Non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness 忘 (wang) in ancient Chinese philosophical texts

Gad C Isay
Tel-Hai College, Israel

Abstract
In this study, I examine conceptualizations of memory in classical Chinese philosophical texts with the purpose of encouraging the inclusion of ideas of non-Western cultures in memory studies. The texts selected for this study are Kongzi’s Analects, Mengzi, the Xici commentary on the Book of Changes, the Zhuangzi, and the Xunzi. Methodologically, I differentiate between the mnemic process and its goal. My point of departure is the complementary relation that marks the non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness sequence. This study proposes the paradigm of an axis and margins to represent the yin-yang reasoning implied by the complementary relation in conjunction with the narrativity of the mnemic process. Two major consequences of this model are the understanding of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness in terms of attentive and suspended awareness, and the supportive role of forgetfulness or suspended awareness in enhancing the function of memory.

Keywords
awareness, axis and margins paradigm, forgetfulness, memory, non-forgetfulness, substance and function (ti-yong), yin-yang reasoning

Introduction
One objective of this article is to encourage studies of conceptualizations of memory-related processes in non-Western cultures. People of different cultures speak different languages and have different pasts, and as a result, while convergences in experiences invariably occur, the conceptualizations of memory-related processes inevitably diverge. Such conceptualizations express and, equally, affect cultural diversity. By the same token, an examination of memory-related processes and their conceptualizations across cultures offers comparative perspectives to the study of such processes.

Memory, as the capacity allowing us to retain and reanimate representations of experience and learning, may as well be discussed in terms of the relations between non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness. Together, these relations communicate the full range of constant alternations in quantity,
not necessarily corresponding to the quality of the person’s mnemic resources. Indeed, ancient Chinese sources refer to remembrance primarily by the term translatable as non-forgetfulness. Etymologically, the character “forget,” wang 忘, consists of wang 亡, loss, above, and xin 心, heart/mind, below, generally conveying the idea of the heart/mind of a person being dispossessed of content that was formerly accessible. The negated form suggests that temporarily relevant mnemic resources are enabled. A reading of the sources below reveals, though not without exceptions, that the understanding of wang and its negated form as forgetfulness and negated forgetfulness needs to be modified. The difference between the two modes is a difference in degree and not in kind, stretching between suspended and attentive awareness. Awareness, as the ground of cognitive experience. A second objective of this study is to probe the complementary pairing of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness and the meanings behind their respective modification into the terms attentive and suspended awareness.

The institution of wang and its antonym at the heart of my discussion reveals my desire to engage direct references rather than occasional instances where mnemic concerns are inferred. For this reason, the mnemic attributes of ritual propriety 禮 (li) and ancestor worship 孝 (xiao), and conceptualizations of the epistemology of history are acknowledged but do not feature as main subjects of discussion. Studies that converge with mnemic concerns in the ancient period often discuss Zhuangzi. Viewing the longer span of the tradition, Owen (1986) discusses literary insinuations of memory, and Schwarcz’s (1998) poetic study compares Chinese and Jewish (Hebraic) associations of cultural memory. Gyatso (1992) edited a volume on mindfulness and remembrance in the Buddhist tradition of India and Tibet, and Wang (2018) explores the transformation of conceptualizations of memory between India and China in the context of developments in Chinese Buddhism. To be sure, a history of memory in Chinese philosophy has yet to be written (see note on further research after the conclusion). This study proposes a preliminary step in that direction.

In an attempt to explain how thinkers in ancient China conceptualized the mnemic process, I concentrate selectively on texts distinguished for their philosophical content, mainly from the Warring States period (453–222 BCE). Section “Wang 忘 in Kongzī’s Analects, Mengzī, and the Xici commentary” discusses incidences of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness in passages from the Analects 論語 (Lunyu, fourth to first century BCE), the Mengzi, and the Xici 辭繋 commentary on The Book of Changes 易經 (Yijing). Section “Wang in the Zhuangzi” discusses chapters 3 and 6 in the Zhuangzi, and section “Xunzi on the working of the heart/mind and non-forgetfulness” mainly considers chapter 21 in the Xunzi 荀子 (third century BCE). Whereas the first four sources, the Zhuangzi included, specify the goals of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness and touch the process merely by implication, the Xunzi pays more attention to questions pertaining to the process, which, though differently formulated, is not inconsistent with the former. My discussion begins, however, with a brief philosophical reflection on the implications that the complementary relations of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness suggest.

The distinction of the complementary relations

Antecedents of the complementary relations of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness are inscribed on oracle bones of the Wu Ting period (circa 1200–1181 BCE) in phrases such as “We may not receive millet harvest” and “We will/may receive millet harvest.” Keightley observes how such expressions complete the whole by embracing two contrary possibilities. He further infers that . . .
Rather than “polar opposites,” “momentary balance” was prioritized (Keightley, 1988: 374–375). Such use of complementary relations where “the germs of one mode [are] always inherent in the other” (Keightley, 1988: 377) defines the yin-yang reasoning, appealing to a non-dichotomous context and a narrative pattern that avoids extremes as it unfolds.9

This mode of orienting oneself toward the goal through the path that avoids extremes is consistent with the account of the heart/mind in the early philosophical texts. In her essay “On the Matter of the Mind,” Bloom (1985) observes that through the medium of the heart/mind each person maintains their unique mental (or psychic) center and, at the same time, participates in a collective sphere, simultaneously within and beyond the physical limits of the body. This view coincides with the intermediary “positioning” of the heart/mind suggested by Plaks (2006):

. . . [T]he “[heart/]mind,” in its double role as the locus of both the emotional and the cognitive mental functions, occupies the middle ground between the deeper layers of interior selfhood, on the one side, and the interface of the inner self with its surrounding natural and human environment, on the other . . . [the heart or the mind forms] an intermediary zone bridging the interior and exterior dimensions of consciousness. (p. 113)

In association with the heart/mind as the intermediary zone that condenses and expands within and beyond the physical limits of the body, and in conjunction with the passages examined in sections “Wang 忘 in Kongzi’s Analects, Mengzi, and the Xici commentary” and “Wang in the Zhuangzi,” as observed above, non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness are distinguished for signifying constant alternations in quantity though not necessarily corresponding to the quality of the person’s mnemonic resources.

