

Twelve Basic Philosophical Concepts in Kant and the Compound Yijing

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STEPHEN R. PALMQUIST*

TWELVE BASIC PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS

IN KANT AND THE COMPOUND *YIJING*

ABSTRACT

This series correlates Kant's architectonic with the *Yijing*'s 64 hexagrams (*gua*). Previous articles explained "architectonic" reasoning, introduced four levels of the "Compound *Yijing*", consisting of $0+4+12+(4 \times 12=48)$ *gua*, and suggested correlating the fourth level's four sets of 12 to the four "faculties" in Kant's model of the university. This third paper examines the philosophy faculty, assessing whether the 12 proposed *gua* meaningfully correlate with 12 basic philosophical concepts that Kant introduces in his three *Critiques*. A key *difference* emerges: Kant's architectonic method aims to produce synthetic a priori knowledge, while the *Yijing*'s architectonic method aims to produce analytic a posteriori belief.

I. THE PARALLELS AND KEY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

KANT AND THE COMPOUND *YIJING*

In two previous articles, I have argued that certain parallels exist between Immanuel Kant's approach to doing philosophy and corresponding aspects of the *Yijing* 《易經》, the Chinese *Book of Changes*. The first article¹ defended the general claim that Kant and the *Yijing* both approach philosophical reasoning by adopting the "architectonic" (as opposed to the Aristotelian, "aggregate") method. In short, the latter begins by observing objects of the type one wishes to understand and attempts to draw general conclusions about them, while the former imposes a predetermined structure *onto* the object, creating

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a meaning the object would not have, if we did not put it there. The primary tool for architectonic reasoning in Kant's Critical philosophy is his table of twelve categories, while the corresponding tool we find in the *Yijing* is its system of 64 hexagrams (or *gua* 卦), exhibiting a dyadic (2^6) structure.

The second article² introduced what I call "the Compound *Yijing*," a non-standard way of arranging the *Yijing*'s 64 *gua* into four "levels," exhibiting a $0+4+12+48=64$ pattern (see Figure 1), and provided a detailed explanation and defense of how the first three levels of the Compound *Yijing* correlate with parallel aspects of Kant's philosophy. The first level ("0") refers to the paradoxically foundational-yet-empty role played by the "dao" in ancient Chinese philosophy and by the "thing in itself" in Kant's system: in both cases, nothing literally true can be said of the reality being named, yet that reality informs and perhaps even creates all knowable objects.³ The second level consists of Kant's four main category headings (i.e., quantity, quality, relation, and modality) on the one hand, and of the *Yijing*'s first and last pairs of *gua* (i.e., numbers 1, 2, 63, and 64) on the other. And on the third level, a parallel emerges between Kant's table of 12 categories (divided into four sets of three) and the 12 *gua* that arise from a consistent application of a small set of explicit mapping rules. The second article concluded with a tentative sketch of how correlations might look on the fourth level: if the same mapping rules are used to arrange the remaining 48 *gua* into four sets of 12 (each in a 4x3 pattern), then each set of 12 might end up exhibiting some significant correspondence to one of the four "faculties" in Kant's model of the university: philosophy, theology, law, and medicine correspond to the four quadrants of the Compound *Yijing*, headed by *gua* numbers 2 (*yin-yin*), 1 (*yang-yang*), 64 (*yang-yin*), and 63 (*yin-yang*), respectively.

