Mencius of Confucianism and Jonathan Edwards of Protestant Christianity: Intellectuals' Self-Awareness and the People's Self-Understandings

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Boston College Electronic Thesis or Dissertation, 2013

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BOSTON COLLEGE
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

The Thesis of:  

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Entitled:  "Mencius of Confucianism and Jonathan Edwards of Protestant Christianity: Intellectuals’ Self-Awareness and the People’s Self-Understandings"

Submitted to the Department of:  Political Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of:

Master of Arts

in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has been read and approved by the Committee:

Chair: Dennis Hale, Professor

Gerald Easter, Professor

April 2013
Boston College

The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Department of Political Science

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A Thesis

By

Ai Lin

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Thank You

Thank you sincerely, Professor Dennis Hale! The process of writing the thesis for me is fun. Specifically, the every moment I talked to and consulted you on the thesis is the most interesting and precious time I had. You not only open the doors to unknown field for me, but also offer me different perspectives to look into same ideas, which made the whole journey so enjoyable and unforgettable.

Thank you, Carol Fialkosky!
Thanks for all the guidance you offered during my studies here in Boston College. I am sorry I probably made your hair turn grey.
Abstract

Intellectuals’ different self-understandings contribute to their development of different views on the people in society. And such different attitudes remarkably affect their ways of engaging their people in the specific cultural contexts. In the process of interactions, people’s characters were established in their specific environments. Admittedly, intellectuals acted as intermediary between the core values/beliefs and the people. Fundamentally and ultimately it is our conceptions of God and our thinking of messages from Heaven that determines not only intellectual’s self-awareness and their views on the people, but also people’s actual self-understanding.

I am trying to demonstrate that those lacking of sense of self-understanding were so tough to develop public awareness and take initiatives in civic participation, just like people in traditional Confucian society in ancient China. People of colonial New England were directed to cultivate their personal relationships with God and so also their sense of the self, which is compact with their active civic society.
1. Foreword

This paper aims to study the relations between intellectuals’ self-awareness and the people’s self-understandings. I am going to approach from a comparative perspective and put Mencius and Jonathan Edwards’ thoughts into parallel studies. Specifically, the paper is divided into mainly three parts: how did they define themselves and their responsibility; how did they think about the general public and choose their engaging targets; and how did they preach their targets. In this way, I hope to get an idea of how intellectuals’ (Confucian literati of ancient China and puritan ministers of New England colonies) different self-awareness help give birth to different types of self-understandings among the general public.

In this paper, I am going to focus on primarily three questions:

Who did they think they are?

Who did they think they should engage?

How did they think they should engage?

Through answering the questions, I am going to argue that partially due to intellectuals’ different ways of thinking and, as a result, different patterns for social engagements, people in Protestant Christian environment in colonial New England tended to develop more fully the sense of self-understanding than people in Ancient China.
2. Intellectuals and the Masses

As one may see, people of different cultural context develop different attitudes towards public concerns/ issues.

Since 17th century, Puritans in the New England colonies adopted Congregationalist church governance and established town meetings. In such form as legislative body, residents of a town gathered every year, voted on operating budgets, laws, and other issues for the community's operation. Such typical tradition of direct democracy reflects ordinary people’s fervent motivation for civic participation ---the eagerness to be involved in the decision making process of public issues.

Puritans emphasized so much on the principle of democratic self-governance, which Tocqueville praised so much in his book Democracy in America. Neither rich nor poor, the Puritans at America’s point departure were a well-educated, middle-class; homogeneous people who knew how to form themselves into voluntary congregations and into a “civil body politic” of equals… well over a hundred years before the Revolution of 1776 or the Constitution of 1787, New England’s Puritans had become the founding fathers of American democratic self-government. “Puritanism was not just a religious doctrine; in many respects it shared the most absolute democratic and republican theories”1.

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1 See Hugh Heclo, Christianity and American Democracy, pp. 10
While so familiar to Americans and thus probably having been incorporated into their DNA, the democratic practice of general public, however, is never realized in any sense in ancient China. Rather, it is the emperors and their courts that normally took hold of everything, from life and death of an individual/family to trade and market management, implementation of tax policy, and public works. Ordinary people are merely subject of their rulers. In rare cases, they acted out and clashed the royal courts in uprisings when they could no longer bear certain extremely brutal and inhuman rulers. That often leads to the end of a corrupted dynasty and founding of another new. When social order is finally restored and new ruler controls all the power, people come back to mind their own business and discipline themselves according to their positions in a society with strict social orders.

Why there are such dramatic difference concerning ordinary people’s self-understandings and social responsibility? Definitely it is related to the core values/ beliefs of the specific culture. And then it becomes a question of how the core values from the high above get down to influence the average people in different cultural context accordingly. This has to do with the so-called “intellectuals”; those mastering the cultural values and serving as intermediary to reach down to the other members in a society. That is to say, there is a simplified model in every culture as below:

Values/beliefs --- Intellectuals --- The People
Admittedly, this paper focuses on the relationships between intellectuals and the people. Firstly, intellectuals’ self-awareness ---their contemplation on their responsibilities and roles in society--- unfolds the core values and beliefs. Secondly, their self-awareness affects their interactions with the general public and, consequently, influences people’s self-identity --- their ways of thinking and living in society. Thirdly and mostly importantly, by “the people” here, I mean people of all different classes as a whole in a society, including ordinary people, officials, and rules.