The sources examined below most often cite for this purpose the term—both noun and verb—for accumulation and storage, 藏 (zang). A poem in the Book of Odes introduces zang to convey the idea of preservation and accumulation of memory within the heart/mind (Mao 228).10 In her heart/mind, the wife loves her husband, and in the core of her heart/mind 中心 (zhongxin) she treasures (zang) him. She then asks, “How can [I] forget (wang) [him]?” The text alludes to the wife’s difficulty in overcoming her husband’s absence, and the endurance of this unforgettable-ness is tied to his image etched (zang) deeply in her heart/mind.

The Xici commentary uses zang in several instances that imply the efficacy of the person’s mnemonic resources (IE:2).11 According to IK:3, sages draw their wisdom from their accumulated knowledge of the past 藏往 (zangwang). The knowledge accumulated is introduced as the foundation of such wisdom.12 The efficacy of the accumulative attribute recurs in IIE:3:

Exemplary persons accumulate [their] properties within their person 君子藏器於身 (junzi zangqi yushen) and wait for the right moment to act. How could they fail in their endeavors?13

Among some 37 occurrences of zang in the Zhuangzi, perhaps the most relevant for the present purpose figures in the seventh chapter (7:6), where the text binds together the heart/mind, the image of the mirror, and memory:

Perfect persons use the heart/mind like a mirror; [they] do not yield nor resist, [they] reflect [back] rather than accumulate (zang), hence [they] are capable of overpowering things and avoiding harm.14

This passage presents zang as an act of purpose, praising the perfect person’s resistibility to encountered impressions. Against the context of Zhuangzi’s disfavor of human-made distinctions, the usage of the term is consistent with the former examples.15 The sources consulted above affirm
that those dynamics zang-ed as the person’s mnemic resources co-exist in the intermediary zone with the constantly changing relational system of the heart/mind. This framework suggests that the synchronizing of the mnemic resources with the heart/mind is responsible for the person’s psychic order.16

To account for both the non-dichotomous context and the narrative pattern in the texts I examine, my study of the relations between non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness appeals to a particular figurative metaphor: the axis and margins paradigm.17 This paradigm replicates both the alternatives and the evolution that the yin-yang reasoning prescribes. Indeed, the yin and the yang signify two complementing aspects of an unfolding process, akin to the cycle of the seasons, of day rolling into night, and movement to stillness, and so forth. Its alternations epitomize a succession of temporary and correlative episodes, with each episode having its center. These alternations avoid extremes and concurrently coalesce into a sequence of centers. In other words, the complementing aspect of avoiding extremes is seen in the centers that line up to form the axis of a specified process while the surroundings form its open-ended margins. In view of the above and to the extent that in this cyclical process, to paraphrase Keightley (1988), “the germs of the axis (non-forgetfulness, yang) [are] always inherent in the margins (forgetfulness, yin) and vice versa,” it is appropriate in discussing the person’s mnemonic process to apply the yin-yang reasoning by using the vocabulary of axis and margins.

The axis and margins paradigm adequately communicates how the yin-yang reasoning affects the conceptualization of mnemonic relations in the texts under study. Non-forgetfulness is the axis, the concentrated segment amid the field of forgetfulness. It is the mode of attentive awareness, analogous to states such as concentration or mental focus. While both non-forgetfulness and attentive awareness invoke “remembrance” as marker of personal continuity, the latter highlights a level of intensity indicating increased clarity and precision at the expense of scope—hence the axis. Respectively, the complementing “suspended” awareness denotes forgetfulness as divergences toward the margins, occasionally converging with the axis (see section “Wang 忘 in Kongzi’s Analects, Mengzi, and the Xici commentary” below). In accordance with the yin-yang reasoning, rather than decay, disjointness, or erasure, forgetfulness assumes the form of suspended awareness, becoming suspended for the purpose of optimizing the mode of attentiveness. Such a symbiotic narrative of the relations between non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness in their modified meaning as attentive awareness and suspended awareness, respectively, is consistent with both the intermediary positioning and the unboundedness of a person’s mnemonic resources. It acknowledges the insecure nature of the person’s mnemonic resources and, at the same time, illustrates how non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness reinforce each other in regulating the functions of memory.18

**Wang 忘 in Kongzi’s Analects, Mengzi, and the Xici commentary**

The pervasiveness of complementary forms of wang applies generally to philosophically oriented texts such as the Analects, Mengzi (Mencius), and the Xici commentary on The Book of Changes. This section focuses on specific cases in these texts in which the person who is committed to virtuous goals commits to either forget or not-forget the opposite and complementary instance, when excess to the other extreme occurs or is probable. In this context, remaining aligned with the axis and, equally, non-forgetfulness, refers to maintaining attentive awareness regarding whatever goal one prioritizes.

In saying VII:19 in Kongzi’s Analects, the Master asks to be appreciated presumably for his commitment to learning rather than other aspects of his personality:
You could have told [the Duke of She who enquired about Kongzi]: “that man, is passionate to the extent of forgetting his food, he is joyful to the extent of forgetting his worries, and he ages not knowing the passage of time.”

A similar case features in _Mengzi_ 7A:35, where the sage ruler Shun is commended for his filial commitment which co-exists with forgetfulness of concern for the world. Similarly, _Mengzi_ 4A:1 quotes from the _Book of Odes_: “Do not deviate, do not forget, follow the ancient norm.” The first two cases allude to forgetfulness of everything that is not the specified goal, whereas in the third, non-forgetfulness of the goal precludes everything else.

In all three cases, the act of forgetfulness is, explicitly and implicitly, in excess. Forgetfulness in saying VII:19 refers to personal needs that ordinary people cannot for long resist or ignore. It is likewise exaggerated to expect Shun to forget the concern for the world. And, to not forget the ancient norm but, implicitly, forget the rest is similarly demanding in excess. To be sure, forgetfulness in these cases, rather than disengaging from awareness, should read as awareness that is suspended or dim and enduring. At the same time, forgetfulness of all but the specified goal in the first two cases implies what the third specifies, the association of the goal with non-forgetfulness. Against the forgetfulness of everything but the goal, the implicit and explicit non-forgetfulness of that goal mark it with enhanced priority. Considering that those things and concerns that are in these cases ordained for forgetfulness exist in a mode of suspended awareness, the dedication of the specified goal for non-forgetfulness adjoins the enhanced priority of that goal with attentive awareness. In this respect, non-forgetfulness corresponds to attentive awareness.