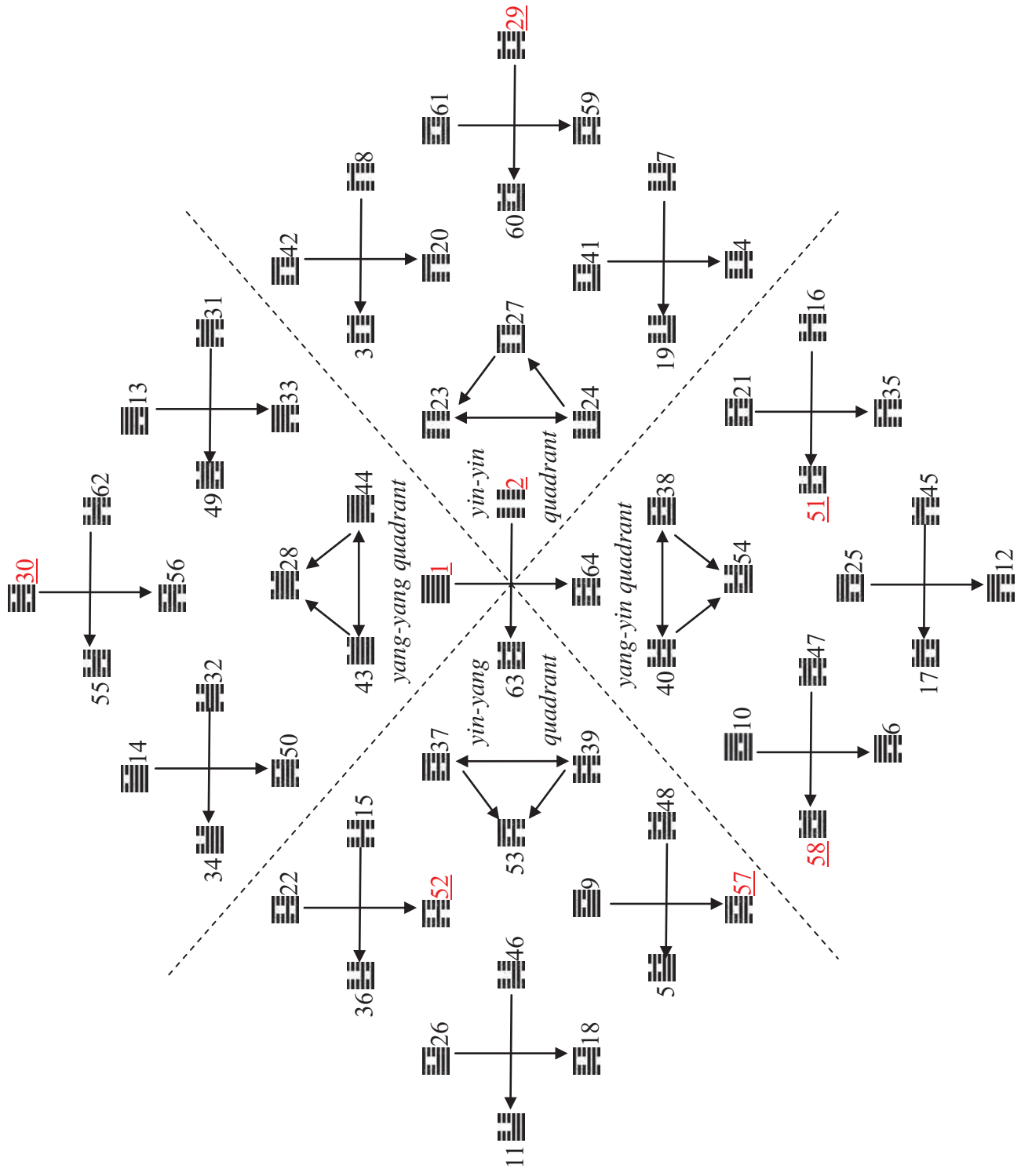


Figure 1: The Compound *Yijing*, showing all 64 *gua*

While I have argued in the previous two articles in this series that Kant and the *Yijing* both share an “architectonic” approach to philosophy, this third article provides the opportunity to highlight a key *difference* between these two ways of interpreting human experience. This difference can best be understood in Kantian terms by recalling that Kant’s philosophy also goes by the label *transcendental*, a technical term that means the truths generated by his architectonic system will be *synthetic* truths (i.e., true because of their factual applicability to the world, not merely truths about the way words are used), yet their truth-status will carry with it *a priori* necessity (i.e., its justification will not require an appeal to any specific experiences). By contrast, as I shall demonstrate below, the *Yijing*’s form of architectonic philosophy is (what I call) *hypothetical*. As I have argued elsewhere, the latter term is best understood as referring to truth-claims that are both *analytic* (i.e., true by virtue of the stipulated meanings we give to the relevant words) and *a posteriori* (i.e., its justification *will* require an appeal to specific experiences).⁴ Thus, while the focus of *Kant*’s architectonic method is to produce synthetic a priori knowledge (i.e., his method aims at a *transcendental* outcome: discovering the necessary conditions for the possibility of experience), the focus of the *Yijing*’s architectonic method is to produce *analytic a posteriori belief* (i.e., its method aims at a *hypothetical* outcome: naming an ideal set of conditions that are in themselves contingent, but that—taken together—symbolically represent all possible types of experience). Once this radical difference between the Kantian system and the *Yijing* system is taken into consideration, my claim that the two share a commitment to architectonic reasoning should be considerably less problematic.

In what follows, I shall discuss three sets of fourfold examples of how Kant applies

his architectonic transcendentally to the (apparent, but not actual) exclusion of hypothetical reasoning, whereas the *Yijing* adopts the latter to the (apparent, but not actual) exclusion of the former. Those who fail to recognize the architectonic nature of the *Yijing*, but who instead treat it as a system providing the type of knowledge that Kant calls “aggregate” (i.e., knowledge based on generalization from *observed* experiences), inevitably tend to employ the ancient system in a superstitious way, such that it ceases to have any serious philosophical value. One who consults the *Yijing* with the latter outcome in mind does so not in order to gain *wisdom* but in order to gain *information*. When employing the aggregate approach, a person asks “What does *p* mean?” and *awaits* an answer; one who employs the architectonic approach, by contrast, says “I see that *p must* mean ...” and thereby *makes* an answer.

Another way to express the key difference between Kant’s type of structured (architectonic) approach and the type I see operating in the *Yijing* is to say that the empirical knowledge generated by Kant’s system is *deterministic* (i.e., it tells us the necessary conditions for the possibility of *scientific laws*), whereas the empirical knowledge generated by the *Yijing* is *free* and perhaps even *random* (i.e., it conveys contingent symbols that are meant to generate *insight*). In other words, determinism is to randomness as the synthetic a priori is to the analytic a posteriori; yet as I shall demonstrate below, both can be employed in an architectonic manner.

This difference is crucial to a proper understanding of the parallels I shall suggest between Kant and the Compound *Yijing* in the remainder of this paper: for each of the three quaternities discussed, I shall seek *parallel* relations, not relations of exact identity. When philosophers adopt an architectonic approach of the Kantian (transcendental)

variety, the results of their inquiry should be *necessary and universal*; to search for a feature of *Kant's* architectonic that *could be otherwise* (i.e., a feature that might somehow *change*) would be a hopeless cause. One does not understand what “transcendental” *means*, if one asks how it might change, for what is transcendental is the *changeless* pattern that we *must* read onto our experience in order to have it at all. Likewise, one would misunderstand what “hypothetical” *means*, if one were to ask for a feature of the *Yijing's* architectonic that *could not be otherwise* (i.e., a feature of the 64-*gua* system that could *never change* into some other feature of the same system). Just as the whole point of interpretation in the *Yijing* is that it is always hypothetical, and that it is therefore *constantly subject to change*, so also the whole point of interpretation in *Kant's* theoretical system is that it is always transcendental, and is therefore *never subject to change*. Yet, they accomplish these opposite goals by applying an architectonic method that is otherwise virtually identical: each produces its respective system by imposing a predetermined formal/mathematical pattern *onto* the object under consideration, rather than reading the pattern *off of* the object.

My goal in the remaining three sections of this third paper is to explore the possible significance of the first of the four fourth-level correlations that were sketched toward the end of the previous article. This first correlation proposes that what *Kant* calls the “lower” faculty of the university (i.e., *philosophy*) corresponds to or is represented by the 12 *gua* on the fourth level of the Compound *Yijing* that are derived from *gua* number 2 (䷁), “the receptive” (*kun*, 坤). My previous hypothesis was that the three “quaternities” (i.e., sets of four *gua*) that appear in this first quadrant (see Figure 2) correspond to three categorial distinctions that *Kant* introduces at crucial junctures in each of his three