Note that in the analysis model, the intellectual(s) serves as an independent factor and, therefore, their role as intermediary is underlined. This, however, does not rule out the case that intellectuals perceive themselves no difference to ordinary people and, as a matter of fact, they are treated as one of countless professions, say, as ministers in Christian context. I will address this later as it proceeds.

3. Jonathan Edwards and Mencius

We have ordinary people in the New England colonies as active citizens in public sphere and ordinary people in ancient China as mere subjects ruled by emperors. In order to get to know the reason for such difference, I would like to come to the two “powerful” intellectuals. They and their thoughts are the focuses of the thesis.
Mencius (most accepted dates: 372 – 289 BCE) was the most famous Confucian philosopher after Confucius himself. Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758) is widely acknowledged as America's most important and original philosophical theologian and Christian preacher. On the outward appearance, living in dramatically different cultural context, about 2,000 years away in time and around 1,000 miles away in space, they should have nothing to do with each other.

It is true that what they each do during their lifetime in their specific culture and society have no relation or direct interaction with each other. Yet, their position as intellectuals in society and the social and cultural movements they lead, to certain extent, are somehow similar.

Firstly, they are among the greatest intellectuals in their cultures in history and, therefore, what they think and do respectively represent the core value of Protestant Christianity in America and Confucianism in ancient China: relations with what is beyond the present world, relations between different classes in secular world, and construction of ideal social models...

Secondly, essentially they are preachers. They try to realize an ideal social model by addressing the important targets in their minds. Besides, they both think themselves are equipped with the responsibility to manage or save the general public and society
in some way. That is, in their mind, their knowledge as well as unique positions in society has defined their social commitments.

Thirdly and more specifically, they both represent some kind of revived trends at a time of turmoil. Living in the Warring State Period (403–221 BCE) of social and political turmoil and morality undone, when several major powerful states emerged and competed with one another, Mencius advocates a return to the ideal classical age when people are taken good care of by sage kings, living and working in peace and contentment. While for Edwards, in a time when people’s religious identity was fading, he led First Great Awakening in the New England colonies in 18\(^{th}\) century through powerful preaching that developed a deep sense of spiritual conviction and redemption and, therefore, made Christianity intensely personal to the average person.

Undifferentiated as they are in the above fields, Mencius and Edwards at the same time do have remarkable differences in terms of especially the target they take on as well as the approaches they adopt. Based on the similar situations above, I will get down to putting their thoughts in parallel studies and exploring their differences.

4. Self-awareness: Jonathan Edwards and Mencius

In different cultural context, the definitions and role of intellectuals are different. As one can see, Confucian scholars controlled the discourse power and maintained the
mainstream moral system in ancient China, where Confucianism is the dominant ideology. And ministers in Christianity lead the construction of relationship between God and his people. While Mencius approached different rulers to talk them into his ideas of benevolence government, Edwards strived to preach the general public and helped them develop proper intimacy with God and Jesus.

Let me begin analysis of their different engaging pattern by first studying their self-awareness. That is, what made them who they are, how they define themselves and their role in society? Primarily I am going to argue in this part that though equipped with holy vocation to help general public understand God and Jesus, Edwards did not perceive any difference with other ordinary people; while Mencius as a great Confucian master developed a sense of superiority that distinguish him from other ordinary people. Such different self-positioning finally led to their different views on the average people.

4.1 Jonathan Edwards in his *Personal Narrative*

Jonathan Edwards is such a prominent protestant minister in American colonial that Perry Miller even called him the first American. His thoughts, in no doubt, represent traditional puritan values in colonial times, which influenced American values and political institutions tremendously later. In this part, I will first give a brief

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introduction to Edwards’ life and thoughts, and then go on to talk about his understandings of God and his own sin and his contemplation of his mission as a minister.

Jonathan Edwards: Life and Thoughts

Jonathan Edwards was born into a Protestant family on Oct 5, 1703 and his father was a minister. When he was only 13 year old, he entered Yale College. Meanwhile, he came to know and loved John Locke’s philosophy, especially his Essay Concerning Human Understanding, which influenced him tremendously. He focused on both theology and natural science. It is said that he was greatly inspired by Isaac Newton’s scientific discoveries and regarded nature as revelation of God’s wisdom and design. In 1727, Edwards was ordained minister at Northampton, MA.

Equipped with sacred duty of advancing God’s kingdom in the new Promised Land, the first generations of puritans in New England were highly motivated by what they trusted as the authentic spirit of God in their pilgrim community. As time passed, however, for later generations in late 17th and early 18th century, the religious establishment inevitably became routine, since Children took what their parents have achieved as the norm. Churches no longer expected the heroic commitment of the original Puritans in order to maintain membership. As a result, many church leaders

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could only implement measures like *Half-Way Covenant* to make church membership less demanding and thus sustain the membership numerically.⁴ At the same time, they knew that something has to be done to awaken people’s religious enthusiasm.

Beginning in 1733, the first awakening movement began with Edwards in Northampton. Within six months, nearly 300 were admitted to the church. Edwards’s unique style of sermons brought reforms and revival to religious life in New England areas. Church members became passionately and emotionally immersed into the God and Jesus. According to Perry Miller, people affected by the revival began to study the Bible at home and sought to build up individual relationships with God. This effectively decentralized the means of informing the public on religious manners and was akin to the individualistic trends present in Europe during the Protestant Reformation⁵.