Inasmuch as attentive awareness differs from suspended awareness in degree rather than in kind, and the former parallels centrality-related vocabulary such as concentration and mental focus, concomitantly signifying the narrative pattern of avoiding extremes, it is in order to use the paradigm of axis and margins to depict their relations. From this perspective, _Mengzi_’s implicit equation of forgetfulness with deviating or drifting into the margins (in 4A:1) warrants that non-forgetfulness be equated with alignment with an axis corresponding to the ancient norm. The same applies in the other two cases. Shun presumably aligns himself with his personal axis by manipulating his mnemonic resources into attentive coordination with the virtue of filiality. According to saying VII:19, at the same time that Kongzi’s personal needs recede into the forgetfulness or suspended awareness margins, he is attentively aware of the commitment to learning. Hence, non-forgetfulness, attentive awareness, and alignment with one’s personal axis offer different names for the same quality. Thus far, the axis in the axis and margins paradigm has signified a personally set, individual goal. The next few examples demonstrate how the person is encouraged to manipulate their mnemonic resources for the purpose of internalizing the collective’s axis of non-forgetfulness as their own.

_Xici_ IIIE:6 affirms the association of the alignment with the personal axis and attentive awareness that is communicated by non-forgetfulness:

Therefore, exemplary persons, in calmness do not forget the threat [ahead], in perseverance they do not forget [the possibilities of] destruction, and when engaged in governing they do not forget [the contingency of] disorder.

Granted that exemplary persons are predisposed to engage in the affairs of the people, this passage advises applying non-forgetfulness in a sense that is synonymous with attentive awareness to the affairs of the people. Significantly, the exemplary person embraces non-forgetfulness for the purpose of making the goals of the collective his own. The application of such an approach entails not forgetting the state or outcome others wish to avoid when directing attentiveness to a certain
goal. To not forget threats when things are calm, nor potential destruction while persevering, nor disorder while engaged in governing is to be attentively aware of the state or outcome that the people wish to avoid while simultaneously maintaining mere suspended awareness of other concerns, including the personal goal of engaging in the management of affairs. Thus, the exemplary person manipulates their mnemic resources to internalize the axis of the collective.

The transposition of one’s own axis with the collective or parents’ well-being recurs in several passages in the *Mengzi*. According to 3B:1 and 5B:7, realizing great expectations and courageous feats necessitates non-forgetfulness of unfortunate endings. The axis refers to non-forgetfulness of unfortunate endings. In *Mengzi* 5A:1, Wan Zhang observes that the person should not forget how one’s parents were affectionate, and even if they failed in this regard, the person should toil and not complain. Here the axis refers to non-forgetting one’s parents regardless of how they treated their offspring. 4B:20 recalls how an exemplary king (King Wu) never familiarized himself with those near, nor did he forget those who were far away. In this case, the axis refers to non-forgetting the distant people so that both the near and the far are equally treated. And 6B:7 observes that respecting the old and being considerate toward the young co-exist with not forgetting the guest and the traveler. Here the axis refers to non-forgetting the guest and the traveler as complementing the respect to the old and being considerate toward the young. These references demonstrate how in various instances negated forgetfulness means directing attentive awareness to the needs of the collective and marginalizing the awareness of one’s own needs.

The authors behind the passages discussed so far were at best only marginally occupied by philosophical implications of mnemic processes. Nevertheless, philosophical mindsets such as the *yin-yang* reasoning that dominated their thought guided them in efficacious directions. The passages mentioned above indicate a task-oriented approach, highlighting both the process and goals of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness. The goals are specified as various virtues that always affect a close circle of people or the greater community, and are constant during a person’s lifetime. The process follows the pattern of the axis and margins paradigm. On the one hand, the axis and its synonyms, non-forgetfulness and the mode of attentive awareness, are distinguished for the coordination required in their performance. On the other hand, the allusion to forgetfulness in association with suspended awareness (rather than oblivion) invokes the endurance of mnemic resources that recede into the margins, implying the positive effect of their inactivity. To be sure, within this framework, suspended awareness and the margins it occupies form an indispensable counterpart for attentive awareness, and the same applies contrariwise. In conjunction with the reasoning of the axis and margins paradigm, the endurance of “forgetful” suspended awareness, coupled with the constancy and attentiveness to goals, supports the person with continuity and orientation.

**Wang in the Zhuangzi**

A similar understanding of the mnemic process and its goal applies to the *Zhuangzi*. Accordingly, in the following, forgetfulness should read as the mode of suspended awareness, and non-forgetfulness as attentive awareness. However, where the *Analects*, the *Xici* commentary of *The Book of Changes*, and the *Mengzi* consider cultural development as the epitome of human accomplishment, for *Zhuangzi*, inherent cultural distinctions distract an otherwise perfect natural order. To him, non-forgetfulness and the accumulation of knowledge thus foil a person from becoming one with the Way. Therefore, where the sources mentioned above stress non-forgetfulness, the *Zhuangzi* advocates forgetfulness.

In chapter 6 (6.9) of the *Zhuangzi*, Kongzi’s disciple, Yan Hui (514–483 BC), reports to his master about his progress in self-cultivation. He forgets, in the following order, humanity and righteousness 仁義 (*renyi*), ritual and propriety 禮 (*li*), and music 樂 (*yue*). Ultimately, he simply
Isay

sits and forgets. In the process, his awareness rids itself of his organs and limbs, of his senses such as hearing and seeing; he leaves his form and neutralizes his intelligence. Eventually he realizes oneness with the great transformations (Zhuangzi, 1988: 111). Another section of the same chapter (6.6) recounts the fish who in the spring cling to one another on the ground when the ponds are drying. “They blow moisture on each other and keep each other wet with their slime.” Zhuangzi (1988) comments that the fish should rather forget themselves in the rivers and lakes, and human beings would likewise be better off, if instead of admiring and criticizing their rulers, they would forget both and become one with the Way (p. 110). Earlier in the same section (6.6), three friends praise the accomplishment of forgetfulness, linking it to immortality (Zhuangzi, 1988: 109). Zhuangzi’s parodical Kongzi then comments that rather than wander like himself within this world, these people roam beyond it. He adds that they forget their internal organs and disregard their senses, equating their capacity to forget with discarding human form.