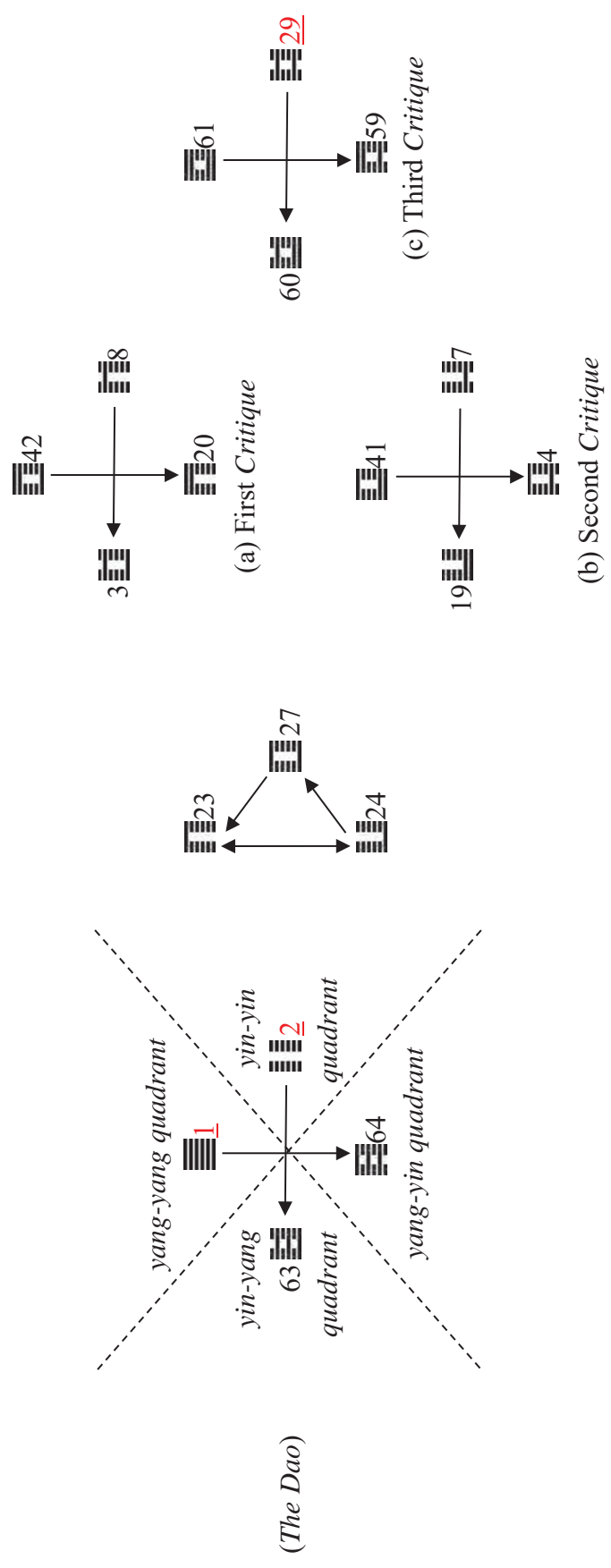
Critiques: the four perspectives on *nothing*⁵ that serve as a Preface to the Transcendental Dialectic in the first *Critique* correspond to *gua* 3, 8, 20, and 42; the four “categories of freedom” in the second chapter of the second *Critique*’s Analytic correspond to *gua* 4, 7, 19, and 41; and the four categorial “moments” in a judgment of *taste* in Part One of the third *Critique* correspond to *gua* 29, 59, 60, and 61. A thorough study of each of these proposed correlations would require an article of its own, so my goal here will be merely to illustrate the above-mentioned similarity-in-difference by observing some initial correlations that arise within each quaternity.

[INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE]

II. THE FIRST *YIN-YIN* QUATERNITY:

FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON NOTHING

Kant’s four “perspectives on nothing” have received very little attention from Kant scholars, largely because they almost seem like a joke: they appear (like an afterthought to an afterthought to an afterthought) in a concluding section, set off from a section called “*Comment on the Amphiboly of Concepts of Reflection*,”⁶ that is itself the final section of the *Appendix* to the Transcendental Analytic of Principles of the first *Critique*. Indeed, Kant begins his discussion in this passage by admitting that the topic is needed only “for the completeness of the system.”⁷ Anyone who disparages Kant’s love of architectonic will therefore naturally regard this section as little more than a humorous curiosity; but anyone who treats Kant’s architectonic with the seriousness that Kant himself treated it will recognize the careful placement of this section as marking a crucial turning point in the argument of the first *Critique*. For his table listing the four perspectives on nothing



Zero Gua on the First-Level The Four Gua on the Second-Level Three of the 12 Gua on the Third-Level The 12 "Receptive" Gua (out of 48) on the Fourth-Level

Figure 2: The Receptive (Philosophy) Quadrant on the Fourth Level of the Compound *Yijing*

comes immediately before he begins the Dialectic's all-important discussion of transcendental illusion. He presents these four concepts in tabular form, noting that they follow the same order as the standard table of categories,⁸ and devotes a numbered paragraph to explaining each.

Kant's table of the four perspectives on nothing makes an appropriate starting point for our discussion of the *yin-yin* quadrant of the Compound *Yijing*, for all twelve *gua* in this quadrant have *nothing* at their core (i.e., two *yin* lines in positions 3 and 4). But Kant's table is not entirely devoid of *thingness*, for its basic distinction is between nothingness as such ("*nihil*") and thingness as such ("*ens*")—though the distinction is made in a way that (as Kant states at the outset of the passage) transcends both possibility and impossibility. This is reflected in the four *gua* that correspond to Kant's quaternity by the fact that the second line of each *gua* is *yin* (nothing) while the fifth line is *yang* (thingness). As is the case for each quaternity that appears on the fourth level of the Compound *Yijing*, what distinguishes the four perspectives on nothing from each other is their top and bottom lines (i.e., lines 6 and 1). Let us therefore examine how the differences in those lines correlate with the distinctions Kant makes between these four concepts.

The primary distinction in Kant's table, between nothingness as such ("*nihil*") and nothingness that masquerades as a thing ("*ens*"), corresponds to the distinction between *yang* and *yin*, respectively, in line 6 (the top line) of each *gua* in Figure 3, below. That is, the *yang* in line 6 of the two vertical *gua* represents the *conceptual* nothingness ("*nihil*") named by the Kantian perspectives of *negativum* and *privativum*, while the *yin* in the two horizontal *gua* represents the *ontological* ("*ens*") nothingness named by the perspectives

of *rationis* and *imaginarium*. Likewise, the two *gua* that have *yang* in line 1 (the bottom line) correspond to the Kantian perspectives that exhibit non-conceptual emptiness (either an intuitive or a non-conceptual object), while the two that have *yin* in line 1 correspond to the perspectives that exhibit *conceptual* emptiness. As Kant describes these in his four numbered paragraphs,⁹ they refer to the following perspectives on nothing (listed, as usual, in the order of the categories): *ens rationis* is the *quantitative* nothingness of a concept that is empty because no object corresponds to it (i.e., it is merely a rational thing, such as the concept of “noumena”); *nihil privativum* is the *qualitative* nothingness of a concept of an empty object (“e.g., shadow or cold”); *ens imaginarium* is the *relational* nothingness of an intuition that is empty because no object corresponds to it (e.g., “pure space and pure time”); and *nihil negativum* is the *modal* nothingness of an object that is empty because no concept can be formed of it (e.g., a self-contradiction).

