anything because of duty" – favors love-driven responsibility (1987) |
| **View on Women** | Celebrates feminine hospitality and spirituality (1855) | Feminine energy as a spiritual path; men and women are incomparable (1974, 1985) |
| **Call to Authenticity** | Promotes "self-reliance" and "Man Thinking" over conformity (1837) | Advocates for discovering the "original face" — one's true self (1975) |

## VI. RESULTS

The results of the practical intervention show significant improvements across all five emotional and behavioral parameters. In Phase 1, baseline values for peace, calmness, relaxation, responsibility, and courage were recorded at 30, 34, 27, 32, and 30, respectively. By Phase 4, these values had risen to 45, 48, 43, 50, and 47, indicating substantial enhancement in each metric. The intervention demonstrated that individuality-building practices can effectively foster emotional resilience and self-awareness, supporting Emerson and Rajneesh's teachings in contemporary educational settings.

## VII. DISCUSSION

The findings from the intervention affirm the efficacy of integrating individuality-focused practices into educational systems. The significant improvements in peace, calmness, relaxation, responsibility, and courage underscore the potential of Emerson's call for self-reliance and Rajneesh's emphasis on meditative awareness to nurture key qualities essential for modern life. As students engaged in practices that emphasized self-awareness and inner clarity, they exhibited reduced anxiety, improved communication, and enhanced peer relationships, suggesting that these practices not only foster individual growth but also enhance social cohesion.

These results resonate not only with the philosophies of Emerson and Rajneesh but also with Carl Rogers' notion that self-actualization arises when individuals are free to explore their inner world without fear of judgment. The intervention also addresses Foucault's concern about institutional control over individual identity—by facilitating internal awareness, students begin to resist externally imposed norms. In alignment with Martha Nussbaum's capabilities framework, the program nurtured core human abilities—emotional resilience, decision-making, and reflection—suggesting that individuality is not just a philosophical ideal but a practical goal in education and human development.

Table 2: Comparative Themes on Individuality – Emerson vs. Rajneesh

| Theme | Ralph Waldo Emerson | Rajneesh (Osho) |
|---|---|---|
| **Concept of Self** | Emphasizes Self-Reliance—the intuitive, moral self that is inherently divine and creative. | Advocates discovering the original face—the authentic, unconditioned self, beyond ego and social roles. |
| **Relation to Society** | Encourages non-conformity; society is often a barrier to self-growth. | Critiques societal conditioning; calls for inner rebellion and detachment from collective norms. |
| **Knowledge** | Supports intuitive knowing over second-hand knowledge; the individual must be a "Man Thinking." | Values experiential wisdom over intellectual accumulation; knowledge must be lived, not learned. |
| **Spirituality** | Finds divinity in the self and nature; spirituality is self-realization. | Emphasizes meditation and presence as paths to transcendence; spirituality is awakening through awareness. |
| **Moral Framework** | Morality arises naturally through character and inner guidance. | True morality is spontaneous, arising from awareness rather than rules or duty. |
| **Time and Presence** | Advocates living in the present and not being bound by the past. | Stresses mindfulness and total presence in the now; mind is past, awareness is present. |
| **View on Education** | Education should empower independent thought and self-trust. | Education must liberate, not indoctrinate; it should awaken inner intelligence and individuality. |
| **Authority and Obedience** | Authority must be earned through integrity and example. | True surrender is spiritual, rooted in love—not obedience to institutions or norms. |
| **Emotional Resilience** | Encourages courage to face criticism and stand alone in truth. | Embraces sadness, aloneness, and introspection as gateways to transformation. |
| **Women and Feminine Energy** | Acknowledges spiritual and emotional depth in feminine qualities. | Sees feminine energy as central to love, devotion, and inner awakening. |

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Rajneesh present powerful visions of individuality as central to personal and societal transformation. Their teachings emphasize self-reliance, authenticity, and the importance of the present moment. By rejecting conformity and advocating for experiential growth, they provide invaluable insights into how individuals can cultivate a life of integrity, independent thought, and spiritual maturity. This study suggests that incorporating Emerson's and Rajneesh's philosophies into modern educational frameworks offers a path

toward the holistic development of individuals, helping them navigate the complexities of contemporary life.

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# Changing Perspectives Between Chinese Landscape Painting of Song Dynasty in the Tenth to Thirteenth Century and Western Landscape Painting in the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century: Seeing Through Chinese Aesthetic Viewpoints and Pre-Qin Daoism

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper aimed at comparing the difference and similarity between Chinese landscape painting in the Northern and Southern Song dynasties and western landscape painting during the seventeenth century to nineteenth century through interdisciplinary method of combining David Sack's sociological framework, Chinese aesthetic criteria of landscape and philosophical thoughts of Pre-Qin Daoism.* ***Firstly****, it applies Sack's axis of Subjectivity-Objectivity to explicate Philips Koninck, Jean-Simeon Chardin, John Constable, Eugene Boudin and even Claude Monet's Impressionist paintings are deeply rooted in "objective scientific observer's perspective" though every artist has unique artistic style due to personal "subjective participant perspective" which has solid fundament on the basis of subjectivity. Take Constable and Boudin as examples to explore their reflections on "skies" which have their own philosophy. In spite of their contemplation on the essence of "skies" – God-like "infinity," they admitted it's impossibility to depict the essence of phenomenon such as infinity and finally turned to paint the changing clouds intending to grasp every beautiful movement of shadows and light, same did Impressionist successors such as Renoir and Monet. Although outwardly stressed on the changeable phenomenon of light and shade in his idea – "Landscape is only an impression, its appearance changing at every moment," Monet seemed unconsciously seeking the essence of Camille's faded light in her dying appearance. Secondly, through analysing the track of Monet's creation from 1870s to 1920s, the graceful Zigzag – "Waving-Line" defining the increasing proportion of special "emptiness" represented by skies, rivers, seas and ponds showing his quest for internal peace, tranquility and spiritual infinity embodied by his design of composition, gradual simplification and abstraction of form through retained multiplicity of luxuriant color-experimented which all related to the artist's spiritual realm with unique subjectivity.*

*By contrast, paralleled by the track from the Northern Song to the Southern Song dynasties, Guo Xi and Fan Kuan's "monumental landscape" paintings not only featured by giant mountains as if Monet's Rouen Cathedral series with one-point perspective, instead, also characterized by Cavalier perspective through which viewers can freely choose different angles to catch every scene in a painting as a whole. Furtherly, Ma Lin and Ma Yuan's paintings had their own "depth" on experiencing the dilemma of life and death at a philosophical level, represented by jagged rhythms of pine trees and rocks, poetic geometry of angular forms and the increasing proportion of empty space reflecting their own spiritual realm. It is related to a philosophical wisdom of seeing through the changing phenomenon and unfolding the essence and depth of life and death because they experienced lots of wars caused by the social-political instability and*

*turmoil. The final part introduces four aesthetic criteria in Chinese landscape painting proposed by contemporary scholar, Lai Huiling – "Clarity" (qing), "Simplicity" (jian), "Exquisiteness" (gao) and "Remoteness" (yuan) to connect with philosophical thoughts of Zhuangzi in Pri-Qin Daoism. It concludes that subjectivity is not as abstract as a whole as in western tradition but could be discussed through its main components such as "heart" (xin), "human nature" (xing) and sentiments (qing). Chinese aesthetic and philosophical thinking mode emphasising more on "heart" and "human nature" different from psychological emotions, sentiments in western cultural tradition may provide new visions for our contemporaries mainly influenced and grown up under western educational systems to recreate some brand-new, innovative ways through our concluding remark on a potential trajectory of evolution in artistic thought both in western and Chinese landscape paintings.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In comparison with the difference and similarity between Chinese landscape painting of Northern and Southern Song dynasties in the tenth to thirteenth century and western landscape painting in the seventeenth to nineteenth century, this paper attempts to explore the issue by introducing Robert David Sack's (1980) scheme which contains two axes – (1) the axis of Objectivity-Subjectivity and (2) the axis of Space-Matter (Figure 1.2, Chapter 1).1 First of all, even if we trace back to the Renaissance, in retrospect of art history, western artist's perspective though contains unique, subjective, artistic perspective, it never kept away from scientific, objective perspective, to which I transferred a pair of sociological terms borrowed from Talcott Parsons and Jurgen Habermas - the "objective observer's perspective"/ "scientific observer's perspective" and "subjective participant's perspective" – the former relates to a subject, as a calm observer is kind of "external existence," standing outside the object he/she observes; the latter refers to a subject with subjective view to participate in research, mainly humanistic but it's a debate under discussion. This pair of terms well discloses the relativity of subjectivity and objectivity. Of course an artist as an observer is "different from"the object he/she observes, but it should be explained that in what sense we say there is some kind of "subjectivity" infusing into the artist's representation? How could we explicate the relation of this kind of "subjectivity" with the spiritual realm and the function of "empty space" while appreciating

Chinese landscape painting? In Sack's words, "Different mixtures of subjectivity and objectivity to Probably one characterize the other modes of thought as well. (Sack 1980: 24)" of the most complicated problems encountered by art historians or aesthetic scholars who try to construct aesthetic theory is how to explain the relation of subjectivity and objectivity in terms of artist's perspective and beholder's perspective. This unstable ambivalence also a little bit appears in Michael Baxandall's Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures.3 In spite of the tiny ambivalence, Baxandall's viewpoint throughout the whole book is very clear – he would stress the importance of artist's subjectivity more than the objectivity embodied in a painting, in his words, artist's representation. Inthefollowing analysis, I would like to reveal a different kind of viewpoint, which is constructed under Chinese philosophical scheme, especially philosophical Daoism, to discuss the relation of subjectivity and objectivity in terms of western landscape painting and Chinese landscape painting.

Now let's start from our focus on the axis ofSubjectivity-Objectivity in Sack's scheme. The objective observer's perspective, which relates to scientific objectivity presented in artworks, embodies not only since the Renaissance but also in the following glorious periods of art history. For example, Philips Koninck(1619-1688) drew and painted landscapes and ships in panoramic perspective which meant a supreme-panorama open up before viewers; Jean-Simeon Chardin(1699-1779)'s paintings were affected by optics prevailing at his time. Chardin had attended scientific lectures held by the French Academy and accepted suggestion from his friend, a scientist of the Academy.4 At the end of eighteenth century to the beginning of nineteenth century, John Constable (1776-1837), a landscape painter who was influenced by meteorology in his time, constructed his idea of sky, a kind of "empty space" related to our further discussion, through his knowledge of meteorology, hues of colors and the proposition of how to arrange"space" in his composition. In Constable's "scientific observer's perspective"we could find out some similar difficulties encountered by Chinese landscape painters who had different "methods" to deal with, while Constable was contemplating his "skies", especially when his contemplation triggered the philosophical concept "infinity". Constable expressed how the old, traditional masters thought of their skies and make the comparison between their idea of skies and that of his own:

That landscape painter who does not make his skies a very material part of his composition, neglects to avail himself of one of his greatest aids. Sir Joshua Reynolds, speaking of the landscape of Titian, of Salvator, and of Claude, says: 'Even their skies seem to sympathise with their subjects.' I have often been advised to consider my sky as a white sheet thrown behind the objects.' Certainly, if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must and shall always with me make an effectual part of the composition. It will be difficult to name a class of landscape in which the sky is not the key note, the standard of scale, and the chief organ of sentiment. You may conceive, then, what a 'shite *sheet' would do for me, impressed as I am with these notions, and they cannot be erroneous. The sky is the source of light in nature, and governs everything; even our common observations on the weather of every day are altogether suggested by it."* (Leslie 1845: 92)