Yan Hui’s mindset before his forgetfulness exercise, being concerned with the affairs of the world, that is, admiring and criticizing Yao and Qie, like the fish blowing moisture on each other in the drying ponds, and the three friends before they discarded human form, is equivalent to engaging in negated forgetfulness rather than forgetting, the result being that they fall short of realizing oneness. Hence, Yan Hui receives praise for his exercise, the text urges the fish to forget themselves in the rivers and lakes and humans to forget the affairs of the world, and the three friends are congratulated for their forgetfulness. Similarly, most references in the Zhuangzi to the ultimate goal in life define it as becoming one with the Way or, attaining oneness, by shedding all traces of non-forgetfulness. Significantly, forgetfulness of all distinctions in these cases involves purpose and intentionality, which is never devoid of mnemonic resources. In this respect, the outcome of the process is synonymous with that outlined above: rather than end in mnemonic emptiness, the link with mnemonic resources persists. As suspended as awareness might be, it is not disengaged.

A reading of other passages in the Zhuangzi reveals that forgetfulness to Zhuangzi is rather selective. Toward the end of chapter 3 (3.5), the text observes that those who get carried away with feelings when mourning forget what Heaven imparted to them (Zhuangzi, 1988: 78). In other words, being carried away by feelings and being only suspendedly aware of participating in the great transformations make everything pointless. Apart from the suggestion that feelings should be tempered, Zhuangzi expects the person to not-forget their participation in the great transformations, and rather be attentively aware of becoming one with the Way (Zhuangzi, 1988: 28). Non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness and, interchangeably, attentive awareness and suspended awareness work in tandem toward achieving the goal of oneness.

Chapter 6 (6.1) revisits this reasoning. The text speaks about True Persons who are not enthusiastic about living, nor do they hold a grudge against death: they do not forget (buwang) their beginning and they do not seek 不求 (buqiu) knowledge about that which awaits ahead. They live the life they were allotted and forgetfully (wang) they relinquish this life (Zhuangzi, 1988: 105).30 To ordinary people, the “beginning” and “that which awaits” refer to the occasions of birth and death, or, more broadly—and relevant for the purpose of the present discussion—to earlier and later phases of their participation in the great transformations. For True Persons, however, at the same time that forgetfulness or suspended awareness promotes their quest to not interfere with this process, thus communicating the mode of fully living the present, non-forgetfulness or attentive awareness work in tandem toward achieving the goal of oneness.

The instances of forgetfulness in chapter 6, and those of non-forgetfulness in chapters 3 and 6, show that the axis and margins paradigm applies to the Zhuangzi, notwithstanding a little twist. Forgetfulness reduces awareness to its suspended mode where distinctions are no longer effective, allowing those “true” persons to neutrally merge with the great transformations. As observed above, the Zhuangzi provides several instances indicating that non-forgetfulness produces
distinctions that harm the sought-for experience. Yet, oneness with the great transformations is a conscious feat—those “true” persons should not forget what they seek. In this respect, non-forgetfulness, in its attentiveness to the goal, is inseparable from the process. Accordingly, synonymous with non-forgetfulness and being attentively aware, alignment with the axis in the Zhuangzi departs from my observation in the preceding section, in that for everyone and endlessly it is fixed on the goal of oneness with the great transformations.

Significantly, to confine the non-forgetfulness of merger with the great transformations to non-forgetfulness of a single goal misrepresents the scope of the mnemonic resources involved. To be sure, the “great transformations” is an all-encompassing idea, and to be attentively aware of this idea is to be aware of everything that matters.31 The exclusion of this one goal from the otherwise all-encompassing forgetfulness (in the sense of suspended awareness) highlights the supportive effect of such forgetfulness on non-forgetfulness (attentive awareness) that has gained credence recently among neuroscientists observing what they call controlled and active forgetting.32 This reasoning applies as well to the texts discussed in the preceding section with the difference that there the goals vary.

**Xunzi on the working of the heart/mind and non-forgetfulness**

The *Xunzi* forms the exception to the complementary reasoning of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness, as the author poses no tension or conditioning between the two modes. He rather draws on mnemonic resources to differentiate between the exemplary person 君子 (*junzi*) and the ordinary person 小人 (*xiaoren*) or, respectively, the accumulative or broadminded, and the shallow or leaky. First, in the chapter “On Self-Cultivation” 修身 (*xiushen*), Xunzi postulates a correspondence between the extent of a person’s command of mnemonic resources and the quality of that person:

The person who absorbs 问 (*wen*) much [learning] is broad 博 (*bo*); the person who absorbs little [learning] is shallow 浅 (*qian*) . . . [.] and “leaky” 漏 (*lou*) would appropriately describe the person who is predisposed to forget [what he learned]. (II.3)33

Quantity words such as “much” and “little” are here juxtaposed, respectively, with quality words such as “broad” and “shallow.” Predisposed forgetfulness is synonymous with leakage, a rather colorful depiction of the forgetful person who fails to accumulate or store the contents of the knowledge gained. Furthermore, as the first part of the quote suggests, whoever learned much and is not predisposed to forget—this person does not forget, they accumulate and are thus capable of realizing broadness. Broadness in this context refers first and foremost to accumulated contents and to a higher level of personal quality.34

The second passage features in Xunzi’s first chapter (I.9), “In Support of Learning” 勵學 (*quanxue*), where he similarly refers to expansion (broadening) in the social and the cultural sphere:

The learning of the exemplary person enters through the ears, collects 著 (*zhao*) in the heart/mind, expands through the four limbs, and becomes apparent in one’s actions . . . The learning of the ordinary person enters through the ears and exits through the mouth. Considering the distance of no more than four inches between mouth and ear, how could [such learning] suffice to ennoble 以美 (*yimei*) the seven-foot body of a person! (Xunzi, 1988: 14–15)35

The knowledge one learns first enters the heart/mind through the ears,36 subsequently infusing the body and becoming manifested in action. The ordinary person is incapable of avoiding forgetfulness and cannot keep the contents for long, and therefore cannot ennoble their body. The
exemplary person, on the contrary, is predisposed to avoid forgetfulness; hence, this person is capable of recalling the knowledge they accumulated in learning.