The above correlations between Kant’s four perspectives on nothing and the first quaternity in the *yin-yin* quadrant of the Compound *Yijing* can be mapped as follows:

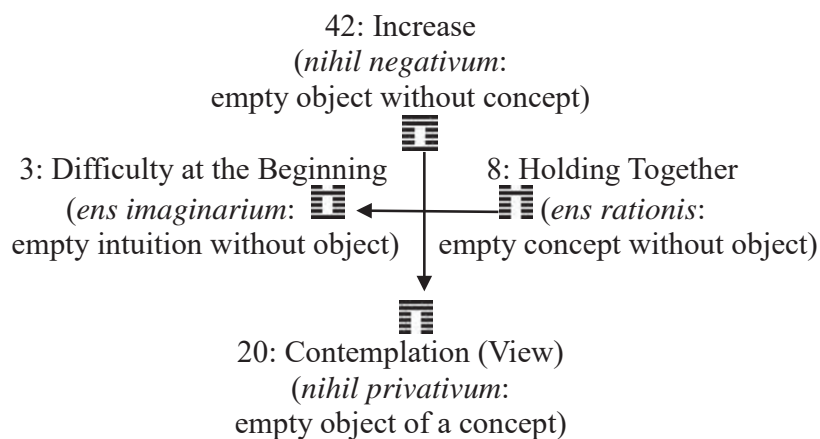


FIGURE 3: KANT’S FOUR PERSPECTIVES ON NOTHING

The above arrangement of *gua* (like all the diagrams in this paper) follows the same

mapping rules that I defended in the second article in this series (cf. “Level Two” in Figure 2, above). It is based on a system of mapping quaternities onto a cross that I call “the geometry of logic,” with lines 6 and 1 of each *gua* defining the fourfold logical relation that I normally represent using the symbols: --, + -, - +, and ++.¹⁰

The foregoing overview, as summarized in Figure 3, demonstrates that the *form* of Kant’s four perspectives on nothing corresponds perfectly to that of the first *yin-yin* quaternity on the fourth level of the Compound *Yijing*. But what about the *content* of these two systems? Demonstrating correlations here is much more difficult, due to the basic difference between their respective approaches to architectonic reasoning, as explained in §1, above. Nevertheless, let us look briefly at each of the four components, in hopes of discerning some possible correspondences. Taken together, Kant’s four perspectives on nothing provide the conceptual preparation for examining metaphysical entities from a theoretical standpoint: all such entities will present themselves as either noumenal (possible, but unknowable) objects, privative (possible and knowable) objects, imaginary (impossible but knowable) objects, or contradictory (impossible and unknowable) objects. Do the four corresponding *gua* present us with anything like a similar set of perspectives?

Gua 8, “holding together” (*bi* 比), consists entirely of *yin* lines, except for the *yang* in line 5. The latter acts as the law, or perhaps a human leader, “holding together” the “yielding” (*yin*) force present in all other lines of the *gua*.¹¹ Expecting such descriptions of any *gua* to describe the kind of necessary conditions or features of human experience that *Kant* describes would be unrealistic; rather, we are looking for parallels, preferably with some evidence that the *Yijing* somehow *names* (in a hypothetical, analytic a

posteriori way) a function analogous to the corresponding feature of Kant's architectonic. In this case, Kant is referring to the function of any *noumenal concept* in metaphysics, as a perspective on "nothing" that nevertheless may function as one of the "ideas of reason" that he is about to examine in the Dialectic. We need not look far to find such a correlation, for noumenal ideas (i.e., God, freedom, and immortality) *hold together* reason's otherwise completely empty search for totality in our understanding of the world, just as a human leader holds together members of a group who would be disjointed and incomplete without the leader's presence.

With *gua* 20, "contemplation (view)" (*guan* 觀), the *yang* force is on the increase in relation to *gua* 8: changing the top line of *gua* 8 from *yin* to *yang* creates an image that resembles a tower, the location where a person may "view" or *contemplate* the surroundings most effectively.¹² To look down from the top two *yang* lines at the four *yin* lines below is to make a contrast not unlike the one Kant appeals to in describing the second perspective on nothing: concepts of *privation* (e.g., dark as opposed to light) arise from thinking about (or contemplating) *something* as if it were *nothing*.

Gua 3, "difficulty at the beginning" (*tun* 屯), consists of two trigrams representing water over thunder, thus suggesting a thunderstorm. The Judgment for this *gua* suggests that, if one can overcome initial difficulty, "supreme success" will result.¹³ In the Transcendental Aesthetic section that appears at the *beginning* of the first *Critique* (immediately after the Introduction), the forms of pure intuition (i.e., pure space and pure time) present themselves as the first and foremost *condition* for the possibility of all knowledge. Nevertheless, as Kant admits in the paragraph on the third perspective on nothing, pure space and pure time in and of themselves are merely imaginary "things":

without an empirical object to fill them, making them real, they are not objects at all, but only the pure form that *awaits* objects so that the task of cognition may begin. In other words, this perspective on nothing describes precisely that “difficulty at the beginning” that arises if someone attempts to talk about form in the complete absence of any content. The form is the most important ingredient for success, but its goal cannot be achieved unless corresponding content appears, like a thunderbolt on a stormy day.

Finally, *gua* 42, “increase” (*yi* 益), is the only one in this quaternity that has an equal number of *yin* and *yang* lines, thus suggesting a conflict or contradiction between the positive and negative forces. At first, this *gua* seems wholly inconsistent with Kant’s fourth perspective on nothing. For how could *nihil negativum* (i.e., an object that is so self-contradictory that we cannot even form a genuine concept of it) be properly symbolized as (or represented by) *increase*? The impression of incompatibility here arises, however, as a result of one of the key differences between Chinese and western presuppositions about contradiction: according to the logic of the *Yijing*, contradiction is not a roadblock that indicates failure to think properly, but a paradoxical step on the way to success. Indeed, a closer look at the *Yijing* commentary reveals that the *type* of increase implied here arises from the self-giving of leaders toward those under their governance, aimed at “the flowering of the commonwealth.”¹⁴ In classical Daoist philosophy, the experience of being faced with an object so complex that one cannot form a concept of it (i.e., the formation of a *nihil negativum*—“a this that is also a that”, as *Zhuangzi* puts it) is precisely what one needs, in order to effect “the most important increase of personality.”¹⁵

By suggesting the foregoing correlations, I do not mean to imply that Kant’s four

perspectives on nothing are *the same* as the four *gua* that make up the first of the Compound *Yijing*'s three *yin-yin* quaternities. What I have demonstrated, quite to the contrary, is only their structural (i.e., *architectonic*) identity, while highlighting their substantive, material difference. Kant's quaternity shows us the way the world *must be*, under certain conditions where we think "nothing" in various ways; the *Yijing*'s corresponding *gua* present us with four symbols of the changing world of human experience that each has an image of nothing (i.e., *yin-yin*) at its core. As we proceed now to examine this quadrant's other two quaternities, we shall find the same contrast operating in both cases.