That is to say, the importance of "sky" ("empty space") in traditional old painters' eyes are not equal to Constable; in the traditional perspective, artists only consider "sky" "a white sheet thrown behind the objects"- the background and in comparison, with Constable's predecessors like Chardin who follows the principle of optics and always let the background painted dark dim and objects in foreground bright with distinctness. For this reason, Constable was always advised to let his skies evade into the background but he refused to do so. Constable had his own idea about "sky" that is "the source of light in nature, and governs everything". In western culture, if you use the metaphor of something as almost "the source of light" and "governs everything", you almost promote that "something" to the ultimate source which equals the position of "God". When Constable in his naturalistic viewpoints valued the concept of "sky" as religious "God", it's impossible that he left such a meaningful symbol designated to ultimate God in the dim background; in The Last Supper, Jesus Christ was situated in the center of Leonardo da Vinci's composition in one-point perspective; in Michelangelo's fresco, God had never evaded into background and always set as "the key note", the standard of scale in terms of human development, and the chief channel of expressing pure, sacred

sentiments. In Constable's naturalistic mind, he praised the "sky" in his landscape paintings as the same position of religious "God". It's impossible for him to neglect the importance and the effectual function of sky in his composition. Also for this reason, he suffered the great difficulty:

"The great *difficulty* of skies in painting is very great, both as to composition and execution; because, with all their brilliancy, they all not to come forward, or in indeed, be hardly thought of any more than extreme distances are; but this does not apply to phenomena or accidental effects of sky, because they always attract particularly." (Leslie 1845: 92)

The above passage corresponds to Sack's words that different mixture of subjectivity and objectivity had different modes of thought and it also proved that Constable had his own idea about how to arrange the proportion and relation of space (distance) and substance (which belongs to Sack's another axil of Space and Substance). He highlighted the variation of accidentally changing clouds through his observation of atmospheric change which was one of his favorite activities. In spite of that Constable did think of the infinite distance in the sky, he quickly shifted to persuade himself that "infinity" could not be applied to common phenomenon – the accidental change of clouds and to "neglect" to contemplate the problem of "infinity" in the faraway distance of sky. By contrast, why did Chinese landscape painters from the Song dynasty to Yuan dynasty, chose to "neglect" those various changes of clouds in their skies and let those skies evade in the background and even small birds or ships vanished in the far distance, mingled with sky and river? Were Chinese not capable of taking "scientific observer's viewpoint" to "perceive" and "represent" phenomena in a "scientific"way? Did the method of "scientific observer's perspective" in painting, architecture only belong to western mind? What kind of philosophical thoughts support Chinese painters to construct their idea of "empty space" in contrast to western "sky"?

Before answering the above questions, keeping Sack's scheme of axis of Subjectivity-Objectivity and axis of Space-Substance in mind would be helpful to our further analysis. In the previous discussion, we mainly focus on the axis of subjective-objective perspective of artist to reveal that many western artists fromRenaissance to the early nineteenth century had been influenced by the development of scientific knowledge including Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment which have been the main **orientation** in western culture. The previous discussion highlights the claim that most of western painters couldn't avoid taking scientific observers' perspective to represent what they perceive. To form this claim, which is quite different from Baxandall's stress on the artist's subjective perspective, I shall remind readers that Chinese philosophical thinking mode is a necessary underground presupposed, which is different from Baxandall's basic presuppose that a kind of sociological "internalization" is required. Now I would like to continue our main line of Sack's two axes, even Impressionism characterized by using strokes of multiple layers of colors to create the subjective atmosphere, which looks like subjective feelings run riot, unlimitedly with artist's free will, actually deeply roots in strictly scientific objective observations in their diligent sketches and drawings.

For example, Eugene Boudin (1824-1898), named "the painter of sky" –the one who triggered artistic enlightenment for Claude Monet, known as one of the Father of Impressionism, likes to observe large pieces of clouds, piled block by block in the sky, interested in the change of phenomenon in the sky; a famous aesthetic commentator Xun Jiang (蔣勳) provides us his sharp viewpoint that even to represent broadest sky, in western way of artistic expression of sky, western painters like Boudin chose to use various types of white to pile up multiple white blocks in three dimensions. To the finest, the most delicate degree, another representative Impressionist Renoir could use various shades of white to represent the transparent cloudy wind, and dresses, coruscatingly blazing in the sunshine with lightning transparency and clarity that is to say, on the axis of Space-Substance, western painters chiefly concern about visualized images of objects changing in space instead of empty space from which the symbolic meaning of infinity comes. In short, "empty space" had never become a "theme" in the western art history. Claude Monet applied the similar method like Boudin piling up white clouds in clusters to depict his sky in Woman in a Parasol – Madame Monet and His Son(National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1875), in which the sky was occupied with a cluster of different hues of white clouds as a figure-hugging background to show through a dark huge woman standing out in

silhouette. It seems that behind the way of increasing overlapping blocks of the subtle hues of white, there is an artistic thinking mode of "addition".

So far as we have discussed, even Impressionism, featuring artists using multiple hues of colors to represent light and shade in order to express the changing sentiments, moods of being a subject in every moment, has still deeply rooted scientific objective observation. That is not to say, the western orientation of art creation and appreciation only stresses on the side of scientific observation or we couldn't make the difference between science and art. Take Claude Monet's reflection on Camille's death after forty years later.8 Monet expressed his idea as follows:

*"For me, a landscape does not exist in its own right, since its appearance changes at every moment. But its surroundings bring it to life—the air and the light, which very continually. For me, it is only the 'surrounding atmosphere' which gives subjects their true value."*(House 1986: 28-9)

But if it's true as Monet supposed, why did he memorize Camille's face with so much changing hue of colors 40 years later? What's the unchangeable part inside Monet's heart that made him think Camille's face was "meant so much" to him? Didn't he consciously seek the carnival of colors which mostly lead him to his inner nature, kind of peaceful harmony and tranquility and represented in most of his landscape paintings? Didn't he unconsciously seek the essence of appearance through every possible innovative pile of colors tuned in every slice of living moment?

In the above discussion, we are primarily concerned about the element of "color"and the route of our discussion is delineated on the axis of Subjectivity-Objectivity. Now we introduce Sack's another axis of Space-Matter to keep on our further analysis. Readers may try to imagine a horizontal axis of Subjectivity-Objectivity and another vertical axis of Space-Matter forming four quadrants by which our discussion is proceeding continuously. On the vertical axis of Space-Matter, we attempt to analyze the element of "composition" in western and Chinese landscape generally.11 These things come in pairs – Ge Zhaoguang (葛兆光) proposes that there are four elements – color, composition, location and deformation – could be helpful for analyzing the historical evolution of thought if scholars are fond of the relation between pictorial research and history of thought (Ge 2006: 139-141).12 In his discussion of composition, Ge said, *"Angle (of artist), extent chosen (by artist), the change of proportion are worthy of discussion…Some artists depict some matter exaggerated large and draw something extremely small; some depict object matters upside down; some have one thing enlarged and the other foreshortened – drew matters out of proportion in a picture; some see object matter from this angle and others see from that angle (Ge 2006: 140).13"* Apparently Camille with a parasol whose figure was enlarged out of proportion and his son was shrunk to a very small size14. But what does it matter with the evolution of thought in Monet's landscape painting? In comparison with Monet's works from the 1870s to 1880s, the composition of his landscape painting basically had become departed from traditional way of perspective.15 From the end of 1880s to 1920s, an indiscernible tendency to abandon one-point perspective gradually became apparent. It is worthwhile to mention that the element of William Hogarth's Zigzag - "Waving-Line"16 (also known as "S-shaped curved line") in Monet's composition indiscernible existed since the end of 1870s accompanying perspective, which gradually became a notable feature in the scenery of cliffs, valley, lanes, floating ice, caps, fields of poppies in the 1880s. In the 1900s, the S-curve has its own deformation –Poplars on the Epte series represented more than 17 kinds of serpentine S-curve and readers may find two as typical type which drifted onto the Water Lilies from 1900s to 1920s—one kind could be seen in the Poplars on the Epte (National Galleries of Scotland, 1891) in which viewers can find one elegant S-curved line formed by a fringe of emerald green poplars fading away in the sky, and the other S-curved line emerged from the fading point to the right corner of picture, structured by the reflection of the green fringe. The two graceful S-curved lines in The Seine at Port-Villez series - Clear weather (The National Gallery, London, 1894), Blue Effect (Private Collection), Pink Effect (Musee Marmottan-Monet, Paris, 1894), and Morning on the Seine at Giverny, the Fog 17 (Private Collection, 1897) etc. were almost diluted invisibly that made the union of vaporous sky and hazy sea and the "enlarged empty space" almost creating a kind of misty and ethereal effect close to Chinese landscape painting. In spite of the fact that there are still other types of composition Monet' inclined to use –A horizontal line cut the picture in half –

one is sky and the other is fields of flowers and grass, sometimes between which there is a very tiny dark fringe of green trees interwoven this horizontal line as kind of decoration, and this way of cutting a picture in half may cause a sense of vast expanse and infinity of blue sky and colorful fields of flowers and grass, of which the view of artist and spectator come to an angle just like one technique from the "Doctrine of Three Types of Distance" (sanyuan fa 三遠法)18 (Bush & Shih 1985, 2012: 168-9; Casey 2002: 102), which is, "Level Distance" (平遠法) firstly proposed by the prominent Chinese landscape painter Guo Xi (Kuo Hsi 郭熙) (ca.1000-90) in the Northern Song dynasty, meant, from near mountains gazing at distant mountains.19 (Clewis 2019: 41-2; Hay, Mair, Bush&Shih 2005: 386) The famous example is Guo Xi's Old Trees, Level Distance (《樹色平遠圖》) in The Metropolitan Museum of Art20 (Foong 2000: 87-115); the other type of Monat's composition frequently represented as the huge subject matter in the Rouen Cathedral series almost occupying the whole picture without saving any empty space and the haystack was in close-up in the Haystack series in which readers also can find out the indiscernible S-curved line, through which Monet just like a curious child playfully used camera zooming in and out to search for the best epicenter, I would like to focus the discussion on the increasing proportion of domains – "empty space" formed by sky, sea, water, pond, etc. demarcated by the S-curve line parallel to the special composition of Chinese landscape painting in the Southern Song and the transition from the combination with one-point perspective since 1870s to 1890s in his land-based landscape painting to the abandonment of it during 1900s to 1920s in his aquatic-Water Lilies series.