According to Samuel C. Person, Edwards and his fellow Puritan ministers were tremendously influenced by both Rationalism and Pietism movements from Europe in terms of dispelling the old and cultivating the new set of teachings about God.⁶ Perry Miller repeatedly asserts that “Edwards always exalted experiences over reason and condemned as nonsensical all views that regard reason as a rule superior to

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⁵ See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity in the First Three Thousand Years*, pp. 716-731
experience.” So, Miller concludes that “Edwards’ fundamental premise was Locke’s.”

Accordingly, Paul Copan also said that “Locke helped furnish Edwards with an alternative to an antiquated metaphysics, which had been utilized by other Puritan thinkers.” While Rationalists perceived traditional western religious philosophy irrational and, therefore, severely repudiated it, advocates of Pietism did not pay that much attention on the rituals and doctrines of old tradition. Rather, they simply ignored it and focused mainly on the construction of individual relationship with God.

In similar context, Edwards in his sermons emphasized religion as a personal issue, the importance of conversion experience, and the pursuit of personal devotions.

We can get some general idea of Edwards’s thought by going through some of his major works. When he was as young as nineteen, Edwards wrote *of Being*, in which he criticized the possibility that there could be “nothingness” and posited that God was the room between objects and other beings, and everything existed ultimately only in the divine mind. Six years later, in a composition on flying spiders: “The Spider Letter” to a fellow of the Royal Society in London, Edwards showed his talents as a scientist. Instead of again representing the images of precarious existence of a sinner like in the sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” the spider here reveals the wisdom of the Creator. Through empirical observation, Edwards posited

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that God endowed the flying spider with the “wondrous liquor” in his tail and thus allowed it to have “pleasure” and to “recreate itself.”¹² In July of 1731, Edwards preached in Boston and afterwards published under the title "God Glorified — in Man's Dependence." He emphasized in the lecture God's absolute sovereignty in the work of salvation: it is God’s great pleasure and mere and arbitrary grace that grant his people walk towards holiness. This was actually Edwards’ direct attack on Arminianism. In May of 1735, near the end of the dramatic revival in Northampton, Edwards presented the case of what humanity deserved when it does not live in harmony with God in a sermon The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners.¹³

**Jonathan Edwards: Personal Narrative¹⁴**

Thanks to his *Personal Narrative*, which Edwards wrote at the request of the Reverend Aaron Burr, whom Edwards would succeed as president of the College of New Jersey, we can get a glimpse of his personal religious experiences, including all kinds of highs and lows, over the years. *Personal Narrative* is basically his spiritual autobiography. And so his self-awareness is revealed here. As we can see, Edwards sought to attain a perpetual state of humility and contrition for his sins, and to realize his utter dependence on God.

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1) God's absolute sovereignty

First of all, Edwards always emphasized God's absolute sovereignty and his utter dedication and submission to God. Only being within God and Jesus can he find a true self. Reading through his concluding sentence of Personal Narrative, we could actually feel his immense joy; “I had, at the same time, a very affecting sense, how meet and suitable it was that God should govern the world, and order all things according to his own pleasure; and I rejoiced in it, that God reigned, and that his will was done.”

Growing up in a religious family with his father as a pastor, Edwards developed an intense Christian identity and began exploring his relation with God from early on; “when I was a boy, some years before I went to college, at a time of remarkable awakening in my father's congregation. I was then very much affected for many months, and concerned about the things of religion, and my soul's salvation; and was abundant in duties. I used to pray five times a day in secret and to spend much time in religious talk with other boys; and used to meet with them to pray together...My mind was much engaged in it, and had much self-righteous pleasure; and it was my delight to abound in religious duties.” Through inward struggles and conflicts, he began ever since his life-long quest for God’s true grace beyond personal convictions and affections. He later reflected that those former delights he had at young age never reached the heart and never arose from any sight of the divine excellence of the things
As Edwards try to learn from everything of God, gradually he began to observe nature, from things in the sky to those on earth as well as all kinds of natural phenomena, which, according to Edwards, reveals God’s divine glory and immense power. As he contended; “…I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God, that I know not how to express. I seemed to see them both in a sweet conjunction; majesty and meekness joined together; it was a sweet, and gentle, and holy majesty; and also a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness; a high, and great, and holy gentleness.” So, to Edwards, the basic existence or changes of everything is a calm sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory; “God's Excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds, and blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water, and all nature; which used greatly to fix my mind.”

Accordingly, he tried to develop a proper relationship with God through all kinds of possible communications. And in order to try keep close to God and get His message, Edwards often walked alone, meditated, soliloquized and prayed in the woods or other solitary places. As he insisted; “…it was always my manner, at such times, to sing forth my contemplations…Prayer seemed to be natural to me, as the breath by which the inward burnings of my heart had vent.”
In addition, he also sought delight in the Holy Scriptures to have secret converse with God;

“I have loved the doctrines of the gospel; they have been to my soul like green pastures. The gospel has seemed to me the richest treasure; the treasure that I have most desired, and longed that it might dwell richly in me. The way of salvation by Christ has appeared, in a general way, glorious and excellent, most pleasant and most beautiful.”