III. THE SECOND *YIN-YIN* QUATERNITY:

FOUR CATEGORIES OF FREEDOM

Kant introduces his table of the "categories of freedom" in Chapter II of the *Analytic of the Critique of Practical Reason*, entitled "On the Concept of an Object of Pure Practical Reason" (4:65-67).¹⁶ He begins the chapter by explaining that the type of concept referred to in its title is "the presentation of an object as an effect possible through freedom."¹⁷ His lengthy introductory section, just before the more widely discussed section "On the Typic of the Pure Practical Power of Judgment,"¹⁸ ends with a relatively brief explanation of this often-ignored table. The table consists of the four sets of three dyadic divisions, arranged in the order of the categories, each referring to an aspect of our application of "the Concepts of Good and Evil."¹⁹ As such, it seems quite appropriate to juxtapose this table to the foregoing table of the perspectives on nothing: whereas the latter (as we saw above) refer to concepts that are *empty* of content

in various ways, the former (as we shall now see) refer to concepts that are *full* of content in the most meaningful possible sense (i.e., the moral).

A potential problem for the interpreter of this quaternity is that Kant gives no *heading* for each set of three categories of freedom; instead, having labeled them with the same words used to name the four *theoretical* categories (i.e., quantity, quality, relation, and modality), he jumps straight into a description of the three sets of dyadic divisions that constitute each *practical* category. One reason he gives no headings may be that each categorial division shown in the table refers to an aspect of the category of *causality* (manifested as the *causality of freedom*);²⁰ another is that he thinks the practical meaning of each category will be immediately clear to every reader.²¹ Nevertheless, he does clearly explain that, because these categories are practical in their orientation, we apply them not to *intuitions* that are processed by our *power of cognition* but to *desires* that are processed by our *power of choice*. In short, they function in a way analogous to *intellectual intuitions*, though not for theoretical purposes, for “they themselves give rise to the actuality of that to which they refer (the conviction [*Gesinnung*] of the will).”²² Although they are in one sense all forms of causality, they still follow the basic fourfold form of the categories. In each case, therefore, I shall introduce a more descriptive heading, based on the brief account Kant gives of each set of three dyadic divisions, being guided by the following clue that Kant provides just before the table appears: “they proceed in their order from those that are morally still undetermined and sensibly conditioned to those that, being sensibly unconditioned, are determined only by the moral law.”²³

The category of freedom that corresponds to *quantity* starts out as *morally*

undetermined while being *sensibly conditioned*. As Kant mentions in the concluding paragraph of this passage, this first category consists of either subjective “maxims that each person bases on his inclination,” objective *principles* “that hold for a genus of rational beings insofar as these agree in certain inclinations,” or an a priori “law that holds for all regardless of their inclination.”²⁴ In general, we can therefore regard all three levels of the first category, the quantity of the practical (noumenal) causality of freedom, as arising out of *inclination-based maxims*. The *quality* of freedom’s causality refers to its initial stage of *conceptual* determination, whereby the grounding in sensibility (i.e., in the inclinations) begins to weaken: the rules that guide reason’s free choice of what to do begin to be *practical* once we identify them as relating to acts we ought to either *commit*, *omit*, or allow as *exceptions*. Fully moral laws allow of no exceptions (they are “categorical”), so this category represents a lower level of moral development, where practical rules have been formed, but the moral law in all its universality has not yet been recognized. We come closer to realizing genuine morality with the *relation* of freedom’s causality, for here Kant introduces “personality” into the mix. Once we relate our moral deliberations to our own personhood, they begin to take on a genuinely moral character, culminating in the recognition that the practical rules I apply to myself must also be applied reciprocally to other persons. Finally, the *modality* of the causality of freedom introduces the concepts Kant regards as purely moral (i.e., devoid of all sensible determination): what is or is not *permitted*, does or does not conform to *duty*, and is either a perfect or an imperfect manifestation of duty.

Using the four headings suggested above (shown in italics in Figure 4, below), we can now map Kant’s four categories of freedom onto the second *yin-yin* quaternity of the

Compound *Yijing*, as follows:

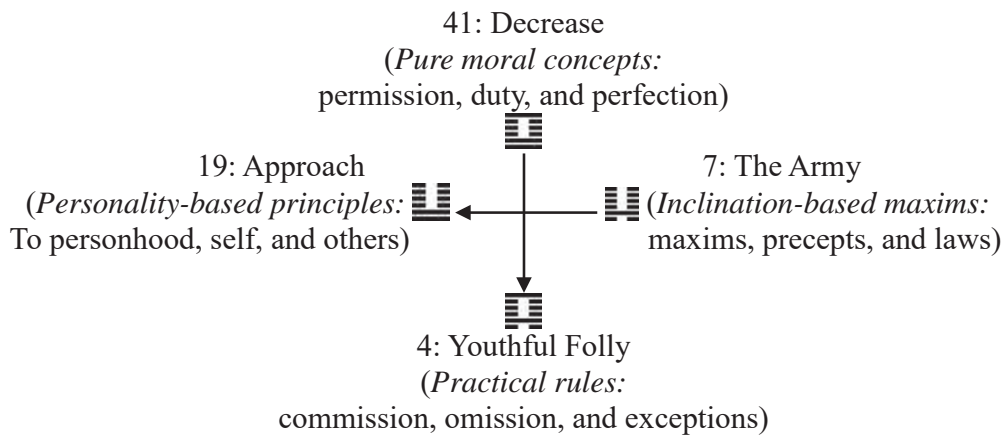


FIGURE 4: KANT'S FOUR CATEGORIES OF FREEDOM

These four categories share with the perspectives on nothing a reference to the *noumenal*; whereas in the former case this reference was mostly implicit and empty, it is now mostly explicit and full (since the causality of freedom is always noumenal for Kant). The corresponding *gua* from the *Yijing* accurately represent this similarity-in-difference in the following way: the two *yin* lines at the core (i.e., in lines 3 and 4) of each of the eight *gua* shown in Figures 3 and 4 represent the *common* factor between the two quaternities, that both refer to primarily non-empirical concepts (as is appropriate for the *philosophical* quadrant of the Compound *Yijing*); and the opposite placement of the *yin* and *yang* in lines 2 and 5 of the four *gua* in each quadrant (with *yang* on top for the four *gua* in Figure 3 and *yin* on top for the four *gua* in Figure 4)²⁵ represents the *contrasting* factor, that the perspectives on nothing are only negatively noumenal, while the categories of freedom are positively noumenal. The logical structure of the Compound *Yijing* therefore corresponds nicely to that of Kant's two sets of quaternities, in this instance. But what about the *names* given for each *gua* in the traditional *Yijing* text? Let us now examine

each of these in turn.