During the World War II (1914-1918), Monet dedicated himself to the Water Lilies series in which viewers may discover the increasing proportion of bottomless ponds depicted by hues of green – from light to saturated zucchini green – to various of blue –petrol, navy and Prussian blue sometimes mix up with light pink, mulberry or wine red ripples of flowers reflections, which symbolic the artist's inner "empty space" – no matter how many colorful images of phenomenon emerged from the pond, there is always a peaceful, quiet empty space ontologically as a basis of changeable phenomena, just like Monet expressed his purpose of creation is to provide the public "a refuge of peaceful meditation."21 (The Museum of Modern Art 2013: 80; DeGalan 2020)

It seems to remind me that the gradual transition of Monet's viewpoint from painting the huge Haystacks, the Rouen Cathedral series to the Water Lilies series has parallels in Chinese landscape painting, of which the compositional transition from the Northern Song.22 The famous example is Fan Kuan's ( 范寬) magnificent hanging-scroll *Travellers Among Mountains and Streams* (National Palace Museum, Taipei) (《谿山行旅圖》)23 (Jiang 2013) in which vertical and monumental-like mountains situated in the front and center of the painting (Delbanco 1992: 25; Li 2013: 364) For this reason, he was nicknamed Fan Zhongli (范中立), meant a person with upright, rectitude virtue, "standing firmly on earth with feet apart and with head reaching into heaven (Li 2013: 364) just like "Monumental Landscape." Another famous representative is Guo Xi (郭熙) . James Cahill in A Pure and Remote View Lecture series proposed that Guo Xiwas in the same Monumental Landscape tradition with Fan Kuan and Yen Wen-kuei (燕文貴), he depicted Guo Xi's The Early Spring (《早春圖》) as follows:

*"Composition: it preserves much of Fan K'uan and Yen Wen-kuei model, while moving into a more subjective, particular vision of the world,still tripartite in both ways. (etc.) But the grand vision of the world is in flux, going through a ]process of change – all the LS masses undercut or overhanging, and the whole seems to have the inner energy of a vast organism. Earth masses are shaded for the effect of rotundity; not so much texture strokes as overlaid brushstrokes that make them appear earthy rather than rocky. Strong effect of light and shadow, although no consistent light source (never in Ch ptg). Has the same basic underlying quasi-narrative: people at base engaged in real-world activities; then ascent to temple near top; then pure nature towering above that."* (Cahill "Notes of A Pure and Remote View Lecture - 7B"

During the Southern Song, "painters abandoned this compositional line of central vertical division and employed the diagonal line of division instead. A square space is divided into two triangles, and the Southern Sung painters planned their compositions by arranging their emphatic elements in one of the triangles – thus leaving the other triangle more or less empty."27 (Li 2013: 365)

In comparison to Monet's artworks in the 1920s, they had a tendency towards some features: in addition to the increasing proportion of empty space by S-curvedline, the simplification of composition giving up one-point perspective, and the most significant transition to abstraction of form. It's the time when the rising of Cubism, Abstractionism, Dadaism and Surrealism had become mainstream in the western art, "Monet's slightly sloppy lines, at once real and surreal, blurry, and overlapping blossoms and willow reflections on the water seemed to place a final exclamation mark on the Impressionist school."28 As if Chen Kuang-yi (陳貺怡) proposed that whether Monet is an Impressionist painter or not in terms of the Water Lilies series is a very complicated issue, here I just try to offer a perspective emerged from Chinese landscape vision and from the thoughts of philosophical Daoism. Seeing through the framework of Chinese philosophy characterized by a traditional "introspective" cultural tendency, though the style of Monet's painting in the 1920s turned to abstraction but not contain the sense of "Clarity"(qing 清), "Purity"(chun-cuei 純粹), and "Transparency"(qing-tou/min-gxi 清透/明晰)which might reflect the artist's inner spiritual realm. I've quite often pondered that Monet seemed the luckiest artist when the World War II had blown millions of people's lives, he still could have a quiet corner of his garden at Giverny to create peaceful beauty through his diligent labor. More than this God seemed to make a joke of Monet's eyesight at the expense of his health and the progress of artistic career. In spite of this, "when God closes a door, somewhere he opens a window." In this issue, this "somewhere" may be discovered through the Way (Dao) of classical Chinese philosophy – a "introspective"perspective of representation in which we may unfold a potential possibility opening to Impressionists like Monet. If a viewer with an aesthetic vision of Chinese landscape painting which especially deeply rooted in philosophical Daoism, one may find that Chinese landscape painting just like Zhuangzi's philosophy seeking the the balance between being talented and untalented29 – a kind of wisdom of never going extreme to hurt others or the self – when he discovered the Way (Dao) of existing in the world, featured the balance between formal realism and abstraction as well as in the content and form seeking "Clarity" ( 清 qing, i.e. represented by using of colors), "Simplicity" ( 簡 jien, i.e. represented by composition, brushstrokes), "Exquisiteness" (高 gao; 高妙 gaomiao) in artistic atmosphere and artist's spiritual realm and "Remoteness" (遠 yuan, remoteness in distance) symbolizes seclusion and peace in spiritual realm usually accompanied by living a cloistered life –transcendence and seclusion from secular world since Chinese artists were conscious of inability to impede the fall of the Northern and Southern Song.

The four aesthetic criteria of Chinese landscape painting proposed by Lai Huiling 30 not only represent in the Chinese landscape painting but also reflect the inner spiritual realm of artists which relate to traditional Chinese philosophy. For example, in Ma Lin's (馬麟) Hidden Fragrance and Scattered Shadows (暗香疏影), the white plum blossoms delicately painted with transparent white as thin as cicada's wings, held by calyxes in mineral green. On the reflection, there are no ripples flying upon the surface of the pond but only subtle shades of white blossoms, diagonally starched branches and indiscernible shadows of bamboo leaves. The hidden fragrance seemed to permeate through the quiet atmosphere of tranquil night and cross over the clear, placid waters of the pond.31 The characteristic of "Clarity" also relates to the verse "Of old those that obtained the One Heaven obtained the One and became clear. Earth [phenomenon in the secular world] obtained the One and became tranquil,32 (Laozi, Chan trans. 1963: Ch.63) which could also be understood as "Of old those that corresponded to Dao (Way/ Natural law): When Heaven (Sky), symbolizing to the noumenon would, corresponds to Dao, it normally appears clear in everyday life; when Earth, symbolizing to the phenomenal world, corresponds to Dao (Natural law including various types of sub-laws, principles in natural and humanistic world), it appears peaceful and tranquil."33 That is to say, the characteristic of "Clarity" quite often comes together with "Peace" and "Tranquility". When an artist as a creative subject whose heart is purified enough to correspond to Dao, one can reach inner peace and then expand this inner clarity, tranquility to one's external behavior including artistic creation and aesthetical appreciation. The parable in the Chapter 19 - "Mastering Life" of *Zhuangzi* explains this idea and also connected to the criterion of "Exquisiteness". 34 (*Zhuangzi*, Watson trans. 1983: Ch.19) In many types of Chinese art including painting, qin music, calligraphy, only when the artist is well self-cultivated and feels purified enough, can

he/she start to paint, play guin and create beautiful calligraphy. Monet in his late ages "seemed to have become increasingly concerned with how people should view his paintings.35" (Chen 2011: 69) This is why I've mentioned about Monet's painting in the 1920s hadn't presented enough "Clarity" in terms of Chinese philosophical criteria of Clarity, Calm, and Transparency fundamentally rooted in artist's inner spiritual realm– a kind of purposiveness without purpose although Monet expressed his "purposiveness" is to provide the public "a refuge of peaceful meditation," (The Museum of ModernArt 2013: 80; DeGalan 2020) he still couldn't avoid the intervention from people's praise and denigration. Further, the quality of "Clarity" (清) relevant to "Tranquility"(靜) could be seen in *Zhuangzi*, "Water that is still gives back a clear image of beard and eyebrows; reposing in the water level, it offers a measure to the great carpenter. And if water in stillness possesses such clarity, how much more must pure spirit."**36**(*Zhuangzi*, Watson trans. 1983: Ch.13)

In terms of the criterion of "Simplicity", we may take Scholar by a Waterfall (Album leaf, ink and color on silk, 24.9x26cm, Ex coll.: C.C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973) by Ma Yuan (馬遠), a leading artist of the Northern Song Painting Academy, father of Ma Lin for example. "The monumental northern landscape style was largely abandoned in 1127, when the Song court was forced by invadingJurchen tribesmen to relocate to the south.37"(Hearn 2008: Ch.9) In this painting, "which shows a gentleman in a gardenlike setting, the jagged rhythms of the pine tree and rock contrast with the quiet mood of the scholar, who gazes pensively into bubbling rapids of a cascade. Ma Yuan reduced nature to a poetic geometry of angular forms and emptiness. The diagonally divided 'one corner' composition leads from chiseled foreground forms to a mist-filled distance, from tactile rocks and trees to the sound of rushing water, from the sensory world to an awareness of the infinite."38 (Hearn 2008: Ch.9) The simplification (reduction from monumental style of Northern Song to angular form) of compositional design and increasing proposition of empty space symbolic a kind of Daoist thought of "Simplicity" (簡樸/ 樸素) which could be seen in the verse such as " In stillness you will be a sage, in action, a king. Resting in inaction, you will be honored; of unwrought simplicity, your beauty will be such that no one in the world may vie with you. (樸素而天下莫能與之爭美)."39 (*Zhuangzi*, Watson trans. 1983: Ch.13) There are at least two points in this verse. A "introspective" perspective of self-cultivation and self-realization to reach inner, peaceful stillness that may or may not lead one to be a winner like a king or millionaire in the secular world but will gradually guide one to the way of awakening and the fulfilment of inner spiritual realm.

The third Chinese aesthetic criterion "Exquisiteness" could be seen in many masterpieces of Chinese landscape painting. In the discussion of Chapter 19 - "Mastering Life" of *Zhuangzi*, the parable has already revealed purifying one's heart and mind is the basis of achieving the highest artistic realm which includes fulfilling the criterion of "Clarity" and "Exquisiteness". Those interesting parables of Chapter 19 could be summarized into a phrase, "He keeps his will undivided and concentrates his spirit,"40 of which there is the secret of the hunchback gentleman to catch cicadas with a stick "as easily as though he were grabbing them with his hand.".41 (*Zhuangzi*, Watson trans. 1983: Ch.19)

Pure and Remote View of Streams and Mountains (National Palace Museum, from the twelfth century to the thirteenth century) (溪山清遠圖) by Xia Gui (夏圭), prominent leading artist of the Southern Song doubtlessly satisfied the demands of four aesthetic criteria of Chinese landscape painting. Here I would like to take it as an example to connect it with the fourth criterion "remoteness/distance" (遠). It's also worthy of mention that Xia Gui represented "light" from heaven/sky with slightly washed ink that would make viewers astonished in such a way without any color. He brought us such beautiful, poetic light from remote, infinite heaven to earth .42 (Jiang2013: Ep.1)

Another reason for choosing this painting is that when we applicate Sack's two axes to analyze this painting, we may find the axis of Space-Matter may not be enough to explain the concept of "remoteness" and "distance" here. Here we may add another axis of Time-Matter to enrich the structure of the diagram for stretching our heart and spiritual mind to infinity symbolized by misty empty space and light from heaven not only relevant to space but also connected to time. The great large proportion of remote empty space was designated to the dissolution of sense of time and space that lead artists and viewers to the progress of infinite

creation and self-realization. Chapter 23 – "Gengsang Chu" mentioned that "When the human heart [heart-mind system] is settled down, tranquilized with great peace, it originates from heavenly light that means infinite transcendental wisdom. When it comes from transcendental wisdom, humans present human nature and matters/phenomena present their own nature [as things-in-themselves]."

In conclusion, the analysis of similarities and differences between Chinese landscape painting in the tenth to thirteenth century and western landscape painting in the seventeenth to nineteenth century through Sack's axes of Subjectivity-Objectivity and Space-Matter, adding the elements of "heart" (xin 心) and "sentiments" (qing情) in philosophical Daoism to distinguish the concept of "subjectivity" in the western culture from that in Chinese culture: the former often entails to "will" and "sensation"as in Kant's aesthetic judgment, the latter involves the more distinction of subject's components which is comprised of heart (xin 心), human nature (xing 性) – the nature of humans existence and the disposition of nature, as well as sentiments (qing 情) that would enrich the analytical dimension of subjectivity. The above discussion mainly highlights on the different effects caused from heart and sentiments and finally tries to conclude a potential trajectory of evolution in artistic thought both in western and Chinese landscape painting, that is: when western landscape painting like Impressionism wishes to go on better, Chinese aesthetic perspectives and traditional philosophical thought of Daoism may broaden a new horizon, after all, "Every cloud has a silver lining." The progress of achieving perfection is eternally infinite.