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“The doctrines of God’s absolute sovereignty, and free grace, in strewing mercy to whom he would shew mercy; and man’s absolute dependence on the operations of God’s Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines.”

Furthermore, quoting Matt. xviii.3-4; “And he (Jesus) said; ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven;’” Edwards emphasized he obtained so much joy with sweetness, and longings, and partings of soul of being just like a little kid before God and Christ and he was led through the wilderness of the world. As he reflected; “That text, Matt. xviii.3, has often been sweet to me, except ye be converted and become as little children, & c.”
Hence, recognizing God’s absolute sovereignty and submitting himself utterly to God, Edwards defines himself as a little child and everything, including him, is so humble before God and Christ. Admittedly, he had “a burning desire to be in everything a complete Christian,” and tried to learn from everything in the world of God’s message. So, his infinite praise of God, serving as the foundation of his thoughts, tremendously affects his self-definition, his attitude on his sinfulness as well as his mission as a minister. I will go on to talk about these.

2) Conviction of Sin

Under God’s supreme reign, Edwards definitely cannot avoid the issue of sin as well as God’s grace. He seems naturally equipped with an intense feeling of never loving God enough, never repentance enough, never turning to God early enough... As he emphasized many times in the Personal Narrative:

“I often felt mourning and lamenting in my heart that I had not turned to God sooner, that I might have had more time to grow in grace.”

“It was my continual strife day and night, and constant inquiry, how I should be more holy, and live more holily, and more becoming a child of God, and a disciple of Christ.”
“Considering how late it was before I began to be truly religious; and how wickedly I had lived till then; and once so as to weep abundantly, and for a considerable time together.”

“My experience had not then taught me, as it has done since, my extreme feebleness and impotence, every manner of way; and the bottomless depths of secret corruption and deceit there was in my heart. However, I went on with my eager pursuit after more holiness and conformity to Christ.”

Moreover, Edwards was always so concerned about his sin. As the latter part of the narrative, he went on great length to talk about his contemplation on his own sinfulness and vileness. Edwards feel guilty at some point that, in his mind, his repentance was nothing to his sin and he had very lime sense of his sinfulness. He would weep and cry over for this. As he confessed;

“My wickedness, as I am in myself, has long appeared to me perfectly ineffable, and swallowing up all thought and imagination; like an infinite deluge, or mountain over my head...Very often, for these many years, these expressions are in my mind, and in my mouth, "Infinite upon infinite ... Infinite upon infinite... When I look into my heart, and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell.”

And then, in a natural way, Edwards related his repentance to God’s grace, resonating
with his utter submission to God; “…it appears to me, that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fulness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of his power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of his power, and in all the glory of his sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself; far beyond the sight of everything, but the eye of sovereign grace, that can pierce even down to such a depth.”

Admittedly, as a minister, who specializes to help people build up relationships with God, Edwards did not develop even a tiny bit of sense of superiority. Rather, he seemed to truly feel he was among the poorest human beings; “It has often appeared to me, that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind; of all that have been, since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell.” When people came to him to talk about their soul concerns and their ponderation on their horrific wickedness and the kind of devil in their body, Edwards even thought “their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble, to represent my wickedness.”

As we can see, on the hand, Edwards’ serious concern of his sinfulness actually reflects his deep and severe conviction of sin, which, to large extent, represents his profound self-awareness as an puritan minister and, therefore, distinguishes him from other ordinary people; on the other hand, however, such conviction also gave Edwards no sense of superiority --- in his context, he is a sinner essentially and thus nothing
could make him different from other people at this fundamental point. Edwards had reason to be infinitely humbled as he considered how much he had failed of answering his obligation.

3) Mission as Minister

Compact with such strict puritan self-disciplines is his understanding of his responsibility as a minister. As God’s making, he believe himself as the natural revelation of God’s grace, kind of similar to the nature as talked about above. Hence, it seems so logical and reasoned for him to become a minister. He stressed for several times in different places of *Personal Narrative* that his heart has been much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world.

He claimed he enjoyed very much the companion of pious Christians and religious conversation, and thus “*I had great longings, for the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world; and my secret prayer used to be, in great part, taken up in praying for it. If I heard the least hint, of anything that happened, in any part of the world, that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect, on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly cached at it; and it would much animate and refresh me.*”

Sometimes he also discussed with his fellow ministers on mission; “*Sometimes Mr.
Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God; and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days.” Obviously, he was concerned with the world as a whole as turning to God. Probably that is why he went to the Indian tribes and preached the American Indians, converting them into Christians.

So, as we can see from Edwards’ life, preaching the public, helping people understand God and Jesus, and thus contributing to the advancement of Christ’s kingdom in the world are considered by him as his holy vocation.

Hailing God as the supreme lord in the universe and contending everything is humble before God and Jesus, Edwards developed a really unostentatious mind. He loved to think of coming to Christ as a little child, receiving salvation of him, humbly exalting Him alone, cutting off entirely from my own root, finally growing into Christ and at the same time working to advance Christ’s kingdom. In such strict puritan context of severe self-disciplines and explicit self-definitions, under no circumstance could Edwards or ministers like him develop any sense of superiority as public intellectual, since he has no other truly unique capital to distinguish himself from others. For him, everyone is God’s creation and everyone is inherently a sinner after all. This kind of self-awareness accordingly affect remarkably his attitude toward the ordinary people as well as how he approached them, in a effort to build up the ideal secular world in
his mind, as a puritan minister with deep vocation.