Accordingly, learning, and thus self-cultivation, depends on mnemic resources. Moreover, the acquired contents, as in the former passage, become part of the heart/mind and, equally, of the body. The use of the word “ennoble” communicates that eventually learning is manifested practically in the quality of the exemplary person. Apart from the distinction, alluded to in this text, between the physical and the psychic, the text associates the practical manifestations of mnemonic resources with the superior qualities of their possessor, linking the person who does not forget with their surrounding cultural community. The two passages (I.9, II.3) illustrate how the quantity of non-forgetfulness determines the quality of the person and affects societal expansion.

Xunzi’s major contribution to the understanding of memory in ancient China is found in his account of the heart/mind and how it works, in the chapter “Dispelling Delusions” (jiebi) (XXI). There, by inference, one may draw insight into the affiliated processes of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness. The account commits itself at the outset to oneness and correlativity: “The world does not have two Ways, [and] the sage does not have two heart/minds” (XXI.1). Delusions 蓄 (bi) epitomize failures in the heart/mind-Way correspondences deriving from one-sidedness — 曲 (yiqu), which is synonymous with obsession (XXI.1). To understand such failures, it is in order to ask what is meant by the “Way” and what is meant by the “heart/mind.” To be sure, the Way that is one consists of multiple facets: “The Way embodies all enduring constants and exhausts all the changes of the world” (XXI.5).

In explicating the workings of the heart/mind toward correspondence with the Way, the quote that follows refers to knowledgeability and to the directions of the heart/mind 志 (zhi) in a sense that converges with their accumulation and with memory:

A person is born [and then] he becomes knowledgeable 知 (zhi). Knowledgeability coexists with directions of the heart/mind 志 (zhi). (XXI.8)

According to the same section in chapter XXI, directions accumulate 志也者，藏也 (zhiyezhi, zangye) within the heart/mind, turning into the person’s knowledgeability. And, knowledgeability necessitates what we generally call memory. Regardless of the choice of word for 志 (zhi), the reference to mnemonic matters is obvious. For the purposes of the present discussion, the accumulated “directions of the heart/mind” could just as well be understood as “mnemic resources.”

The workings of the heart/mind consist of the dynamic relations between three qualities and their matching capacities. The text reads,

How do human beings know the Way? The answer is: [by the virtue of] the heart/mind. How does the heart/mind know? The answer is: [Because it consists of] emptiness 虚 (xu), singularity 壹/— (yi), and quiescence 靜 (jing). Owing to its possession of the quality of emptiness, the heart/mind never stops accumulating. Owing to its possession of the quality of singularity, the heart/mind never ceases to account for diversity 满 (man). And owing to its possession of the quality of quiescence, the heart/mind never ceases its engagements 動 (dong). (XXI.8)

The working of the heart/mind is determined by the capacities to accumulate, to account for diversity, and to constantly engage. These capacities that draw, respectively, on the qualities of emptiness, singularity, and quiescence clearly have much to do with the person’s mnemonic resources. Significantly, whereas the qualities are apparently hard-wired or inborn in the heart/mind, the capacities are their consecutive derivatives.
The relations that the *Xunzi* proposes between qualities and capacities suggest the substance and function 體用 (tiyong) formula that later—under the influence of sources arriving from India—became a major philosophical category in Chinese thought.\(^{42}\) The *yin-yang* reasoning is revealed in that without qualities or substance there would be no capacities or function and vice versa. I take substance to represent the contents of the person’s mnemonic resources in its primordial neutral state, a state which, of course, never actually exists. The function of the heart/mind relates to the process of contextualizing and vitalizing the content by forming linkages.

In view of the three pairs of qualities and capacities, this early variation of the *tiyong* formula engenders the following understandings regarding the mnemonic resources of the person. The heart/mind’s quality of emptiness prevents content previously accumulated from interfering with whatever is next acquired. In other words, accumulation during the mnemonic process proceeds regardless of the amount already received. *Xunzi* further argues that the heart/mind’s quality of singularity prevents one’s awareness of difference from causing disintegration. For mnemonic purposes, this means that the process is an ongoing personally centered experience at the same time that its content is infinitely diverse. This argument is little different from a contemporary scholar’s observation of the need for having both psychic unity and psychic diversity (Lloyd, 2018: 21). The quality of quiescence signifies the constancy of engagement, at the same time that it guarantees that the ongoing activity does not undermine knowledgeability. The person’s mnemonic resources, therefore, constantly move and transform regardless of former associations. Accordingly, these resources indefinitely accumulate, are experienced as personally centered, and are dynamic and diverse.

The *Xunzi* lacks a specific indication to the axis and margins paradigm and its corollary modes of attentive and suspended awareness. However, a synthesis of his view and that of his predecessors who are discussed above seems close at hand. Indeed, the *yin-yang* reasoning that pervades the qualities and capacities correlation in *Xunzi*’s “Dispelling Delusions” is compatible with the paradigm and its modes: The qualities or substance correspond to the margins, while the capacities or function correspond to the axis.

**Concluding remarks**

An unbounded storage of accumulating mnemonic resources is intricately enmeshed with the heart/mind of each person. To account for the heart/mind’s intermediary positioning and the narrative pattern of the *yin-yang* cyclical process, I appeal to the axis and margins paradigm. This paradigm depicts non-forgetfulness as the intense mode of concentration, more adequately termed attentive awareness. Forgetfulness is termed suspended awareness. It further proposes that that which is momentarily close to the core conforms to the axis (*yang*) and that which momentarily distances away conforms to the margins (*yin*). Axis and margins are mutually supportive, and the same applies to non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness in their respective modified meanings. *Xunzi* excepted, the complementary relations of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness communicate constant alternations in quantity that do not necessarily correspond to differences in the quality of these resources.