## II. REFERENCES


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2. Robert D. Sack, Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: a Geographical Perspective. Basingstoke (U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 1980), 24.
3. Michael Baxandall, Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures (U.S.: Yale University Press, 1985)
4. Although Baxandall emphasizes on the scientific perspective of our time is quite different from that of Chardin's time, Chardin was not necessary to be influenced by scientific knowledge, not necessary to read Lock's theory and there's no critical relation between the ideas Chardin embodied in his paintings and Chardin's representations. I would like to point out that in a broad sense, Chardin might "probably" "possessed" the scientific viewpoint of optics since Baxandall provides us the information of Chardin's attendance of the lectures in Academy and his influence by scientist's suggestion.
5. i.e. Baby Powder, Cornsilk, Cream, Eggshell, Ivory, Old Lace, Rose White, Seashell, Snow, Titanic, Vanilla, etc.
6. See Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Dance at Le Moulin de la Galette (Musee d'Orsay, Paris, 1876) and another oil painting Luncheon of the Boating Party (The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C., 1880-1881) Still other Renoir's famous painting Girl in a Lace a Hat, (Pola Museum of Art, 1891) which couldn't be easily attribute to portrait, was explicated by a variety of white colors to increase the effect of vivid changing of light and shadow. Liu Chiao-Mei (劉巧媚) introduces that the preference of "white lace caps, flowery straw hats, and bouffant, ribboned hats" characterize the style of late Renoir's painting which well corresponded to the diary of Julie Manet in which "Renoir had once made his own hat of white chiffon and roses, which he put on a model dressed in white, with a green belt." However, with the rise of industrialization, women with formal decorated hats were gradually out of fashion because it's bulky and clumsy when making cross-country train journeys. Most importantly, Liu pointed out that "whether he was following fashion or defying changing social conventions, each was in accordance with his own, individual choice. Either way, in Girl in a Lace Hat, the hat's cloth exhibits numerous and subtle color variations and transformations, increasing the radiance of the figure's appearance, assuming the role of makeup." See Liu Chiao-Mei (劉巧媚), "Renoir and Fashion," (雷諾瓦與時尚) in National Palace Museum, United Daily News Group, Pola Art Museum & Pola Art Foundation (國立故宮博物院、聯合報系、POLA 美術館與公益財團法人 POLA 美術振興財團), Renoir and the Painters of the Twentieth Century (《幸福大師 雷諾瓦與二十世紀繪畫》) [Text in bilingual: Chinese and English] (New Taipei City: United Daily

News Group, 2013), 32. (新北市: 聯合報股份有限公司,2013 年 5 月),頁 32

7. Actually Xun Jiang (蔣勳) explicates a pair of terms "addition philosophy" (加法哲學) and "reduction philosophy" (減法哲學) in Chinese. Here I transfer this pair of terms into a kind of "thinking mode" with Sack's words to avoid the argumentative meaning of "philosophy" in the western culture and in Chinese culture. See Xun Jiang (蔣勳), "History of Chinese Art (《中國美術史》)," [Video Lecture in Chinese] in The Gathering with Mr. Yin and Ms Yuan (殷瑗小聚) (Hualien, Taiwan: Tzu Chi Da Ai TV) (花蓮:慈濟大愛電視台).
8. For example, our highly sensitive and affectionate artist uttered: "I found myself staring at the tragic countenance, automatically trying to identify the sequence, the proportion of light and shade in the colors that death imposed on the immobile face. Shades of blue, yellow, gray...Even before the thought occurred to memorize the face that meant so much to me, my first involuntary reflex was to tremble at the shock of colors. In spite of myself, my reflexes drew me into an unconscious operation that is the daily order of my life." See Charles F. Stucky, ed., Monet: A Retrospective (New York: NY Hugh Lauter Levin, 1985) Readers may also reference to Monet's Camille on Her Deathbed (Musee d'Orsay, Paris, France, 1879) in which different hues of white mixed with blue, green and gray, the piles of chilly white colors wildly wrapped Camille's dead face just like four years ago, in Woman in a Parasol – Madame Monet and His Son (National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1875), Camille's lace-white dress flyaway with fluttering hemline through which viewers may feel our female character was being dragged into a whirlpool of cloudy sky, seemingly symbolizing an unstable future. But this time, with the whirlpool of piles of various hues of white simply wrapped up and dragged into Camille herself. The gaze of Monet here, as he said, mainly focused on "the proportion of light and shade in the colors" which brought him to trembling with complicated sentiments of fear caused by the whirling of colors and led him to "unconscious operation". As he himself said, "Landscape is only an impression, its appearance changing at every moment ." (Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2009) The subjectivity of artistic observer, Monet, whose gaze highlights on the "atmosphere" of changing appearance and he presupposes that there is no such "rightness"/ "real nature"/ "real essence" of appearance.
9. John House, Monet: Nature into Art (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 28-9.
10. See series of Haystacks: Haystacks in the Morning Ef ect, Private Collection; Haystacks, Midday, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1890, and Haystacks, the End of Summer, Giverny, Musee d'Orsay, Paris; also see series of Rouen Cathedral: Rouen Cathedral, Midday, Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia, 1894; Rouen Cathedral, Afternoon (The Portal, Full Sunlight), 1892-94, Private Collection); Rouen Cathedral at Sunset, Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russia, 1894. Source from Michel Draguet, Kuang-yi Chen & Mei-ching Fang, Monet Garden (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2011), 176-7.
11. In this short essay, we couldn't analyze many landscapes in detail but the general discussion is possible. Readers interested in analysis of the "thought" in western and Chinese paintings and keeping these two axes in mind may be helpful for their own innovative exploration.
12. See Lecture VI – " About the Research on the Pictorial History of Thought"(第六講「關於圖像的思想史研究」). In Ge Zhaoguang (葛兆光), Lecture Recording of Research on the History of Thought: Vision, Perspective and Method(《思想史研究課堂講錄:視野、角度與方法》)[Text in Chinese] (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company (北京:生活.讀書.新知三聯書店), 2006), 139-141 (頁 139-141).
13. Zhaoguang Ge (葛兆光), Lecture Recording of Research on the History of Thought: Vision, Perspective and Method(《思想史研究課堂講錄:視野、角度與方法》) [Text in Chinese] (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company (北京:生活.讀書.新知三聯書店), 2006), 140(頁 140).
14. See Woman in a Parasol – Madame Monet and His Son (National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1875) Vincent van Gogh painted his The Starry Night (The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1889) also featured by the exaggeration of enlarged blazing stars whirling in the whole sky and dominated almost 3/4 of the whole picture.
15. Readers may take look at Promenade near Argenteuil (Musee Marmottan Monet, Paris, 1873), Wild Poppies near Argenteuil (Musee d'Orsay, Paris, 1873), The Luncheon (Musee d'Orsay, Paris, 1873), The Garden of Monet at Argenteuil (National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1873), Meadow with Poplars (Museum of Fine

Arts, 1875), Poppy Field (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1875), Red Boats, Argenteuil (Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1875), the snow scene series in Argenteuil (1875), and Landscape: The Parc Monceau (The Metropolitan Museum, New York, 1876), etc.

16. William Hogarth, Ch. IX. – "Of Composition with the Waving-Line," Ch. X. - "Of Compositions with the Serpentine-Line," in The Analysis of Beauty: Written with a View of Fixing the Fluctuating Ideas of Taste (Glasgow: Good Press, 2019), 57-9, 59-85.
17. The two S-curved lines were deformed as an amoebic shape turning upside down in this painting.
18. In terms of the"Doctrine of Three Types of Distance" (Sanyuan fa 三遠法), it's introduced as follows: "Mountains have three types of distance. Looking up to the mountain's peak from its foot is called the high distance. From in front of the mountain looking past it to beyond is called deep distance. Looking from a nearby mountain at those more distant is called the level distance." See Susan Bush & Hsio-yen Shih, "Atmosphere and Spatial Recession," in Early Chinese Texts on Painting (2nd Edition) (HK, China: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 168-9. Also See Edward S. Casey, "Ch. 6 – Representing Place Elsewhere: Northern Sung Landscape Painting," in Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002,) p. 102.
19. See Robert R. Clewis, ed., "Ch.3 – Guo Xi, from 'The Interest of Lofty Forests and Springs' [Lingquan gaozhi《林泉高致》]" in The Sublime Reader (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), 41-2. Also see John Hay, Victor H. Mair, Susan Bush & Hsio-Yen Shih, "Ch. 57 – Guo Xi (attrib.), 'Advice on Landscape'," in Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture, eds. Victor H. Mair, Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt and Paul R. Goldin (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 386.
20. In terms of the vast expanse of space and infinity of blue sky, Foong provides readers with a beautiful description of Guo Xi's technique of "Level Distance". See Foong Ping, "Guo Xi's Intimate Landscapes and the Case of Old Trees, Level Distance," Metropolitan Museum Journal, 35 (2000): 87-115.
21. The Museum of Modern Art, MoMA Highlights: 350 Works from the Museum of Modern Art, Harriet Schoenholz Bee, Cassandra Heliczer and Sarah McFadden (eds.,) (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2013), 80. Also see Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, "A Refuge of Peaceful Meditation," in KC Studio [Electronic edition] (Kansas City, US: KC Studio, 18, 2020) Retrieved August 11, 2022, from https://kcstudio.org/a-refuge-of-peaceful-meditation-french-paintings/
22. James Cahill also has the similar imaginative parallel to western culture, in the preface of 7A lecture, he said: "Northern Song monumental landscape stands, in my estimation, as a high point in the whole history of Chinese painting, and up there with Gothic cathedrals, or the music of Bach, among the greatest works of man." See James Cahill, "Notes of 7A – 'Early Northern Song Landscape'" in A Pure and Remote View Lectures [Video Lectures] (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Institute of East Asian Studies Publication Online Database) Retrieved August 9, 2022, from https://ieas.berkeley.edu/publications/ieas-publications/james-cahill-video-lectures/pure-and-remote-view-all-lectures#APARV7A
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25. Lin-can Li(李霖燦), "The Landscape Paintings of the Northern and Southern Sung Dynasties," in Research on the Famous Chinese Painting (《中國名畫研究》)[Text in Chinese], Hangzhou, China: Zhejiang University, 2013) (杭州:浙江大學), 364 (頁 364).
26. James Cah ill, "Notes 7B – 'Late Northern Song Landscape and Guo Xi," in A Pure and Remote View Lectures [Video Lectures] (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Institute of East Asian Studies Publication Online Database) Retrieved August

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28. Kuang-yi Chen, "Monet – The Eternal Impressionist," in Draguet, Michel, Kuang-yi Chen & Mei-ching Fang, Monet Garden (Taipei: Taipei Fine Arts Museum, 2011), 67.
29. Burton Watson, trans, Ch.20 - "The Mountain Tree" ( 山 木 ) in The Complete Works of Zhuangzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)
30. Lai Huiling (賴慧玲)specializing in Chinese philosophy especially Confucianism, philosophical Daoism and religious Daoism serves as associate professor at I-Shou University, Taiwan. These four aesthetic criteria in Chinese landscape painting proposed by Lai when the author of this paper attended her series of lectures on Daoist wisdom and art of life at I-Shou University (義守大學) , Kaohsiung, Taiwan, since 2009 to 2021.
31. See Wen-mei Hsu ( 許 文 美 ), intro, "Ma Lin's The Hidden Fragrance and Scattered Shadows (宋馬麟《暗香疏影》) of Song Dynasty," in Hear From Me: Stories of the NPM's Collection (《聽我說文物》) [Video introduction] (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 2021) (台北: 國立故宮博物院, 2021年) Retrieved August 9, 2022, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_UuHY1gXBc Readers interested in this painting may make comparison to the Orchid also created by Ma Lin. See Maxwell K. Hearn, "Ch.14 - 'The Perfection of Nature'," in How to Read Chinese Paintings (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2008). Hearn's description well alluded to Zhuangzi's criterion of "Simplicity," "Clarity," and "Exquisiteness" that made us appreciate this leaf of painting as a phrase, in short, "Its form is simple and the color is crystalline-clear" (形簡色清) and its implication of spiritual realm is meaningful with profundity (意味深長).
32. Wing-Tsit Chan ( 陳 榮 捷 ), trans, "Chapter 39," in Laozi, Laozi [Electric text] (Terebess Asia Online (Tao) database, 1963) Retrieved August 9, 2022, from https://terebess.hu/english/tao/_index.html

On this website, readers may find many creditable versions of translation in Chinese philosophical classics, many of which are out of print, not easily to be collected but still significant in traditionally academic context. Readers may make their own judgment by comparison of different versions in history. I chose Chan's translation of Laozi's words in terms of this passage because Chan's usage corresponded to Huai Wang's interpretation of Laozi. See Huai Wang (王淮), Exploration and Annotation of Laozi (《老子探義》) [Text in Chinese] (New Taipei City: The Commercial Press, 2017) (新北市:臺灣商務印書館,1969 年初版, 2017 年第二版第一刷) .