At first sight, *gua* 7, “the army” (*shi* 師), seems to have nothing whatsoever to do with morality. However, once we examine the symbolism of the lines themselves, a very relevant correlation to Kant’s first category of freedom (inclination-based maxims) emerges. This *gua* is made up of the two trigrams for earth (above) and water (below): just as the earth stores up its strength in the form of subterranean water, so also a nation stores up its strength in an army. Armies, of course, are dangerous, so the *gua* as a whole symbolizes “danger inside, and obedience outside.”²⁶ The latter phrase could aptly describe actions of the sort Kant says are “legally” (i.e., externally) good, even though their underlying maxim (i.e., the person’s *internal* reason for doing the action) may be evil. This seems to be just what Kant has in mind with the first of his four categories of freedom. Just as *gua* 7 has only one *yang* line, submerged deep within a set of five *yin* lines, so also the inclination-based maxims can qualify as genuine expressions of freedom only if there is a grain of the moral law governing the moral choice from within—like a general controlling an army even though the enemy may not see him.

Gua 4, “youthful folly” (*meng* 蒙), seems to be more obviously related to morality, with its reference to “folly” in the title. However, “folly” here is best understood as a reference to the *inexperience* of youth, rather than to moral error. The constituent trigrams (“mountain” over “water”) conjure up the image: “A spring wells up at the foot of a mountain.”²⁷ The advice given to the teacher in the commentary on this *gua* is that students must be set free to explore and find their own way, just as a spring finds its way to the sea after flowing out of the mountain. This correlates well with Kant’s second category of freedom, where “practical rules” guide a person to commit and omit actions

that are deemed to be good or evil, respectively, but also allow for “exceptions” in some cases—an obvious sign that one’s moral development has not yet reached full maturity.

The title of *gua* 19, “approach” (*lin* 臨), has a range of connotations that includes “becoming great.”²⁸ The trigrams form the image of “the earth above the lake,”²⁹ with the two *yang* lines at the bottom representing strength that is welling up from below and letting itself be expressed more fully. Similarly, Kant’s third category of freedom refers to a more advanced stage in moral development, where one’s personhood and the personhood of others begin to form the basis of one’s moral principles. It is as if the inclinations that were still present in the first category (represented by the *yin* in line 1) have given way to a doubling of the moral law’s influence, with no obstacles standing in the way.

Finally, *gua* 41, “decrease” (*sun* 損), conceals a strong moral meaning even though the English title seems to connote weakness. The two trigrams form the image: “At the foot of the mountain, the lake.”³⁰ This suggests “decrease” if we compare the two trigrams in this *gua* with the two purest trigrams (“heaven” consisting of three *yang* lines and “earth” consisting of three *yin* lines), because the *yang* in the top line of “mountain” (the upper trigram) appears to have migrated from its former position as the top line of what is now “lake” (the lower trigram); that is, the *yang* of “heaven” must “decrease” by changing its line 3 from *yang* to *yin*, in order to generate *gua* 41. This image implies that “the superior man controls his anger / And restrains his instincts;”³¹ and this is precisely what Kant identifies as the key to the “pure moral concepts,” such as “duty” and “perfection,” that arise in his depiction of the fourth category of freedom.

Once again we see that Kant’s fourfold categorial distinction correlates well with the

corresponding quaternity of the Compound *Yijing*, with the difference being that Kant is identifying *necessary* elements of *any* possible free choice, whereas the *Yijing* is naming highly contingent *symbols* that can provide wise guidance for interpreting *any* human experience. What remains, in order to complete this first step in the attempt to confirm the hypothesis I presented in the previous article in this series, is to examine whether similar correlations exist when we come to the third *Critique*.

IV. THE THIRD *YIN-YIN* QUATERNITY:

FOUR MOMENTS OF TASTE

Of the three Kantian quaternities under discussion in this paper, Kant's theory of the four "moments" in a judgment of taste, which enable us to experience an object as beautiful, is by far the most widely discussed by commentators.³² This should come as no surprise. For, whereas Kant himself only briefly mentions the previous two quaternities (providing just a few paragraphs of explanation for each), he devotes much of Part One of his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* to a detailed elaboration of this third quaternity. Because Kant develops his fourfold theory of beauty so fully, I shall provide a slightly more detailed summary of its main points, before pointing out their potential correlations to the *gua* that make up the corresponding quaternity in the Compound *Yijing*.

While a "judgment of taste" is unlike either a cognitive judgment or a moral judgment, according to Kant, it shares some features of both, thereby making it a *synthesis* between the previous two, which have been represented here by Kant's theories of the perspectives on nothing and the categories of freedom. Once again, Kant explicitly states that he is following the order of the categories, though he starts his discussion with

a footnote explaining that the analysis will *begin* with quality. Despite this unusual expository strategy, the *logic* of the resulting fourfold conceptual scheme is the same; I shall therefore discuss the four moments in the same order Kant does, but map them according to the standard order of the categories.

The “moment of quality”³³ stipulates that the delight experienced in judging an object to be beautiful must be *disinterested*. An “interest” is any “delight which we connect with the representation of the real existence of an object.”³⁴ Other types of delight are “invariably coupled with an interest in the object,”³⁵ typically depending either on the existence of something “the senses find pleasing in sensation,”³⁶ or on the existence of something “reason recommends...by its mere concept.”³⁷ A judgment of beauty, by contrast, being a *pure* judgment of taste, “relies on no interest:” a person making such a judgment ought to have “complete indifference” concerning “the real existence of the thing.”³⁸ Otherwise, Kant warns, our judgments of taste will be biased in favor of our own interest, instead of assessing whether or not our feeling truly merits describing the object as “beautiful.”

Although a judgment of beauty is always subjective, and thus has “no bearing upon the Object,”³⁹ Kant argues that the “quantity” of such a judgment requires that the object “pleases universally.”⁴⁰ The second moment is therefore a special kind of *subjective universality*; judgments expressing a delight that is subjective but *not* universal, or a delight that is universal but *objective*, should not be regarded as genuine judgments of beauty. The criterion of subjective universality means that a person must regard delight in the object “as resting on what he may also presuppose in every other person; and therefore he must believe that he has reason for demanding a similar delight from

everyone.”⁴¹ Unlike a logical judgment (i.e., one that aims to produce *knowledge*), a judgment of taste “does not *postulate* the agreement of every one...; it only *imputes* this agreement to everyone.”⁴² That is, when we judge something to be beautiful, we feel everyone *ought* to make the same judgment if placed in the same position: for we adopt the “idea” that our judgment extends “to *all* subjects, as unreservedly as it would if it were an objective judgment,”⁴³ even though we may know very well that, as a matter of fact, everyone does *not* agree.

The third moment of all judgments of beauty deals with the *relation* of “ends.”⁴⁴ the object of such judgments must exhibit “the form of *finality* [or *purposiveness*]...*apart from the representation of an end* [or *purpose*].”⁴⁵ This paradox requires that, in judging an object to be beautiful, we regard it as existing for a *reason*, because we perceive an inner *purposiveness*; yet no external *purpose* can be found. This is no illusion, according to Kant, but part of what it *means* for something to be called beautiful: judging something to be beautiful means judging that it *points to itself* rather than to some agreeable sensation or good state of affairs outside of the object. Since the “determining ground” of such a judgment “is simply finality of form,”⁴⁶ our delight in something beautiful is based solely on the conviction that “the state of the representation itself” is intrinsically worth preserving.⁴⁷ Our delight must not be determined by the external goal it points to, such as the *pleasant sensation* of tasting well prepared food, or the ability of food to satisfy our hunger. In other words, delight in the beautiful *means* delight in something we do not wish to *consume* but to *preserve*.