My examination of several passages from Kongzi’s *Analects*, Mengzi, the *Xici* commentary on the *Book of Changes*, and the *Zhuangzi* demonstrates how within the complementary framework of the *yin-yang* reasoning, forgetfulness is conceived in terms of its susceptibility to manipulation that enhances non-forgetfulness. In my argument, the application of the axis and margins paradigm to the conceptualization of non-forgetfulness and forgetfulness reflects the manner by which the modes of awareness simultaneously fuse and divide. Non-forgetfulness, or attentive awareness, never wholly excludes other things and concerns. Similarly, the equivalence of forgetfulness with suspended awareness supplants the contingency of dichotomous terms such as oblivion. Intentional
forgetfulness in the *Zhuangzi* presumably sharpens the division between the attentive and the suspended modes of awareness and their mnemonic connotations, and yet is consistent with the same paradigm. Indeed, the confinement of the axis to non-forgetfulness of a single goal—most vividly presented in the *Zhuangzi*—discloses how writers of these texts favorably regard the effect of forgetfulness in optimizing the function of memory. I suggest the next several questions for further consideration: does a right balance between the two modes exist, and, if so, what is that balance and how can it be maintained? Furthermore, how long can attentive awareness be maintained and what happens when it becomes interrupted? And how do excess in attentiveness or suspension affect one’s personality? 

The *Xunzi* agrees with the former sources that mnemonic resources enhance the realization of personal goals. However, discounting the axis and margins paradigm, it differs in considering forgetfulness merely for its subtracting effect. Passages I.9 and II.3 illustrate how non-forgetfulness quantitatively determines the quality of the person and affects societal expansion, though neither exhort the person to categorical non-forgetfulness. Xunzi’s primary contribution resides, however, in the way he makes sense of the working of the heart/mind by using the qualities of emptiness, singularity, and quiescence and the capacities to accumulate, to account for diversity, and to constantly engage its directions, respectively. With Xunzi, the person’s mnemonic resources indefinitely accumulate, are experienced as personally centered, and are dynamic and diverse. His application of the *tiyong*-resembling formula and *yin*-yang reasoning in denoting the relations between qualities and capacities implies the compatibility of the axis and margins model and its corollary modes of attentive and suspended awareness to his understanding of mnemonic processes. Such a synthesis remained, however, unattended.

**Note on further research**

Conceptualizations on the personal level of memory-related processes in the Chinese tradition are ripe for expansion. The earliest known written materials include the oracle bone inscriptions (OBI) of the thirteenth to the eleventh century BCE and the bronze inscriptions (BI) manufactured during the same period and over the next few centuries. Subsequent are the texts traditionally considered as transmitted statements and hymns of “Chinese” antiquity, such as the *Book of Documents* (尚書) and the *Book of Odes* (詩經). The outstanding methodological problems presented by both these inscriptions and texts notwithstanding, writers of both the BI and these texts (the OBI require a separate consideration) seemingly resemble writers of later philosophical texts in expressing mnemonic concerns by the complementary terms of *wang*. Apart from the texts examined above, which are by no means exhausted, among many other sources that deserve scholarly attention in this respect are the *Mozi* and the *Liji* (禮記), and bamboo slips that have recently been unearthed. Similarly, it would be beneficial to apply the concerns examined here to later philosophical texts such as those of the Southern Song (1127–1279 AD) and Ming (1368–1644) masters who engaged extensively in discussions pertaining to the heart/mind and beyond. Another direction for further research is to examine a broader array of terms—from *nian* 念 and *ji* 記 (see fn. 3), to *zhuan* 傳 (transmission of cultural contents), *shi* 識 (be conscious of, comprehension), and *cheng* 稱 (sometimes refers to mnemonic impression), as well as terms in addition to *wang* 忘, *zang* 藏, and *zhi* 志, that have already been mentioned. These and other terms and sources open an epistemic range of meaningful implications spanning an ocean of classical references enabling the re-thinking of memory-related processes.

Research in comparative studies provides another direction. In conjunction with the Chinese sources, memory-related works of Plato and Aristotle offer a perspective on the significance of the dichotomous versus non-dichotomous divide for understandings of mnemonic processes. There are
several suggestive options both of convergences and of divergences between the Greek and the Chinese traditions. To cite two: While Plato’s postulation of the soul that transcends the body as source of all knowledge (Plato 2011) markedly differs from the views discussed above, Aristotle’s hylomorphic model that argues for the complementing relations of potentiality and actuality, matter and form, body and soul/mind is comparable to the qualities and capacities reasoning in Xunzi. Obviously, more comparisons across various periods and other cultures such as those of India and the so-called Middle East are equally promising. One may also consider the “Chinese” view from the perspective of “Western” understandings of memory and examine what it is to accumulate something in the mind, how a person does not forget (or recalls) a thing from that storage, how or when non-forgetfulness goes wrong or operates rightly, what constitutes the process in material terms, and, finally, analyze taxonomies of memory and the effects of temporality.

Acknowledgements

Three anonymous reviewers made a number of critically useful suggestions which I incorporated into this final version. I would like to express my gratitude to them. Among the people who along the way contributed to the writing of this article, I would like to mention Vera Schwarcz, Yotam Ronen, Amy Klein, and Niva and Daphna. The responsibility for errors in this study must rest with me.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Gad C Isay https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2780-0529

Notes

1. A recent example is Nikulin (2015) containing a “reflection” essay on forgetfulness in Zhuangzi that stretches for 8 pages in a book nearly 400 pages long (Chen, 2015). Another is the 48-chapter-long The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory that dedicates its three non-Western chapters to classical Indian philosophy, Indian and Buddhist philosophy, and Chinese Buddhist philosophy (Bernecker and Michaelian, 2017). See Note 7 below.

2. The gap between quantity and quality alludes to the possible efficacy of forgetting, observable in the passages examined in sections “Wang 忘 in Kongzi’s Analects, Mengzi, and the Xici commentary” and “Wang in the Zhuangzi.” Hereafter, to dissociate myself from Western-centered meanings and yet remain context-sensitive, rather than “memory,” in most cases I use “mnemic resources” or “mnemic processes,” and so on. “Mnemic” in the sense of memory-related qualities and capacities.