33. This further interpretation is explicated by the author of this paper.
34. Here I quote the interesting passage of the parable as follows: "Woodworker Qing carved a piece of wood and made a bell stand, and when it was finished, everyone who saw it marveled, for it seemed to be the work of gods or spirits. When the marquis of Lu saw it, he asked, 'What art is it you have?' Qing replied, 'I am only a craftsman—how would I have any art?' There is one thing, however. When I am going to make a bell stand, I never let it wear out my energy. I always fast in order to still my mind[heart/心 xin]. When I have fasted for three days, I no longer have any thought of congratulations or rewards, of titles or stipends. When I have fasted for five days, I no longer have any thought of praise or blame, of skill or clumsiness. And when I have fasted for seven days, I am so still that I forget I have four limbs and a form and body. By that time, the ruler and his court no longer exist for me. My skill is concentrated, and all outside distractions fade away. After that, I go into the mountain forest and examine the Heavenly nature of the trees. If I find one of superlative forms and I can see a bell stand there, [then]I put my hand to the job of carving; if not, I let it go. This way I am simply matching up 'Heaven' [Dao/ Way Natural Law] with 'Heaven'. That's probably the reason that people wonder if the results were not made by spirits." See Burton Watson, trans, "Ch. 19 – 'Mastering Life,' ( 達 生 ) in The Complete Works of Zhuangzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)
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36. Burton Watson, trans, Chapter13 – "The Way of Heaven" (天道) in The Complete Works of Zhuangzi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)
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43. See Ch.23 – 'Gengsang Chu' (庚桑楚) of Zhuangzi. The passage quoted here is translated by the author of this paper. According to Ouyang version, the original Chinese passage appears as "宇泰定者,發乎天光。發乎天光者,人見其人,物見其物。人有脩者,乃今有恒" could be translated as "when Heaven/Sky itself serenely settled down, the heavenly light permeates all things on earth. Under the heavenly, divide light, humans present human nature and matters/phenomenon present their own nature. Humans self-cultivated with peace and serenity will lead them to everlasting eternity and infinity" while firstly presented at the 2022 ISCP conference. However, compared to the collation and annotation of Shumin Wang (王叔岷), he precisely indicated that the Chinese character "宇" (yu) in this passage refers to "heart" (心/ xin) ; another Chinese word "泰" (tai) means "great" (大/ da); sthill other one "定" is meant to "settled down," "tranquilized," and "placid" (靜/jing). The next significant term "heavenly light" (天光/ tien-guang) relating to the theme of this paper is signified to "wisdom" (慧/ hui). Therefore, the whole passage could be translated to "When humans heart [heart-mind system] is settled down, tranquilized with great peace, it originates from heavenly light that means infinite transcendental wisdom. When it comes from transcendental wisdom, humans present human nature and matters/phenomenon present their own nature [as things-in-themselves]." The term "者" (it/ zhe) as a pronoun refers to "heart," according to Guo Xian (郭向), this passage also alludes to "empty room generates white light"/ "[in an ] empty room [it/ placid heart/ tranquilized heart-mind system] generates white light (transcendental wisdom)" (虛室生白/ shu shi sheng bai) in the Chapter 4 – "In the World of Men" of Zhuangzi. Wang collated the explication of Ma (馬氏) in which he said Xue Xuen (薛瑄) furtherly explained as "When heart is greatly settled down, it generates 'Clarity' (明/ming)" / 心定則明). Similarly, 宣穎 (Ying Xuan) explicated this symbolic image of empty room as 'tranquilized clear heart' by proposing that "when one is tranquilized and peaceful, one is 'empty,' 'selfishless' in one's heart-mind; when one's heart-mind is selfishless (humble, not arrogant, not being an egoist in our contemporary usage), one's heart becomes transparent and clear." (靜則虛, 虛則明) The reason why the author of this paper choose Shumin Wang's collation and annotation here rather than Ouyang's translation from ancient Chinese to contemporary Chinese lies in that Wang's interpretation is better coherent to the content of Chapter 23, Chapter 4 and other chapters within *Zhuangzi* in terms of contextual consideration in spite of the fact that two versions, both Ouyang and Wang's annotations, contain collations down to the ages in traditional Chinese academic history, and both of which also have similarity to good advantage, which means, in their annotations, they quite often explicated the reason why chose one's interpretation instead of others that left readers "empty space" to make judgement by themselves. See Chao Ouyang & Jingxien Ouyang (歐陽超, 歐陽景賢), Ch. 23 – "Gengsan Chu" (庚桑楚), in *The Annotation and Translation of Zhuangzi* (Vol. 1-2) (*Zhuang shi yi* 《莊子釋譯》(上)、(下)) [Text in Chinese] (Taipei: Liren Bookstore, 1992) (台北:里仁書局, 1992年台一版), 945-53 (頁945-53). Also see Shumin

Wang (王叔岷), *The Collation and Interpretation of Zhuangzi* ( *Zhuangzi jiao chuen*《莊子校銓》) , Vol. 2 (中冊) [Text in Chinese], (No. 88, Special Issue of Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica) (中央研究院歷史語言研究所專刊第八十八輯) (Nangang, Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1999) (台北南港:中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1999年), 886 (頁886).

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# Crafted Over a Decade: An Interview with Shi Deliang, Author of Dream of the Mustard Seed

*Wang Zuyou*[δ]

## ABSTRACT

*Shi Deliang (史德亮), Ph.D., is both an accomplished engineer and a distinguished writer. He was awarded the "Best PhD" accolade by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and holds permanent membership in the Chinese Writers Association of America. His magnum opus, Dream of the Mustard Seed (《芥子梦》), is a 100-chapter historical novel exceeding 800 pages and comprising over 600,000 words. Spanning the period from 1900 to 2000, the novel chronicles China's profound transformations during this era, encompassing pivotal events such as the late Qing dynasty, the Xinhai Revolution, the Anti-Japanese War, the founding of the People's Republic of China, and the Reform and Opening-Up era. Dr. Shi devoted more than a decade to meticulously crafting and revising this work to ensure its historical accuracy and narrative depth. The novel's title draws inspiration from the philosophical concept of the mustard seed, symbolizing how something small can encapsulate vastness—a theme that resonates across both Eastern and Western philosophies. This metaphor underscores the novel's ambition to encapsulate a century of Chinese history through the lens of a single family's experiences.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**Wang Zuyou** (hereinafter referred to as "Wang"): Hello, Dr. Shi, it is a great honor to conduct this written interview on behalf of the editorial board of the Journal of Translating China. Your distinguished achievements in both engineering and literature serve as an inspiration to many.

I understand that you hold a Ph.D. in Engineering and have been bestowed with the Best Ph.D. Award by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, one of the most prestigious accolades in

the field. Additionally, you are a permanent member of the Chinese Writers Association of America and the author of the acclaimed 600,000-word novel Dream of the Mustard Seed, which was awarded the "Film and TV Literature Award" at the 2nd World Chinese Film & TV Festival. Your work has also attracted significant attention from prominent media outlets, including interviews with Phoenix TV's America Channel and the People's Daily Overseas Edition.

Achieving excellence in both engineering and literature—fields often regarded as distinct—is indeed a rare and remarkable accomplishment. Could you kindly introduce yourself and share the insights behind your exceptional success across these diverse domains?

**Shi** Deliang (hereinafter referred to as "Shi"): First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Wang and the editorial board of the *Journal of Translating China* for granting me this opportunity to share my experiences.

I was born and raised in China, where I developed a deep-rooted connection to my cultural heritage. Subsequently, I pursued my Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering at the University of Pittsburgh. Upon completing my doctoral studies, I embarked on a career as a global engineer with a multinational corporation, which provided me with the invaluable opportunity to travel extensively and collaborate with colleagues from diverse cultural backgrounds.

These international experiences have significantly broadened my perspective, fostering profound reflections on my Chinese heritage and its role within the global cultural landscape. The contrasts and intersections between Chinese culture and those encountered abroad inspired me to explore these themes more deeply.

Motivated by this introspection, I resolved to channel my insights into writing a novel that examines cultural dynamics. Although I lack formal training in literature, my passion for articulating the intricacies and complexities of cultural identity and exchange has driven me to undertake this endeavor.

**Wang:** Composing a 600,000-word novel without formal training in literature is indeed a remarkable achievement. Could you elaborate on how you managed to accomplish this feat? Additionally, had you published any literary works prior to this novel?

**Shi:** Prior to the publication of Dream of the Mustard Seed, I had not released any significant literary works. My academic pursuits in Chemical Engineering required a steadfast commitment to research. During my Ph.D. studies, I concentrated extensively on scientific investigation, engaging with technical literature, and publishing research papers. At that time, I authored six peer-reviewed articles, which honed my writing skills—albeit in a scientific rather than literary context.

I am convinced that the clarity and structure inherent in my research papers played a pivotal role in their acceptance by high-impact journals, ultimately earning me the Best Ph.D. Award from the American Institute of Chemical Engineers. Intriguingly, the rigorous academic training I underwent left an indelible mark on my novel. Readers may observe a certain precision in the writing style, which reflects my background in technical research.

Although I do not professionally work in the literary field, I have always harbored a profound passion for literature. Since childhood, I have been an avid reader of classical Chinese works, including the Four Great Classical Novels, as well as Western literary masterpieces. Over the years, reading has remained my most cherished pastime.

After transitioning into the corporate world, my company discouraged the external publication of technical papers. Nevertheless, the writing habit cultivated during my doctoral studies persisted. Consequently, I redirected my creative energies toward literature as a new outlet for expression. Initially, my intention was to compose something concise. However, as ideas continued to emerge, the work naturally expanded in scope. Ultimately, it evolved into a 600,000-word novel.

**Wang:** I understand that you dedicated ten years to writing this novel—an exceptionally long period. Were there moments when you considered abandoning the project?

**Shi:** When I embarked on this journey, my initial plan was to create a brief and straightforward piece. At that time, I did not contemplate the duration required. I simply wrote whenever I had spare moments after work. After about a year, I realized that the novel was developing into a much

more substantial work, and I still lacked clarity regarding the total time needed for completion.