4.2 Mencius in the Confucian Classic “Mencius”

Mencius was the most famous Confucian philosopher after Confucius himself. He helped develop further Confucius’ ideological system and thus served as an important link between past and future. I am going to talk about the construction of Mencius’s self-awareness according to the Book of Mencius, a book recording his preaches and dialogues with his disciples and rulers: his idea on the Heavenly order, self-positioning, self-discipline, and social responsibility.

Mencius: Life and the Book of Mencius

Mencius was born in the State of Zou (around 289 BCE), only eighteen miles south of Qufu, Confucius’ birthplace. It is said that he is a student of Confucius' grandson, Zisi. It was the Warring States Period (403–221 BCE), a turbulent times he lived in. The state of China at that time had been divided into many vassal states. And dukes and kings of some powerful vassal states were seeking brilliant military counselors and trying to dominate the whole China. In the meantime, similar to Confucius, according to The Historical Records, Mencius travelled China widely for forty years to offer advice to rulers for reform--- following the exemplary ancient sagacious kings, focusing on domestic affairs and being kind to the people, rather than
launching wars at will against other states. Unfortunately, his advices were not adopted and he was not hired by any kings or dukes. As a result, he finally turned to focus on teaching and talked with his disciples on the Classics as we as Confucius’ philosophy. Upon his death, his disciples and disciples of his disciples came to record the words Mencius had said and there came the Book of Mencius, from which we can get to know his thoughts. Obviously, his revival effort was not succeed. His philosophy, however, was praised and claimed by kings of almost all later dynasties as state ideology and, therefore, has tremendous influence on Chinese culture and people.

1) The Heavenly Order

The world picture Confucian masters like Confucius and Mencius envisioned is so dramatically different from that of Christians’. In order to better understand Mencius’ self-awareness, it is important to get to know their contemplation on the Heavenly order.

First of all, there is no such a distinct, specific and personalized God as in Christianity. Rather, in Confucianism, Heaven is relatively an indistinct and unspecific concept. Yet, Confucian masters do think on the one hand, Heaven represents the highest moral standard ---benevolence and righteousness. As it is said in the Book of Changes, of which Confucius is the commentator, “As heaven maintains vigor through movements,
a gentle man should constantly strive for self-perfection\textsuperscript{15.}” The Heaven, without talking or flaunting too much, puts everything under his regulation unnoticeably. Moreover, Heaven carries and bears all kinds of beings and make them each live in its proper place. From Confucian perspective, Heaven is such vivid embodiment of Confucian political and moral propositions.

More specifically, for Mencius, the Heaven, or the universe is essentially a moral universe and the moral principles of man are also metaphysical principles of the universe.\textsuperscript{16} We can see here it is the moral universe that Mencius indicated when he spoke of Heaven and he had connected man with the Heavenly order. He once remarked; “All things are complete within us. There is no greater delight than to realize this through self-cultivation.\textsuperscript{17}” That is to say, through the full development of his nature, a man can not only know Heaven, but can also become one with Heaven. (Mencius thought human nature is good, and so here the development of one’s nature means realization of Heavenly principles in a man.)

In the Book \textit{Mencius}, there recorded when asked by a disciple what Mencius was a specialist, Mencius replied; “\textit{I know the right and wrong in speech, and am proficient in cultivating my Hao Jan Chih Chi (The Great Morale) … It is the metaphysical energy in universe, supremely great, supremely strong. If it be directly cultivated

\textsuperscript{15} See Cary Baynes (trans.), \textit{Classic of Changes}, Retrieved 30 March 2010
\textsuperscript{16} See Feng Yu-lan, \textit{A short history of Chinese philosophy}, pp.124
without handicap, then it pervades all between Heaven and Earth. It can be achieved only by the combination of righteousness and the Truth.\textsuperscript{18} According to the analysis of Philosopher Feng Youlan, \textit{the Great Morale Mencius mentioned is a matter concerning man and the universe, and therefore is a super-moral value, It is the morale of the man who identifies himself with the universe, so that Mencius said of it that “it pervades all between Heaven and Earth.”}\textsuperscript{19}

While on the other hand, Confucians did not bother to think much about the origin of the universe as Christians do. As Confucius said, 	extit{till you know about the living, how are to know about the dead and beyond}?\textsuperscript{20} Thus, things before and after life are utterly out of Confucius’s concern. They focused mainly on the secular world and tried to adapt an effective ethical system to manage the society.

Admittedly, those who learned from Heaven and managed the world in Heavenly way (benevolent government) are highly praised and appreciated as role models. For Confucian masters, they are the ancient sagacious Kings, like the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, a group of semi-mythological rulers and culture heroes from ancient China during the period around 2852 to 2070 BCE. They are the highest moral standards in the temporal world and Confucians like Mencius tried in vain to restore the social order by having the dukes and kings of his times to learn from these