3. During the early period, 記 (ji) was limited in most cases to the meaning of “to record” or “a record” in relation to the production of texts. As for mnemic purposes, it was yet to assert itself. Ji is absent in the Analects and in the Mencius 孟子 (Mengzi, fourth century BCE) and it features twice in the outer chapters of the Zhuangzi 莊子 (fourth century BCE), conveying the meaning of a record or a written source (in chapter 12), and as the verb “to remember” or, rather, “pay attention” with regard to a pattern of behavior (in chapter 20). It appears once in the Xunzi. Another term 憶 (yi) does not figure in the texts examined in this essay except for the Classic of Odes 詩經 (Shijing) of the Western Zhou and early Eastern Zhou periods (1046–771 BCE, 771–256 BCE) where its meaning is only remotely related to mnemic concerns. The closest one-word phrase for “remembrance” in the ancient texts is 念 (nian). However, a reading of ancient sources such as The Classic of Odes suggests that whereas nian necessitates mnemic resources, it primarily indicates the drawing of attention in association with present and/or past knowledge of certain affairs. This nian is synonymous with what I call “a second-order remembrance.” Apparently, when authors wished to express experiences that were more emotive, closer to the core of the person, and more directly linked to mnemic resources, they resorted to negated forgetfulness. The latter, therefore, represents “a first-order remembrance.” In other words, when deeper mnemic experiences needed expression,
authors opted for negated forgetfulness rather than nian. The vocabulary of second-order and first-order follows the parallel—and yet much different—differentiations in Henri Bergson’s pure memory and habit memory, and Edmund Husserl’s secondary memory and primary memory (Nikulin, 2015: 245, 250).

4. For a view that justifies such a modification (more on this in section “The distinction of the complementary relations”), see Cua who observes in his study of Zhuangzi: “. . . to forget distinctions, not in the sense of eliminating them, but in the sense of not being ’tied down’ or being obsessed with the importance commonly attached to them” (Cua, 1977: 306). By opting for the term “attentive awareness,” I follow Shun’s study of Le (joy) in the Analects: “. . . what one loses [in wang] is not awareness as such but attentive awareness” (Shun, 2017: 139).

5. For memory and ancestor worship, see Brashier (2011). For a comparative study of ritualistic commemoration in Kongzi’s Analects, see Casey (1984). For memory and historiography, see Leung (2019).

6. For moral virtue and forgetfulness in Zhuangzi, see Cua (1977); for forgetfulness in Zhuangzi, see also Chen (2015).

7. Cheng (2017) discusses Chinese Buddhism with few allusions to memory.

8. Keightley contrasts “will” with “may not,” although the contrast in the original is sharper, hence my addition of [may].

9. Allan (1991) traces the beginning of the yin-yang reasoning (in her words “dualism” or “theory”) to the construction of the Xia (a presumed antecedent dynasty) in Shang (1600–1046 BCE) mythology as an inversion of their own mythical themes (pp. 57–73). For the prominence assigned to centrality 中 (Zhong) in Confucian philosophy, see Li (2014: 70–86). For the narrative pattern, see Plaks (1977).

10. The poem numbers follow the arrangement in the Mao edition of the Book of Odes (Mao shi 毛詩). Hereafter, unless otherwise specified, translations from the Chinese are by the present author.

11. Xici IE:2: 顯諸仁,藏諸用; the function of that which has been accumulated unfolds in humaneness.

12. Xici IK:3: 聖人以此洗心,退藏於密,吉凶與民同患。神以知來,知以藏往,其孰能與此哉!

13.君子. . .,待時而動,何不利之有? Compare with Xunzi I:20, discussed below. “Exemplary person” in Confucian texts such as the Analects, Mengzi, Xici, and Xunzi refers to the person who embodies moral nobility and is at least theoretically fit to engage in managing the affairs of the people.

14. The Chinese reads: 至人之用心若鏡,不將不迎,應而不藏,故能勝物而不傷. For the association of the heart/mind with the image of the mirror in the Zhuangzi, see Oshima (1983). Zhuangzi’s “perfect person” and, equally, the “true person” 真人 (zhenren, see below), is distinguished for being one with the great transformations of natural and human existence. For the present purpose, there are no significant differences between the two.

15. Xunzi’s usage of zang is discussed in section “Xunzi on the working of the heart/mind and non-forgetfulness” and is consistent with these observations.

16. For one source among others supporting this assumption, see Xunzi: “The heart/mind is the master of the body, the ruler of the illuminating intelligence . . .” 心者,形之君也,而神明之主也 . . . (Xunzi XXI:9).

17. For the axis and margins model, I take inspiration from Qian (2001: 43–47).

18. Contemporary neuroscientists observe how the mind actively engages in controlled forgetting to prevent overfitting, to aid in learning, and so forth. In such cases, similar to those raised by the Chinese sources brought here, the purpose is to increase focus. For neuroscience examples, see Anderson (2021).

19. The Chinese reads: 葉公問孔子於子路,子路不對。子曰: “女奚不曰,其為人也,發憤忘食,樂以忘憂,不知老之將至云爾.”

20. The Chinese reads: “舜視棄天下,猶棄敝蹝也。竊負而逃,遵海濱而處,終身訨然,樂而忘天下.”

21. The Chinese reads: 不愆不忘率由舊章. Saying II:2 in Kongzi’s Analects manipulates a different line in the Book of Odes to convey a similar message.