To make further progress, I engaged in a discussion with my wife and sought her support. I explained that I would require a more focused commitment to writing over the subsequent two years. She graciously agreed and assumed additional household responsibilities and childcare duties to accommodate my dedication to the novel.

However, as the writing extended into the fifth year without a foreseeable conclusion, her patience began to diminish. She started to vocalize her frustrations, and eventually, she expressed reluctance to see me working on the novel at home. This marked a particularly challenging period for both of us.

Even amidst these challenges, I never seriously entertained the idea of abandoning the project. Instead, I revisited our arrangement and assumed greater responsibilities at home—sharing household chores and chauffeuring our children to their activities. I continued writing whenever possible: at the badminton court, during swimming lessons, in waiting rooms—every available moment became an opportunity to advance the novel.

**Wang:** It appears that the writing process was both protracted and demanding. How did you maintain your motivation throughout?

**Shi:** As I progressed with the novel, I gradually came to realize that I occupied a truly unique position in telling this story—and this awareness became a significant source of motivation for me. I viewed it as both an honor and a responsibility.

Firstly, the novel is not merely a work of literature; it also integrates elements of science. Within the context of modern Chinese history, science has arguably played a more pivotal role than literature in shaping the nation's destiny. The Western powers compelled China to open its doors primarily due to their advancements in technology and science. However, traditional Chinese literature rarely addresses scientific themes. While there are numerous classical Chinese novels, very few explore scientific topics. Given my background—a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering—I considered myself uniquely qualified to meaningfully incorporate science into a literary narrative.

Second, the narrative spans both China and the United States. I was raised in a profoundly traditional Chinese household and did not leave my home province until attending university. My upbringing was entirely steeped in Chinese culture—its traditions, history, music, art, and folklore. America once appeared to me as a distant and abstract concept. I formerly believed that Chinese and American cultures were fundamentally incompatible. However, after residing in the U.S. for over two decades and visiting 40 of its 50 states, I have developed an intimate understanding of American society. I am as familiar with my neighborhood in Chicago as I am with my hometown in China. This bicultural experience enables me to authentically represent both worlds.

Third, the book extends beyond merely Chinese and Western cultures. It also delves into Indian, African, Latin American, and Native American traditions. In China, when individuals refer to "Western culture," they often exclusively think of the U.S. and Europe, frequently overlooking other global cultures. As a global engineer, I have had the rare opportunity to experience many of these cultures firsthand. This novel provided me with the platform to explore and interconnect them, aiming to foster a more comprehensive sense of world culture.

Fourth, I believe I am uniquely positioned to undertake this literary endeavor. Over a century ago, Liang Qichao envisioned a novel that harmonized Chinese and Western cultures. He commenced writing Xin Zhongguo Wei Lai Ji (The Future of New China) in 1902 but left it unfinished due to shifting political priorities. Later, Lu Xun aspired to merge literature and science into a grand novel. However, his literary pursuits were constrained by the sociopolitical upheavals of his time, limiting him to writing short stories. In contrast, I live in an era of relative peace, possess a stable career, and can dedicate sufficient time to writing. If I encounter challenges in this endeavor, I can only imagine the far greater obstacles faced by others in the past.

With these motivations, I felt I was creating something meaningful—something that could resonate with and benefit a wide readership. This sense of purpose sustained me, regardless of how long or arduous the journey became.

**Wang:** Why did you choose the title Dream of the Mustard Seed for your novel?

**Shi:** The title Dream of the Mustard Seed emerged after much contemplation. This novel encompasses a vast array of cultures—both ancient and modern, Eastern and Western. I reflected on what could serve as a convergence point for such diverse elements.

The "mustard seed" is an exceedingly small object, yet it embodies profound philosophical concepts. In ancient times, the Song dynasty poet Xin Qiji wrote, "Do not speak of Sumeru in a mustard seed; observe the great roc soaring." Today, modern science reveals that the universe originated from a singularity—a point of infinite density and infinitesimal size. This singularity, despite its minuscule nature, contained the potential for the entire cosmos, much like the symbolic mustard seed.

In Chinese Buddhism, there exists the concept of "a mustard seed containing Mount Sumeru," which illustrates the idea that the immense can reside within the infinitesimal. Similarly, in Christianity, the mustard seed represents faith: "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed…" The Quran also mentions that even deeds as small as a mustard seed are accounted for in divine judgment. Thus, the mustard seed serves as a symbolic intersection across cultures and eras, bridging Eastern and Western philosophies.

As for "dream," it evokes a realm that transcends the boundaries of reality and illusion, akin to Dream of the Red Chamber. The "dream" in my title reflects this duality, capturing the intricate blend of reality and imagination woven throughout the novel.

**Wang:** Could you provide a concise introduction to your novel Dream of the Mustard Seed?

**Shi:** Dream of the Mustard Seed is a sweeping epic that chronicles the lives of five generations of the Yang family, set against the backdrop of a century of profound transformation in China, spanning from 1900 to 2000. This period witnessed a series of momentous events, including the fall of the Qing Dynasty, the Xinhai Revolution, the War of Resistance against Japan, the Chinese Civil War, the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Cultural Revolution, the Reform and Opening-Up Policy, and the return of Hong Kong to China. Each of these events represents a significant milestone in China's 5,000-year history, and this novel portrays them through the intimate lens of one family's journey.

Much like Feng Menglong's Chronicles of the Eastern Zhou Kingdoms, which recounts five centuries of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, or Luo Guanzhong's Romance of the Three Kingdoms, which spans eighty years of turbulent history, Dream of the Mustard Seed seeks to encapsulate an entire century of China's transformation. To the best of my knowledge, there has not previously been a comprehensive novel that narrates this century-long narrative in its entirety—until now.

This novel does not merely recount historical events; it explores the cultural, social, and personal dimensions of the era, interweaving narratives that embody the resilience and adaptability of the Chinese people. It stands as a tribute to the enduring spirit of a nation and its people during one of the most transformative centuries in their history.

**Wang:** It certainly sounds intriguing. Could you provide an overview of your novel Dream of the Mustard Seed to offer readers a glimpse into its narrative?

**Shi:** Certainly. This novel chronicles the experiences of five generations of the Yang family, set against the backdrop of everyday life in Shanhe Town. It depicts a century of profound transformation in Chinese society while examining diverse global civilizations.

At the Heavenly Assembly, the Buddha held up a mustard seed to symbolize the vastness of the universe encapsulated within the smallest particle. This mustard seed developed an aspiration to explore the human world, and under the guidance of the deity Guan Yu, it was directed to the Yang family in Shanhe Town, where it was fated to be reborn as Yang Jiezi—given that "Mustard Seed" translates to "Jie Zi" in Chinese.

Although small in size, Shanhe Town functions as a microcosm of China. Its name, which translates to "mountains and rivers," encapsulates the essence of Chinese civilization. The town's sixteen households correspond to the first sixteen surnames listed in the classic text "Hundred Family Surnames": Zhao, Qian, Sun, Li; Zhou, Wu, Zheng, Wang; Feng, Chen, Chu, Wei; Jiang, Shen, Han, and Yang.

Yang Tianjian, after successfully passing the military examination, was appointed to Guangxi for border defense duties. He assisted General Feng Zicai in achieving a decisive victory against the French during the Sino-French War, notably at the Battle of Zhennan Pass. However, when the Qing court ordered the withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, Yang Tianjian voiced his objections and was consequently dismissed from his post. He returned to Shanhe Town on horseback and dedicated himself to establishing a construction enterprise, which would later amass substantial wealth for his son, Yang Jiting.

Yang Jiting inherited his father's enterprise; however, the nation's defeat and subsequent territorial concessions precipitated economic decline, rendering the construction business largely obsolete. During the Boxer Rebellion, Jiang Sheng led the Boxers in attacking Christians. Li Zhiliang and his family were rescued from peril by a drunken Yang Jiting. In gratitude, the Li family arranged for their daughter, Li Youhui, to marry Yang Jiting. Later, while overseeing the renovation of the Guan Yu Temple, Yang Jiting was provoked into overexertion by rival builders, which ultimately led to his death from exhaustion, leaving behind his widow and child.

Following the passing of his father, Yang Fengye's family descended into dire poverty. Despite his intellectual gifts and scholarly potential, the turbulent socio-political climate and his unwavering refusal to compromise hindered his prospects, leaving him unmarried well into his thirties. Zhou Yuzhen, the highly capable daughter of affluent merchant Zhou Shengchang, skillfully managed the family business but remained unmarried due to her large feet—a trait stigmatized by traditional societal norms. Ultimately, she married the destitute yet principled Yang Fengye. This union proved unexpectedly advantageous; during the Communist era, their modest social standing shielded them from political persecution. Together, they had a son, Yang Zhixing.

Owing to financial difficulties, Yang Zhixing left school at an early age. Jiang Gangtie, a principled veteran revolutionary, had a daughter named Jiang Jiajie, who demonstrated exceptional academic prowess but was unable to afford high school tuition due to economic constraints. After leaving school, she married Yang Zhixing. During the reform era, Yang Zhixing worked as a coal miner and survived a catastrophic flood in the mine. Following this life-altering event, he dedicated himself to studying traditional Chinese medicine, which gradually improved the family's financial situation. Their primary concern, however, remained their son, Yang Jiezi, who appeared to lack intellectual acumen.

Although he appeared to be simple-minded, Yang Jiezi pursued his education with unwavering diligence. He eventually earned a Ph.D. in the United States and traveled extensively across various countries. One evening, while abroad, he was overcome by an intense longing for his homeland and family, which prompted his decision to return. On a high-speed train journeying back to Shanhe Town, he gazed out at the rapidly changing landscape, reflecting on his great-great-grandfather Yang Tianjian's arduous horseback journey home over a century ago. He marveled at the profound transformations that time had brought about.

**Wang:** You mentioned that you integrated Chinese and Western cultures in your novel. Could you elaborate on a specific example?

**Shi:** Certainly. In one chapter, I explore the Confucian concept of the Six Arts—rites (礼), music (乐), archery (射), charioteering (御), calligraphy (书), and mathematics (数)—which were fundamental disciplines for nurturing a well-rounded individual in ancient China. I establish parallels between these arts and contemporary university majors, thereby providing a bridge between traditional and modern educational philosophies.

Rites (礼): Comparable to studies in ethics or philosophy, with a focus on cultivating moral conduct and fostering social harmony.

Music (乐): Aligned with music or performing arts programs, emphasizing emotional expression and cultural appreciation.

Archery (射): Similar to physical education or sports science, promoting physical health and instilling discipline.

Charioteering (御): Analogous to engineering or mechanical studies, involving the control and coordination of complex systems.

Calligraphy (书): Associated with literature or fine arts, emphasizing creativity and refining communication skills.

Mathematics (数): Closely aligned with modern mathematics or data science, concentrating on analytical and quantitative reasoning.

By correlating these ancient disciplines with contemporary fields of study, I seek to demonstrate the enduring value of a holistic education and how traditional Chinese educational philosophies can be meaningfully integrated into today's academic landscape.

**Wang:** Could you elaborate on how you integrated a rigorous, research-based methodology—reminiscent of the process involved in composing a scientific paper—into the development of your novel?

**Shi:** Certainly. A noteworthy example is my portrayal of the Battle of Niangziguan during the invasion of China by the Eight-Nation Alliance. Historical accounts of this battle differ considerably. Some sources, such as Qing military reports, assert that Qing forces inflicted substantial casualties—up to 1,800—on the Eight-Nation Alliance. Conversely, other records, including Japanese military documents, contend that these figures were grossly exaggerated, with actual casualties being relatively minimal.