\textsuperscript{19} See Feng Yu-lan, \textit{A short history of Chinese philosophy}, pp.124
role models, thus reviving their values and ways of governing. We can see Mencius
talk about them so much in the book *Mencius*. For example, in Part 1 of Chapter Li
Lou and Part 1 of Chapter Teng Wen Gung, there recorded Mencius saying;

\[\text{Hence we have the saying: “To raise a thing high, we must begin from the top of a}
\text{mount or a hill; to dig to a great depth, we must commence in the low ground of a}
\text{stream or a marsh.” Can he be pronounced wise, who, in the exercise of government,}
\text{does not proceed according to the ways of the former sagacious kings?}^{21}\]

\[\text{He who as a sovereign would perfectly discharge the duties of a sovereign, and he}
\text{who as a minister would perfectly discharge the duties of a minister, have only to}
\text{imitate ---the one Yao, and the other Shun. He, who does not serve his sovereign as}
\text{Shun served Yao, does not respect his sovereign; and he who does not rule his people}
\text{as Yao ruled his, injures his people.}^{22}\]

\[\text{It was by benevolence that the three dynasties gained the throne, and by not being}
\text{benevolent that they lost it.}^{23}\]

As a matter of fact, Kings’ way of governance is Mencius’ primary concern. Why he
emphasized so much on this? Because the ideal society Confucian masters like

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Books in 1990, pp. 290: Li Lou Part 1

22 Both Yao and Shun are among the ancient sagacious kings. Shun was formerly a minister of King Yao and later
appointed by Yao as the next king. They are both highly praised by Confucians.

23 The three dynasties are the Xia, the Shang, and the Zhou after the period of the Three Sovereigns and Five
Emperors. Zhou dynasty still existed in Mencius’ time, though he regarded it as old and ready to vanish away.
Mencius have in mind is a social ordered system with strict disciplines and distinct class differences. And every name in the social relationships, like father, minister, or king, implies certain responsibilities and duties. A society, therefore, would function well when everyone fulfill their duties accordingly. A king, in a Confucian society, dominates everything in his kingdom, similar to the way the Heaven controls everything in the universe and acts as a patriarch. His benevolence would remarkably influenced and be copied by his people.

For instance, one can see Mencius stressed that; *Shun considered that if one could not get the hearts of his parents he could not be considered a man... By Shun’s compete fulfilling everything by which a parent could be served, Ku-sau (his father) was brought to find delight in what was good. When Ku-sau was brought to find that delight, the whole kingdom was transformed... all fathers and sons in the kingdom were established in their respective duties. This is called great filial piety.*  

24 Here in addressing filial piety, Mencius adopted the story of Shun as model. Only when he, the king in the highest place, did the right thing can the people under follow him and there could foster a good environment in the whole kingdom. Just as Mencius concluded in another Chapter; *If the sovereign be benevolent, all will be benevolent. If the sovereign be righteous, all will be righteous.*  


After talking about Mencius’ thoughts on Heaven and his world picture, now let’s get down to exploring his self-positioning and Self-discipline in the secular world.

2) Self-positioning

Mencius and many other Confucian masters thought they were unique because they were the ones who still held fast to the classical rituals and morality in such a chaotic times. Mencius once said, “That whereby the superior man is distinguished from other men is what he preserves in his heart; namely, benevolence and propriety.” Hence, for Mencius, there exists a clear distinction between the superior man, or well-educated man and the other ordinary people. He definitely regarded them higher in the class order.

In talking to the King Hui of Liang on the importance of helping his people develop their livelihood, Mencius revealed the idea that educated people, or literati like him were essentially different from the average and, therefore, stood out against them. As Mencius replied to the King’s question, ‘They are only men of education, who without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they will not have a fixed heart. And if they have not a fixed heart, there is nothing which they will not do, in the way of self-abandonment, of moral deflection, of depravity, and of wild license...’

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In his mind, literati would not become corrupted, nor would them be morally deflected and self-abandonment for material goods. Because they have deep in mind sense of right and wrong and thus developed a “fixed heart.” In other words, masters like him Mencius could choose to do what they think the righteous thing simply because they are the right things.

3) Self-discipline

Hence, as Mencius thought they uniquely followed the classical rituals and morality, which were originally held by the sagacious Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors and which were in accordance with the Heavenly order, he developed strong self from within and always stuck to the essential principles.

Once upon a time, after telling a story of how a brilliant charioteer refused to drive the chariot for a duke in hunting because as the charioteer said; “I drove for him, strictly observing the proper rules for driving, and in the whole day he did not get one bird. I drove for him so as deceitfully to intercept the birds, and in one morning he got ten... I am not accustomed to drive for a mean man...” Mencius concluded afterwards that; “Thus this charioteer even was ashamed to bend improperly to the will of such an archer... Never has a man who has bent himself been able to make others straight.” He emphasized here how important it was for Confucian literati to observe their
principles.

Admittedly, concerning the definition of a great man (a superior man,) Mencius contended that “…To dwell in the wide house of the world, to stand in the correct seat of the world, and to walk in the great path of the world; when he obtains his desire for office, to practice his principles for the good of the people; and when that desire is disappointed, to practice them alone; to be above the power of riches and honors to make dissipated, of poverty and mean condition to make swerve from principle, and of power and force to make bend: these characteristics constitute the great man.”

Besides, such superior man’s uniqueness also lies in his interaction with others. Mencius once said; If a man love others, and no responsive attachment is shown to him, let him turn inwards and examine his own benevolence. If he is trying to rule others, and his government is unsuccessful, let him turn inwards and examine his wisdom. If he treats others politely, and they do not return his politeness, let him turn inwards and examine his feeling of respect27.