The fourth and final characteristic, the moment of *modality* in any judgment of beauty, is that the experience must produce “a *necessary delight*”⁴⁸ that functions as an

“exemplary” kind of necessity.⁴⁹ That is, an experience of delight in a beautiful object can be regarded as a *necessary example* only when we presuppose “the existence of a common sense” (i.e., a common way of *sensing* the world), corresponding to the “common understanding” that enables us to agree on cognitive judgments.⁵⁰ Kant regards this common sense as “the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our knowledge”, such that it also serves as an “ideal norm” forming the basis for the necessity of our aesthetic judgments.⁵¹ He refers in a similar way to an internal “archetype of taste” that serves as “the highest model” for aesthetic judgments, but cautions that people vary widely in their ability to access it: “each person must beget [this archetype] in his own consciousness,”⁵² for judging what is beautiful is a skill that must be acquired.

As with the two sets of four categorial concepts examined in the previous two sections, we can now map Kant’s four moments in a judgment of taste onto the corresponding (in this case, the synthetic) quaternity of the *yin-yin* quadrant of the Compound *Yijing*, as follows:

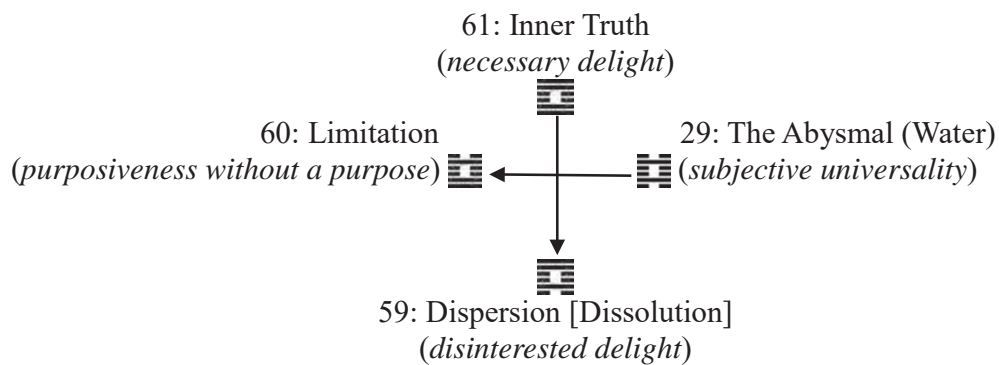


FIGURE 5: KANT’S FOUR MOMENTS IN A JUDGMENT OF TASTE

This third quaternity in the Compound *Yijing* is a synthesis of the first two, just as Kant

depicts the third *Critique* as a synthesis of the first and second *Critiques*. For the *Yijing* system, the synthesis is represented by the fact that a *yang* line appears in both positions 2 and 5: the upper *yang* (i.e., line 5) is taken from the first quaternity, and the lower *yang* line (i.e., line 2) from the second quaternity. For Kant's system, the synthesis unites the faculty of cognition's focus on *nature* with the faculty of desire's focus on *freedom*, by focusing on the way freedom and nature interact in the faculty of pleasure and displeasure. We shall conclude this study by examining whether the four *gua* in the former system⁵³ exhibit any significant correspondence to the four moments defined by the latter.

Gua 29, "the abysmal (water)" (*kan* 坎), is one of the eight *gua* (*bagua* 八卦) in the entire *Yijing* that consist of two identical trigrams, and the *only* such *gua* on the fourth level of the *yin-yin* quadrant. As the title clearly indicates, the doubled trigram is "water," whose middle *yang* line between two *yin* lines conjures up the image of "water in a ravine" that "flows on uninterruptedly and reaches its goal."⁵⁴ The doubling of this image is taken as an ominous sign, representing an "abyss." In Kant's discussion of the "quantity" of a judgment of taste (i.e., the *second* moment), he describes its "universal" character as being *imputed* (subjectively) into the object, so that it "feels" universal, even though (from an objective standpoint) it is not. While it may be tempting to regard Kant's proposal as somewhat "abyss-like," with the central *yang* line of each trigram representing the universality that is conveyed between the pure subjectivity of the *yin* lines on either side, a fact that cannot be ignored is that there is little in the traditional commentary on this *gua* that suggests any connection to aesthetic judgment as such.

Kant's discussion of the "quality" of a judgment of taste (i.e., the *first* moment), by contrast, correlates quite well with *gua* 59, "dispersion [dissolution]" (*huan* 涣). The latter

consists of two trigrams depicting wind above and water below, conjuring up the image: “The wind drives over the water,”⁵⁵ thus dispersing the danger symbolized by the water. (That this *gua* comes immediately after the double-water *gua* in this quaternity is significant.) The *Yijing* commentary interprets such dispersion as a reference to the need for leaders to approach all decisions in a *disinterested* manner, through “the dispersing and dissolving of divisive egotism,”⁵⁶ without favoritism to their own special interests or friends: “only a man who is himself free of all selfish ulterior considerations...is capable of so dissolving the hardness of egotism.”⁵⁷ Since the main focus throughout the *Yijing* is on proper governance, it is not surprising that the theme of *delight* does not arise. Nevertheless, an analogy clearly arises here between what might be called a ruler’s *beautiful* judgment and a Kantian judgment of taste: both must be *disinterested*.

Gua 60, “limitation” (*jie* 節), combines the trigrams for water (above) and lake (below), implying limitation because a lake has a definite limit to the amount of water it can contain.⁵⁸ Since both trigrams relate to water, the lesson of this *gua* can be expressed by the maxim that we must “set limits even upon limitation.” Kant’s focus in the third moment of beauty is also on limitation, in the sense that “purposiveness”⁵⁹ refers to the *limit* of the proper use a thing may have. Another way of expressing both Kant’s third criterion of beauty and the meaning of *gua* 60 would be to say that a thing can have *limitedness* without having any actual *limit*, or that there is *no limit* to the applicability of limitedness to human affairs; according to Kant, we experience this paradoxical situation most profoundly every time we judge an object to be beautiful. Such judgments are a good example of the kind of disinterested limit-setting that the *Yijing* regards as “the backbone of morality.”⁶⁰

With *Gua* 61, “inner truth” (*zhong fu* 中孚), we come to the only *gua* in the *yin-yin* quadrant that has no *yin* lines other than the central two that define the quadrant itself. This preponderance of *yang* lines, as well as the title of the *gua*, already connote the *necessity* that serves as the fourth moment of Kant’s aesthetic quaternity. The image arising from the two trigrams constituting *gua* 61 is “wind over lake.”⁶¹ The two pair of *yang* lines that surround a single pair of *yin* lines connote “a heart free of prejudices and therefore open to the truth.”⁶² While no hint of *delight* seems to be present in the commentary on this *gua*, there are clear indications that inner truth is the key to an *exemplary* life; so once again we find potentially relevant resonances between Kant’s transcendental term and the hypothetical symbolism of the *Yijing*.