To establish a more precise and reliable account, I undertook extensive research, consulting numerous original sources, including the Draft History of the Qing Dynasty, the diary of Alfred von Waldersee—the German field marshal who commanded the Eight-Nation Alliance—as well as reports from the Chicago Daily Tribune dated 1901. Through the meticulous cross-referencing of these varied accounts, I was able to reconstruct the event with enhanced accuracy and depth, thereby ensuring that my narrative remained both credible and engaging.

This meticulous approach is reflective of my engineering background, wherein precision and evidence-based analysis are of paramount importance. I firmly believe that applying such rigor to historical fiction not only enhances its authenticity but also pays tribute to the complexity of the events and the individuals who experienced them.

**Wang:** As a Chinese individual who has resided abroad and extensively traveled to various countries, how have these experiences influenced your literary work?

**Shi:** As a Chinese individual residing abroad, I have come to recognize that my literary work is enriched by a unique perspective that serves as a bridge between diverse cultures and experiences. This vantage point enables me to interact more deeply with individuals from varied backgrounds, thereby enhancing my comprehension of their histories and traditions. At the same time, it affords me the opportunity to reflect more thoughtfully on Chinese culture, allowing me to appreciate its uniqueness and resilience.

Prior to relocating to the United States, my understanding of American life was predominantly influenced by Hollywood films, which portrayed images of opulent homes and extravagant lifestyles. However, my experiences in the U.S. have unveiled a far more intricate reality. For example, during my Ph.D. studies, an American classmate once commented, "You're wealthy; I'm poor." Surprised by this statement, I responded, "I am not wealthy. Why do you say that?" He clarified, "Do you have student loans?" Upon learning that I did not, he explained, "That's precisely the point. You completed your education without incurring debt, whereas I owe hundreds of thousands of dollars. In comparison, you are financially better off than I am." He further disclosed that his parents divorced when he was young; his father remarried and had additional children, providing no financial support, while his unemployed mother was unable to offer financial assistance. This conversation profoundly altered my preconceived notions about American affluence.

In another instance, a Colombian friend conveyed his amazement at the level of safety in China. He remarked that in his home country, even driving during the day can pose significant risks due to the prevalence of robberies. He explained how entering certain areas could result in being ambushed by multiple vehicles. He further expressed regret that despite Colombia's rich endowment of resources—such as food, fruits, and minerals—the absence of security, compounded by governmental corruption and control by drug cartels, makes daily life perilous. With a sigh, he stated, "If only our country could achieve safety, it would truly be a paradise."

These narratives have significantly deepened my appreciation of China's achievements and stability. They inspire me to systematically document and disseminate these stories through my writing, with the aim of exploring the intricacies

of cultural identity and the multifaceted experiences of individuals across the globe.

**Wang:** Do you plan to continue pursuing literary creation in the future?

**Shi:** Yes, I intend to continue my literary pursuits in the future, though I regard myself as a writer with relatively limited output. On the one hand, I have professional responsibilities that occupy much of my time, leaving writing to be conducted during my limited spare hours. On the other hand, I maintain stringent standards for my work, and only those pieces that have undergone meticulous refinement and with which I am fully satisfied are presented to readers.

Take Dream of the Mustard Seed as an example. Over the course of its decade-long creation process, I meticulously revised the manuscript numerous times before finalizing it. At one stage, the fourth draft exceeded one million words in length. Subsequently, I made substantial cuts, deleting over 400,000 words, to ultimately shape the current version, which spans more than 600,000 words. This rigorous and extensive revision process has led many to describe me as someone who "forged a sword over ten years," a phrase that aptly encapsulates my approach to literary creation and may well define my future endeavors in this field.

**Wang:** This conversation has been highly enlightening. While there is significantly more to explore, time constraints necessitate that we continue this discussion at another opportunity. Thank you for sharing your valuable insights, and I extend my wishes for continued success in your literary endeavors.

**Shi:** Thank you, Professor Wang, for your insightful and thought-provoking questions.

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# Pranayama-Mantra: Oxygen of Life

*Dr Carlos Munoz*[δ]

## ABSTRACT

*Life definition varies with studies. For Vedic Science prana means a vibratory lively energy, while traditional Science only defines a physical energy as a quantitative property that is transferred to the body through metabolic processes. One-fourth of the world's adult population is suffering from hypertension, which is predicted to increase to 29% by 2025. The awareness and practice of aerobic exercise and yoga is a good proposal for this aged group. In the West most people believe that pranayama is only a respiratory technique useful for wellness and health. But, for Hindu doctrine called Suddha Dharma Mandalam introduced in South-America by Master Sri Vayera Yogi Dasa, exercise also involves a spiritual-mental attitude.*

*The aim of this study is to analyze the role of pranayama-mantras in human health, its methods of actions and objectives*

*Essentially Pranayama (prana or energy + ayama or control) is an expansion process of the human mind to Universal Consciousness leading to divine contact. There are different types of pranayama respiratory exercises with/without mental mantra recitation including inspiration (pooraka)-retention (khumbaka)-exhalation (rechaka): a) Prakrita (matter) only physiological breathing rhythmic exercise, leading to strengthening the body and therapy for organic diseases; b) Atmiya (personal Spirit): breathing rhythmic exercise combined with mental mantra recitation and personal spiritual thought , which allows conscious contact with our Atman; and c) Suddha (Universal Spirit): breathing rhythmic exercise combined with mental mantra recitation and cosmic spiritual thought, reaching contact with Pure Universal Consciousness. Practice Pranayama-Mantra to obtain vital prana*

*"Life is Prana, Prana is life. Presence of Prana in the body ensures life"*
*"Life is not O2, O2 is not life. Presence of O2 in the body does not ensure life"*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Life's concept depends on criterium analysis. For Vedic Science the whole universe can be comprehended in terms of vibrations, where Prana (Sanskrit word - प्राण) means a vibratory lively energy derived from the Pure Consciousness. He is obtained from the air and absorbed from the breathing. Science has usually ignored concepts when it didn't understand or couldn't prove through experiments and measure through laboratory equipment. Mechanistic science is fixed in the framework of "naïve realism" what you see is all there is. Modern Science talks about various types of basic energies like electrical, thermal, etc. expressions one or cosmic energy described in text known as Upanishads (Baluni R, 2023). By other hand, different lines of evidence from evolutionary biology (Wagner PD, 2008), geochemistry (Becker A, et al. 2004), and systems biology build a central role of oxygen (O2) in evolution of multicellular life on the earth (Falkowski PG, 2006). Physiologists consider how O2 travels from environment to mitochondria, Metabolists its role focused in energy generation, Biochemists as a source of reactive O2 and Clinicians on tissue structure and function.

The ancient Sanskrit word "prana" carries with it a mystical character. It is much more than just air or breathing. Throughout the ancient world, the concept of moving air was wrapped in wonder. Known as ruah in Hebrew, pneuma in Greek, spiritus in Latin and chi in Chinese it was synonymous with life itself. In the verse from Gospel of John, Jesus explains the nature of pneuma to Nikodemus: "the wind blotch where it listed, and thou headrest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goth: so it is everyone that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). By looking at the Hebrew version of the creation of Adam: "and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Comparatively, the eastern the great Sage Patanjali (~ III century, BC) pointed out: "breathing practices bring true understanding and knowledge into life by destroying all the impurities of mind" (Taimni IK, 1961); pranayama is the fourth of the eight "limbs" mentioned in his famous Yoga Sutras, who presented it as essentially respiratory exercise that is preliminary to concentration as do the earlier Buddhist texts (Pande GC, 1990). Yoga teachers including BKS Iyengar have advised that pranayama should be part of an overall practice that includes the other limbs of Patanjali's teaching such as asana or postural poses (Iyengar BKS, 2011). The Indian tradition of Hatha Yoga makes use of various pranayama breathing-style where the 15th century Hatha Yoga Pradipika text (Mallinson J et al, 2011), which was written by the sage Svatmarama includes several techniques widely used today through western schools. In the 19th century the celebrated Swami Yogananda, a direct monastic disciple of Ramakrishna, wrote: "the real meaning of pranayama is the gradual cessation of breathing (Yogananda Paramahansa, 2005). The actual well-known yoga scholar Andrea Jain (editor of the Journal of the American Academy of Religions) states that pranayama breathing was "marginal in the most widely cited sources" before the 20th century, and that these practices were dramatically unlike the modern ones; she writes that while pranayama in modern yoga as an exercise consists of synchronizing the breath with movements (between asanas), in texts like Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, pranayama meant "complete cessation of breathing" (Jain A, 2015)

The breathing pattern of most people is very shallow; we use a very small portion of about 1/11th of our lung capacity! This low capacity breathing pattern deprives us from proper oxygen for health and well-being. In Yoga, the human lifespan is also considered in terms of breathing: yoga says the faster and shallower the breath, the shorter our life. The slower and deeper our breath, the longer our life. Breathing is the very first and very last act of life. The act of breathing is so simple, so obvious that we normally take it for granted; but breathing holds the very fabric of life and is the key to our breath and wellness. The Yoga breathing exercises, well known as "pranayama", are essentials for wellness and health. Yogis say that breathing is the connecting force of the body, mind and heart. Thus, one of the most important benefits of pranayama, aside from our health, is the expansion of consciousness. Our breath, what Yoga calls "prana" or the vital force of life, is a vehicle that moves us into subtle layers of our energy body. With the help of this vital force, we come into contact with our core self-establishment in our true nature. Thus, yogic breathing practices are designed to clear the blockage of energy channels in the body and support movement of prana.

Pranayama cycle (three-phase breath-exercise): Yoga is an ancient Indian practice

for bodily, mental and spiritual communication. In the West, it was introduced by Swami Vivekananda (Vedanta School) in the United States in 1893 (Remadevi S, 1999) and by Sri Vayera Yogui Dasa (Suddha Dharma Mandalam) (SDM) (Janardana TM, 1951; Muñoz C et al, 2020) in South America Chile in 1920 (Fig 1). In today West, standard Yoga usually combines asana (posture), pranayama (breathing) and meditation (mental-spiritual quiet), with 89% of yogis using pranayama and about half (45%) using meditation combined with asana (Dinesh et al, 2015). Pranayama requires voluntary control of respiratory muscles and involves different breathing speeds, shortening and elongation of breathing, and breath holding via the known three main stages or phases: a) puraka or inhalation, b) kumbhaka or retention, c) rechaka or exhalation. According to Hatha Yogis, each stage has the effect of enhancing physical awareness and enforcing introspection; therefore, as a whole, pranayama is integral to the practice of yoga and a key element in the ultimate pursuit of enlightenment. By other hand, there are three types of pranayama including: a) Prakrita; b) Atmiya; and c) Suddha

## II. MATERIAL PRANAYAMA (SINGLE ACTION: BREATHING)

Prakrita (matter) Pranayama: it is defined as only physiological breathing rhythmic exercise, which involves a breath-control for puraka:khumbaka:rechaka stages with different time-proportions among each of them. This practice leads to strengthening the physical body and it is therapeutic for different organic diseases as shown previously in the second part of this article. While its role in Yoga is recognized its force is however minimized and even dismissed as of no aid to the contacting of the Divine, but permitting its practice actively for the achievements of bodily and mental vigour only. This statement is substantiated with what Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh (Himalayas) has written in his book on the Science of Pranayama, wherein in reply to the poser "Is pranayama necessary for getting darshan of the Lord", the Sage emphatically states NO. So then, it follows that this Pranayama though an "anga" of Yoga is useless, if the goal is held as "contacting the Divine" since it does not serve this purpose at all (Janardana TM, 1953). Modern Yogis turn around and declare, breath-control is intended as preliminary action to lead the Consciousness Godward ultimately, and hence pranayama is breath-control. Though the act of substituting "container for the contained", and of meaning one thing and stating another, may be euphemistically admirable in other spheres of knowledge, it has no place in an exact science like Yoga. Thus, Prakrita pranayama consequently has no place in a scheme which has for its object God realization as such, exclusively and unconditionally. Furthermore, this Prakrita pranayama involves only a rhythmic breathing. If someone wants to increase their physical power and higher resistance to diseases, then practice this pranayama or respiratory exercise maintaining the adequate times and intensity for inspiration, retention and exhalation, which should be well executed and directed by a competent Instructor.