Mencius even extended such theory from management of the self to the government of a family and a state. He said; a man must first despise himself, and then others will despise him. A family must first destroy itself, and then others will destroy it. A state must first smite itself, and then others will smite it.

Here, inward self-contemplation is remarkably emphasized, similar to Christians’ stress on repentance in a sense. The self-examination in Confucianism, however, does not rely on any outward supervision. That is to say, they do not have a sense of a holy power, from what is beyond the present world, looking down upon them. It is all by their own self-improvement that they develop such strict sense of self-examination, which definitely cannot be attained by many ordinary people. Hence, Mencius and other Confucian literati take pride in their unique self-cultivation and self-examination and, therefore, distinguish themselves with other average people.

They have an explicit definition of who they are and what they should do to maintain their characteristics, as the famous saying by Confucius goes; *to remain unsoured even though one’s merits are unrecognized by others is that not after all what is expected of a gentleman?* In their words, it is what themselves think and do that established their self-identity, rather than feelings and treatments from others.

4) Social Responsibility

As Mencius and Confucian literati like him still insisted authentic principles of ancient sages, they thought they, therefore, were naturally equipped with the significant responsibility to help restore the society into the classical order and so in

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line with the Heavenly law. The Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors are their role models, accordingly.

As Mencius once told his disciples the story of Yao, one of the sagacious Kings; “In the time of Yao, when the world had not yet been perfectly reduced to order, the waste waters, flowing out of their channels, made a universal inundation. Vegetation was luxuriant, and birds and beasts swarmed. The various kinds of grain could not be grown... To Yao alone this caused anxious sorrow. He raised Shun to office, and measures to regulate the disorder were set forth. Shun committed to Yi the direction of the fire to be employed... Yu (minister of water resources at Shun’s time) separated the nine streams, cleared the courses... and led them all to the sea... When this was done, it became possible for the people to cultivate the ground and get food for them... During that time, Yu was eight years away from his home... Although he had wished to cultivate the ground, could he have done so? The minister of agriculture taught the people to sow and reap, cultivating the five kinds of grain... and if they (the people) are well fed, warmly clad, and comfortably lodged, without being taught at the same time, they become almost like the beasts. This was a subject of anxious solicitude to the sage Shun, and he appointed Hsieh to be the minister of instruction, to teach the relations of humanity…” 29

We can see from his narratives that, first, he praised what Yao did as he is so

concerned about his people’s livelihood and worked with his fellow ministers for both material and spiritual goods; second, a gentle man should actively care about the public’s lives and make it as his top priority, as Mencius quoted words from Yao; “Encourage them (meaning his people;) lead them on; rectify them; straighten them; help them; give them wings; thus causing them to become possessors of themselves. Then follow this up by stimulating them, and conferring benefits on them;” 30 third, with such significant social responsibility, a gentle man should not tend to some minor or trivial things like cultivating the ground. That is to say, when the sages were exercising their solicitude for the people in this way, they would not have the leisure to cultivate the ground, which he thought should actually belong to the average people.

Later Mencius quoted Confucius’ comment; “Great indeed was Yao as a sovereign. It is only Heaven that is great, and only Yao corresponded to it. How vast was his virtue!”31 Yao is one of Mencius’ “Saints.” What he and his fellow Confucians should do is to learn from Yao. And in their context, sage men should be the king and manage his people. However, situation changes when all the kingships later developed hereditary system. So, many of the dukes and kings of Confucius and Mencius’ time are not wise enough to lead the people. In this case, with direct inheritance from the ancient sages the Heavenly principle, Mencius tried to engage and manage the society

and people through being minister for kings or dukes and advised them on governance. When asked if gentlemen of old time take office, Mencius replied; “They did. The Record says, ‘if Confucius was three months without being employed by some ruler, he looker anxious and unhappy... The loss of his place to an officer is like the loss of his state to a prince...’”32 In all, Mencius’ ultimate goal is to help manage and restore an ordered society.

4.3 Brief Summary

Now that we have looked into respectively Edwards and Mencius’s self-understanding, we can detect the many distinctions. While Edwards defines himself as a little child and everything, including all human beings, is so humble before God and Christ; Mencius held the idea that educated people, or literati like him were essentially different from the average and, therefore, stood out against them as they were the ones who still held fast to the classical rituals and morality in such a chaotic times. While Edwards seemed naturally equipped with a intense feeling of never loving God enough and so concerned about his own sin and regret depending too much on his own strength for salvation, Mencius took pride in their unique self-cultivation, without outward supervision. So, Edwards relied on God, the supreme power from what is beyond the present for salvation and Mencius emphasized so much on self-examination self-discipline for final transcendence and, therefore, further

distinguishes themselves with other average people. Admittedly, Edwards’ profound self-awareness as an puritan minister motivated him to preach his fellow sinners and thus advance Christ's kingdom; Mencius insisted authentic principles of ancient sages and naturally chose to help restore the society into the classical order. There we see they each have such different self-awareness.

5. The People and the Engaging Targets

Both Edwards and Mencius’ unique self-awareness affected remarkably their attitude toward the other people as well as how he approached them. In the interactions with the other social members in society, they also, to certain extent, came to form the people’s minds and thinking. I will in this part address two major questions:

1) Who were they striving to engage respectively in their social context; and

2) How were they preaching their engaging target?