In conclusion, I must admit that the experiment so far has been only partially successful. While I have claimed to identify meaningful correlations for all but one of the twelve *gua* that appear in this quadrant of the Compound *Yijing*, I would freely admit that some of the correlations are of somewhat tenuous significance; indeed, similar resonances might be detectable between almost any two randomly selected elements in the two systems. Yet this looseness of fit is precisely what we should expect, given the key difference between the *Yijing*’s hypothetical emphasis and Kant’s transcendental emphasis (see §I). In any case, the resonances that do exist should not be ignored simply because the *Yijing* is sometimes used as a tool for fortune-telling. For a western scholar to do so would be a great irony, indeed. For the typically western mentality that fears anything that smacks of fortune-telling also tends to praise the western scientific method above all else. Yet the main goal of the latter, arguably, is to *predict the future!* Recognizing the significance of this ironic fact should enable even the harshest skeptic to

appreciate that the foregoing analysis of several key aspects of Kant’s metaphysical principles, and their architectonic correspondence to the *gua* in the *yin-yin* quadrant of the Compound *Yijing*, deserves further consideration from Chinese and western scholars alike.

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ENDNOTES

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¹ “Architectonic Reasoning and Interpretation in Kant and *Yijing*”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38, no. 4 (2011): 569-583. That first paper in the series was a significantly revised version of “The Unity of Architectonic Reasoning in Kant and *I Ching*,” in *Cultivating Personhood: Kant and Asian Philosophy*, ed. Stephen R. Palmquist (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 811-821.

² “Mapping Kant’s Architectonic onto the *Yijing* via the Geometry of Logic”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 39, Supplement (2012), 68-86. I offered an initial summary of the position defended in that second article in my earlier article, “Introduction: Levels of Perspectives in Kant and Chinese Philosophy,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 38, no.4

(2011): 505-508.

³ I have also explored this first parallel in my article “A Daoist Model for a Kantian Church,” *Comparative Philosophy* 4, no.1 (2013): 67-89.

⁴ See e.g., *Kant's System of Perspectives: An architectonic interpretation of the Critical Philosophy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993); hereafter *KSP*. For the most up-to-date discussion of this rarely-discussed epistemological classification, see my article, “Analytic Aposteriority and its Relevance to Twentieth Century Philosophy,” *Studia Humana* 1, no.3/4 (2012): 3-16.

⁵ See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans., Werner S. Pluhar (Hackett: Indianapolis, 1996), A290-292/ B346-349; citations of both the first (“A”) and second (“B”) edition pagination, as here. In the second paper in the series, I referred to these as the “categories of nothing”, because (like virtually all of Kant’s fourfold distinctions) they follow the order of the categories.

⁶ *Ibid.*, A268/B324.

⁷ *Ibid.*, A290/B346.

⁸ *Ibid.*, A70/B95.

⁹ *Ibid.*, A290-291/B347-348.

¹⁰ For a concise summary of the principles of the geometry of logic, see Lectures 13-14 of my book, *The Tree of Philosophy*, fourth edition (Hong Kong: Philopsychy Press, 2000); hereafter *TP*. See also the Chinese translation by Pengxiao Zhai as *Zhe Xue Ru Men* 《哲学入门》 (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2010).

¹¹ *Yijing*, 36. All references to the *Yijing* refer, as here, to the Richard Wilhelm edition:

The I Ching or Book of Changes, third edition, trans. Cary F. Baynes (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).

¹² Ibid., 36.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴ Ibid., 162.

¹⁵ Ibid., 163.

¹⁶ See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 66 (Academy Edition pagination, Vol. 4), where Kant provides a table listing twelve categories of freedom, but does not specify any special heading for each.

¹⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸ Ibid., 67.

¹⁹ Ibid., 66.

²⁰ In *ibid.*, 65, Kant says these categories of freedom “are, one and all, modes of a single category, viz., that of causality, insofar as the determining basis of causality consists in reason’s presentation of a law of causality which, as law of freedom, reason gives to itself and thereby proves itself a priori to be practical.”

²¹ In *ibid.*, 67, immediately after presenting the table, Kant writes: “I add nothing further here to elucidate the present table, because it is understandable enough on its own. This sort of division, drawn up according to principles, is very beneficial to any science on account of its thoroughness and understandability.” Frustrating though such comments may be to the contemporary reader, they at least suggest that Kant would have

appreciated the present attempt to display his various fourfold divisions using the *Yijing* as a guiding map.

²² *Ibid.*, 66, translation amended.

²³ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

²⁵ Moreover, the four *gua* in Figure 4 are the exact opposites of the four that appear in Figure 3—i.e., one table can be derived from the other simply by turning each *gua* upside down. When this is done, the only difference between the two quaternities is that the second and third *gua* appear in reverse order. This occurs because the mapping rules I have adopted require lines 1 and 6 of each *gua* to have a specific term (i.e., either the *yin* line or the *yang* line), depending on its position on the cross. The first and fourth *gua* on each cross have the same term in lines 1 and 6, so turning them upside down changes nothing—unlike the second and third *gua*, where lines 1 and 6 are always opposites.

²⁶ *Yijing*, 66.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 21.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 159.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 159.

³² For a general introduction to this argument in the third *Critique*, see Lecture 29 of *TP*. A more detailed discussion, including summaries of how Kant explicitly links these “moments” to the four categories, can be found in *KSP*, §IX.2.A. The discussion below relies heavily on the former source.

³³ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1987), p.203 (Academy Edition pagination, vol.5).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 216.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 219.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 222.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 240.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 236-237.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 232.

⁵³ Interestingly, three of the four *gua* in this quaternity are numbered continuously, according to the traditional ordering of the *Yijing*'s 64 *gua*. The reason for this surprising

result is too complex to be considered here. Of the 12 quaternities on the fourth level of the Compound *Yijing* (see Figure 1), only one other quaternity has *any* continuous numbering, and in that other instance only two *gua* are numbered continuously.

⁵⁴ *Yijing*, 114,116.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁵⁹ Kant's German term, *Zweckmäßigkeit*, can also be translated as "finality"; "*Zweck*" means "purpose" or "end".

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 236.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 235.