Several pranayama-breathing studies by diaphragmatic stretching have reported improves thoracic and abdominal cavity expansion, lumbar flexibility, body stability, balance and expiratory muscle activity (Gonzalez-Alvarez FJ et al, 2016; Abel AN et al, 2013; Ankad RB et al, 2011). Respiratory muscles, especially inspiratory muscle strength, plays a significant role in muscle endurance (van der Esch M et al, 2004). Other studies have suggested the effects of inspiratory muscle pressure on high-intensity exercises (Sasaki M et al, 2005; Witt JD et al, 2007) and their effects on the change of perception of respiratory exertion during exercise (Spengler CM et al, 2000). Improving respiratory muscle strength delays muscle fatigue and improves blood flow to peripheral muscles, thereby decreasing the sense of breathlessness (McConell Ak et al, 2004; Schoser B et al, 2017). Thus, practicing pranayama over an extended period could potentially enhance respiratory circulation and contribute to adequate motor control (Bradley H et al, 2014) as well as bring about further positive changes in physical function. A previous literature review concluded that a minimum of 10 weeks, with pranayama practiced at least twice a week, was needed to observe changes in pulmonary function (Abel AN et al, 2013). In addition, it has been reported that changes in respiratory function take longer in younger than in older people (Ahmed QR et al, 2010; Tran MD et al, 2001)

Among common chronic diseases, hypertension is certainly one of the major health problems globally. One-fourth of the world's adult population is suffering from hypertension, which is predicted to increase to 29% by 2025 (Manchanda

SC, 2013). The World Health Statistics 2012 report depicted that 23% of men/women of more than 25 years of age suffer from hypertension. Physical inactivity is an important risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and less active people have 30- 50% more risk of developing hypertension (Whelton SP et al, 2002). It is found that 54% of stroke and 47% of ischemic heart disease worldwide occur due to hypertension. According to the American College of Sport medicine, even the reduction of 2mmHg systolic and diastolic blood pressure (BP) reduce the risk of stroke by 14% and 17% and risk of coronary artery disease by 9% and 6%, respectively (Baster T et al, 2005). In addition to aerobic exercise, another lifestyle modification which is helpful in reducing BP is yoga through mind-body exercise including asanas and pranayamas (Cohen D, 2007). Interestingly, the maximum awareness of aerobic exercise and yoga come through doctors (65%), followed by self (26%) and social (8%). By the other hand, the awareness and practice of aerobic exercise and yoga was the highest in the age group of 51-70 years old, which increased the prevalence of hypertension that may be associated with age-related changes. Increasing age is one of the important risk factors linked with hypertension due to atherosclerotic changes in the blood vessels, especially during stress (Bharatia R et al, 2016). In conclusion, this concern can be prevailed over by education and awareness program, seminars, or community visit, which will impart the knowledge of the role of exercise and yoga techniques such as pranayamas, with their benefits for hypertension or health to individual.

## III. SPIRITUAL PRANAYAMA (TRIPLE ACTION: BREATHING, RECITATION, THINKING)

In the West during the present time most of the people believe that pranayama is only a respiratory technique. However, for the Hindu doctrine Suddha Dharma Mandalam the significance of word pranayama breath-control is its surface meaning only, the exact Sanskrit word for it being "swasabandana" (mastery of the Energy of Life). Quite obviously pranayama must mean something deeper. As already mentioned, prana is a general word to indicate energy, life-force, intellect, spirit and so on; and the approximating exact word to convey its idea is "Consciousness"; similarly, "ayama" does not merely mean restrain and control, but it also means "expand"; so that, its importance is best conveyed by "leading to". Pranayama thus comes to mean "leading to Consciousness". Of course, the Consciousness is led not towards anything else but God (Janardana TM, 1940). According to Suddha teachings, there are two types of spiritual pranayamas which objectives are described below:

a) Atmiya (Atman or personal Spirit) Pranayama: it is defined as a mental spiritual breathing rhythmic exercise, which involves a breath-control for puraka:khumbaka:rechaka stages combined with both adequate mantra recitation and personal spiritual mental thinking. This practice is aimed at reaching a conscious contact that allows to experience the excellent qualities of the Atma-Yoti or Light of our personal Spirit, which is housed in the etheric chamber of our heart. This system requires mastery of the senses of the mind and it is practiced by those called "Gnanis" (Sage of knowledge) who have devoted themselves to Atmavichara inquiry into Atman, as being free from and independent of Prakriti (Matter). To them, the word is "mitya" – false or No True – and governed by "maya" – illusion or transitory truth, hence to be rejected. In other words, the contact with the Atman or personal Spirit is the "pure eternal Essence" and the real goal of their aspirations. Atma (Spirit) and Prakriti (Matter) are unrelated and opposed to each other and that to realize Atma has to be suppressed. These two are ever in unison, mutually interacting and influencing each other and that under no condition whatsoever, one remains without the other in the Word-Process are truths which these people have yet to learn. Atmiya pranayama includes the following triple action: rhythmic breathing + syllable/mantra recitation + Atma thought. Figure 2 shows Pranayama-Mantra including the three stages and its respective actions. In relation to this practice, the famous text called Aparokshanubhuti of Sri Sankaracharya and one of the highest Upanishads, says: the comprehension of "I Am an eternal Spirit" is the real Puraka (inhalation), the maintenance of this idea in mind is the real Kumbhaka (retention), and the elimination of any separativity's idea from the mind is the real Rechaka (exhalation. The disciple should think that Spirit shines with all divine powers into the heart (Suddham Atma Khyamamalam, Suddha Ñanatapomayam). To succeed in Atmiya Pranayama, the aspirant should master the senses of the mind, vegetarian and frugal food, will and

purity, the desire to achieve spiritual vision and the wisdom contained in the Atman's Light

b) Suddha (Brahm or Universal Spirit) Pranayama: it is defined as mental spiritual breathing rhythmic exercise, which involves a breath-control for puraka:khumbaka:rechaka stages combined with both adequate mantra recitation and cosmic spiritual mental thinking. This practice is aimed at reaching a conscious contact with The Absolute or Pure-Transcendent-Immanent-Power of Supreme Bright of Universal Consciousness which compenetrates all beings giving them life. The variety of Suddha pranayama is free from the "octopus" of the two previous kinds. Wherein, the play of opposites is the rule, and no easily got over, the act of taking sides quickly yields results. We have the Materialists who act denying the Spiritual-Principle, and the Spiritualists bent on emasculating the ever-present and necessary material vehicles and their legitimate operations in life. It is important to transcend the influence of opposites by which the placements of various parts are understandingly equated to the Whole. It is obvious, to do so, the Mind has got to be educated on proper basis. We must remember that Everything is Brahm, Everything is of the Nature of Brahm (Sarvam tatkalvidam Brahm), Everything is Necessity, which reveal the stand-point of synthesis. Atman is not Brahm, since Brahm is triune - Atma, Shakti and Prakriti – each of these occupying a distinct and unique place in the scheme of the Wholeness, interacting on each other mutually. Atma abides in this World-Processes as the Representative of Brahm, and its realization as a first step though important is not a completeness in itself. The Senses are weaned away gradually from the attractive and repulsive nature of objects by degrees, until at last their effects are neutralized by the perception of True in them, getting thus sublimated. Such a study and objective practice which are subjective are prerequisites that conduce to success in Suddha (pure) Pranayama. Practice of Suddha or Brahmic pranayama involves a triple action: rhythmic breathing + syllable/mantra recitation + Brahm thought

Pranayama as such is the technical name given to that practice which is entirely subjective, since leading the Consciousness Godward is a mental act. Consciousness has its dominant seat in Manas (Mind-emotion plane). Manas by its nature is usually outward-turned towards objects, and the Senses are their gateways to carry the impressions made by objects. To divert the course of Manas from objects towards God, pranayama is the first act, prior to meditation (Dhyana) which is an act of continuity. Certain external conditions are absolutely necessary while in the period of practice viz solitariness (away from crown) avoidance of overfeeding, austerity, quietude and a frequent recalling at all times in the Manas of Brahmic beatitudes. Three essential features go to make up a complete pranayama. They are the mental acts of

1. Reducing the Many into the One Immanent-Divine-Essence,
2. Of retaining the idea of Wholeness in which the One and the Many abide as always necessary auxiliaries,
3. And of dismissing all those hindrances that prevent the retention of this unique fact of knowledge. Manas, the eleventh Sense, the vehicle of meditation, though receives its impressions through the Senses, is not exclusively conditioned by them, since it has its own independent movements of likes and dislikes. Various capacities are acquired through the practice of pranayama of which four pertain to Puraka (inhalation) being: attractive friendliness, ability to receive and unite, the abandoning of distractive ideations and the state of wantlessness. Similarly, a second set of fourfold capacities accrued through Kumbhaka (retention) include: state of mental stillness or quietude, state one-ness in Brahm, the feeling of firmness of character and the state of equipoise.

The purpose of this sublime pranayama is to lead to contact with Divinity in oneself and in the infinite cosmos. In physical appearance we are separated, but in reality we are united by very subtle forces and ethers until reach the Atma-Sutra or atomic thread, which forms and maintains the order and unity of all things and beings. If we meditate deeply on Unity (Bhavana), it is possible to feel Unity with the Absolute. Through this elevated sacred spiritual practice, the human being can reach the direct knowledge of Unity of Everything and feel his own soul as expanded in the vastness. The individual Atman connected with the universal Brahm, then the imagination is made that the Divine Power or Brahma Shakti underlying the suns, moons, lands, trees, birds, animals, angels

and Gods, is mentally attracted to the depths of us. The attraction of this Shakti should be as long as possible for the disciple. It must be thought that it is like a magnet of powerful attraction and that it continuously attracts each time the Power which is accumulated in its interior. The transcendentally Conscious Spirit of the God (Brahm) is in every place, through his competing and transcendent power with all his Divine powers. In relation to the Suddha pranayama practice, the Suddha Master Vayera Yogi Dasa explained this topic as follows: Puraka or inhalation includes the mental-attraction of Brahma Shakti or Divine Power as long time as possible; the second stage Kumbhaka includes the mental-retention of the Divine Power it accumulates into the subtle heart of the disciple; the last Rechaka phase includes the mental-expansion of the Energy from our heart compenetrating all the things and beings, unifying and infusing them great Peace and Transcendency.

## IV. CONCLUSION

It seems that when the breath, as prana and not molecular O2, is ready to leave, all other senses recognize that it is the most vital. In the absence of Prana, there is no survival at all. Prana is existential, anybody with and willingness to feel the vitality can effortlessly view and experience various sources of Pranic energy

Based on the present background, it is possible to mention that the triple action of breathing-mantra-thought for Atmiya or Suddha Pranayamas represent the key for contacting the Self-Divine through spiritual practice of Raja-Yoga, while the unique action of breathing for Prakrita Pranayama represents good option for strengthening the physical body through the physical exercise of Hatha-Yoga

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