22. Shun (2017: esp. 140–141) uses “neglect” rather than “forget” for wang in saying VII:19 and in others.

23. The Chinese reads: “父母愛之,喜而不忘;父母惡之,怒而不忘.”

24. The Chinese reads: “志士不忘其憂,勇士不忘其死.”
27. The Chinese reads: 三命曰：‘敬老慈幼，勿忘賓旅’.
28. Hereafter, I refer to this accomplishment of becoming one with the Way interchangeably and, in accordance with the Chinese text and the explanatory requirements, as the achievement of oneness, or to become one with the great transformations.
29. The text mentions “Yao and Qie.” Yao is the legendary exemplary ruler and Qie the most detested one.
30. Significantly, “[to] not seek” is the “future” parallel of the ‘past’-oriented “[to] not forget.”
31. For a similar understanding in the context of an analysis of Buddhist thought, see Casey (1992: 290).
32. Gravitz (2019) reviews several recent studies that affirm the constructive contribution of forgetfulness to the function of memory.
33. In Chinese: 多問曰博; 少問曰淺; ...易忘曰漏.
34. Compare to the Zhuangzi, where forgetfulness facilitates the person joining the great process of transformations.
35. Knoblock’s translation with adaptations. There are no specific mnemonic words in this quote although the relevance of the implication is obvious. The Chinese reads: 君子之學也，入乎耳，著乎心，布乎四體，形乎動靜，...小人之學也，入乎耳，出乎口。口耳之閒則四寸耳，曷足以美七尺之軀哉。
36. “Ears” in the above quote should not be taken literally but rather appeal to the mode of learning in class.
37. The Chinese reads: 天下無二道，聖人無兩道.
38. Xunzi (n.d.), Eno (trans).
39. Several translations in this specific context opt for “Memory” for zhi 志 (Cheng, 2014: 190; Graham, 1989: 253). Shun (2014: 265–266, 278) uses “directions of the heart/mind.” The character closely resembles the rarely used 詞 (also, zhī), the meaning of which converges with memory.
40. The Chinese reads: 人生而有知, 知而有志.
41. The Chinese reads: 人何以知道？曰：心。心何以知？曰：虛壹而精。心未嘗不藏也，然有所謂虛；心未嘗不滿也，然而有所謂一；心未嘗不動也，然而有所謂靜。The translation here is indebted to Xunzi (1988: 682–683).
42. Cua (2003) translates ti 體 as “intrinsic nature” (pp. 720–722). With the introduction of Buddhism into China and especially Wang Bi’s (王弼 226–249 AD) commentary to the Laozi (specifically, chapter 38), the distinction between substance and function (ti-yong) became a major category in Chinese philosophy.
43. Kern (2009) discusses commemoration in the bronze inscriptions (BI), the Documents, and the Odes.
44. For the different orientations in Greek and Chinese philosophical discussions, see Lloyd and Sivin (2002).

References
Allan S (1991) The Shape of the Turtle: Myth, Art, and Cosmos in Early China. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Anderson MC (2021) Memory Control Lab/Publications. Available at: http://www.memorycontrol.net/publications.htm#2019 (accessed 17 July 2021).
Bernecker S and Michaelian K (2017) The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory. New York: Routledge.
Bloom I (1985) On the matter of the mind: the metaphysical basis of the expanded self. In: Munro DJ (ed.) Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, pp. 293–327.
Brashier KE (2011) Ancestral Memory in Early China. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Casey ES (1984) Commemoration and perdurance in the analects. Books I and II. Philosophy East and West 34(4): 389–399.
Casey ES (1992) Remembering resumed: pursuing Buddhism and phenomenology in practice. In: Gytatso J (ed.) Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, pp. 271–298.
Chen X (2015) Reflection, memory and forgetfulness in Daoism. In: Nikulin D (ed.) Memory: A History. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 176–183.
Cheng CY (2014) Xunzi as a systematic philosopher: toward organic unity of nature, mind, and reason. In: Shen V (ed.) Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 179–199.
Cheng CY (2017) Chinese Buddhist philosophy. In: Bernecker S and Michaelian K (eds) The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory. London: Routledge, pp. 428–438.
Cua AS (1977) Forgetting morality: reflections on a theme in Chuang Tzu. Journal of Chinese Philosophy 4: 305–328.
Cua AS (2003) Ti and Yong. In: Cua AS (ed.) Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy. New York: Routledge, pp. 720–722.
Graham AC (1989) Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argumentation in Ancient China. LaSalle, IL: Open Court.
Gravitz L (2019) The forgotten part of memory. Nature 571: S12–S14.
Gyatso J (ed.) (1992) Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Keightley DN (1988) Shang divination and metaphysics. Philosophy East and West 38(4): 367–397.
Kern M (2009) Bronze inscriptions, the Shijing and the Shangshu: the revolution of the ancestral sacrifice during the Western Zhou. In: Lagerwey J and Kalinowski M (eds) Early Chinese Religion: Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD). Leiden: Brill, pp. 143–200.
Leung VS (2019) The Politics of the Past in Early China. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Li CY (2014) The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony. London: Routledge.
Lloyd GER (2018) The Ambivalences of Rationality: Ancient and Modern Cross-Cultural Explorations. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Lloyd GER and Sivin N (2002) The Way and the Word: Science and Medicine in Early China and Greece. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Nikulin D (ed.) (2015) Memory: A History. New York: Oxford University Press.
Oshima H (1983) A metaphorical analysis of the concept of mind in the Chuang-tzu. In: Mair VH (ed.) Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 63–84.
Owen S (1986) Remembrances: The Experience of the past in Classical Chinese Literature. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Plaks AH (1977) Conceptual models in Chinese narrative theory. Journal of Chinese Philosophy 4: 25–47.
Plaks AH (2006) Xin 心 as the seat of emotions in Confucian self-cultivation. In: Santangelo P (ed.) Love, Hatred, and Other Passions; Questions and Themes on Emotions in Chinese Civilization. Leiden: Brill, pp. 113–125.
Plato (2011) Meno and Phaedo (ed D Sedley) (trans Long A). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Qian M （錢穆）（2001）Hushang Xiansilu 湖上閒思錄 [Quiet Thoughts at the Lake]. Taipei: Lantai chubanshe.
Schwarcz V (1998) Bridge across Broken Time: Chinese and Jewish Cultural Memory. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
Shun KL (2014) Early Confucian moral psychology. In: Shen V (ed.) Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 263–290.
Shun KL (2017) Le in the analects. In: Goldin PR (ed.) A Concise Companion to Confucius. New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 133–147.
Wang YR (2018) Wholesome remembrance and the critique of memory—From Indian Buddhist context to Chinese Chan appropriation. In: Wang Y and Wawrytko SA (eds) Dao Companion to Chinese Buddhist Philosophy. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 69–100.
Xunzi (1988) Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works (trans Knoblock J). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Xunzi (n.d.) Removing blinders. In: Resources on Traditional China Translations and Course Materials (trans Eno R). Early China Resources, Indiana University. Available at: https://chinatxt.sitehost.iu.edu/Thought/Xunzi-Removing_Blinders.pdf (accessed 30 June 2020).
Zhuangzi 莊子 (1988) Xinyi Zhuangzi duben 新譯莊子讀本 [A Zhuangzi Reader] (ed JH Huang 黃錦鋐). Taipei: Sanmin shuju.

Author biography
Gad C Isay is Senior Lecturer in the Department of East Asian Studies in Tel-Hai College and is a member of Tel-Hai Center for the Study of Religions. His research area is comparative philosophy, modern Chinese intellectual history, and particularly the thought of Qian Mu.