I believed both these two are key questions in examining the relations between Edwards and Mencius’ self-awareness and the people’s self-understandings. I am going to argue that while Edwards targeted every individual soul in society and tried to develop their individual and independent thinking, which contributed to the more mature sense of self-understanding in people in colonial New England areas; Mencius neglected the average people and mainly addressed the rulers at the top social hierarchy, but as masters speaking to children, thus making the less mature sense of
self-understanding in his people in ancient China.

5.1 Edwards’ “fellow sinners”

In order to advance Christ’s kingdom, as a minister, Edwards strived to help people build up individual relations with God and Jesus. Moreover, since everyone is God’s creation and everyone is inherently a sinner after all, there is no certain group of men that is superior to others and that should be specifically saved. So there is the only engaging target for Edwards ---the people. I will first examine Edwards’ attitude towards his “fellow sinners” via his works and then analyze his way of addressing the people.

Edwards’ “fellow sinners” and his Treatise Concerning Religious Affections

We can get to know more about Edwards’ “engaging target” through his engagements in his works. In 1746, Edwards wrote one of his most famous essay; A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections to explain how true conversion to Christianity occurs and how to judge a conversion true or not. I am going to argue that Edwards was targeting every individual in society. Moreover, his treatise helped develop further ordinary people’s self-awareness, as everyone reading the essay would tend to be pushed to think about whether their love of God come from the heart with true religious affections. Edwards contended that they puritans loved God simply because
He is God, instead of any other more complicated or unitarian purpose. He required intense self-contemplation from every individual.

Admittedly, Religious Affections is a little guide book for self-contemplation of individual relationships with God and Jesus, as Edwards wrote in the introduction; “…Therefore it greatly concerns us to use our utmost endeavors clearly to discern, and have it well settled and established, wherein true religion does consist.” Edwards began to lead people into journey of self-reflection by talking about the nature of the affections and their importance in religion. He emphasized that true religion, in great part, consists in holy affections. And he continued to throw out questions and offer answers afterwards. For example, in answering the question; “what the affections of the mind are?” Edwards said “the affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul.” Though offered as an objective measurement, this specific rule can only applied by a man to evaluate himself. In other words, it is all individual issue and no one else could impose this to criticize others.

He also contended that it might not be a bad thing when a Christian, in the pursuit of true religious belief, came across sufferings, frustrations, or seduces. It is a trial of our belief, which could help differentiate the true ones from the false and upgrade further

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33 See Jonathan Edwards, A Treatise concerning Religious Affections, Online Edition by International Outreach, Inc. pp.4
34 See Jonathan Edwards, A Treatise concerning Religious Affections, Online Edition by International Outreach, Inc. pp.18
our understandings of God. Quoting 1 Peter 1:8; “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy;” Edwards highly praised those Christians who continued to pursue God even in sufferings. What made them love God so much? Edwards explained that because they have seen Jesus in his holy spirit and this is the source of their joy and love. In short, Edwards emphasized that the true religion lay in the affections, which have been testified by Bible and the stories of the Saints.

And then Edwards went on great length to address what he thought are not the grace religious affections in twelve points. For example, he contended that;

“Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the nature of the affections, by this, that comforts and joys seem to follow awakenings and convictions of conscience, in a certain order.”

“It is no certain sign that the religious affections which persons have are such as have in them the nature of true religion, or that they have not, that they dispose persons to spend much time in religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external duties of worship.”

“Nothing can be certainly known of the nature known of the nature of religious affections by this, that they much dispose persons with their mouths to praise and glorify God.”

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35 See Holy Bible, New International Version, pp. 409
On the one hand, Edwards try to let people understand the nature of the affections in such a strict and rigorous way that they could examine their consciousness thoroughly and explicitly. On the other hand, many outward rituals and doctrines of praising and glorifying God have been regarded as useless and discarded by Edwards. None of these, like singing in the chorus, orally praising and worshiping God, can be reasonably looked upon as evidence for a person’s true conversion.

After diffusing what he thought as fake religious affections, Edwards then came to show what are distinguishing signs of truly gracious and holy affections. He confirmed beforehand that he did not intend to lay down rules or signs to help people tell and distinguish true gracious affections from false in others or determine whether their neighbors are true professors or hypocrites. As he confessed, “I should be guilty of that arrogance which I have been condemning.” As far as he is concerned, one’s relationship with God is one’s individual business. In no way can others meddle into someone’s private territory, not only because it is about the holy God beyond the knowledge of the secular world and every one’s own intimacy with God, but also because it would offer pretext to suppress others. Admittedly, in the 12 pieces of specific guidance he offered, they are all about inward development of intimate relationships with God and Jesus. Edwards emphasized that:

“The first objective ground of gracious affections, is the transcendentally excellent and amiable nature of divine things as they are themselves...”
“Those affections that are truly holy are primarily founded on the loveliness of the moral excellence of divine things...”

“Gracious affections do arise from the mind’s being enlightened, richly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine things.”

“Truly gracious affections are attended with a reasonable and spiritual conviction of the judgment, of the reality and certainty of divine things.”

“Gracious affections are attended with evangelical humiliation. Evangelical humiliation is a sense that a Christian has of his own utter insufficiency, despicableness, and odiousness, with an answerable frame of heart.”

“Wherein gracious affections are distinguished from others, is, that they are attended with a change of nature.”

“Truly gracious affections differ from those affections that are false and delusive, in that they tend to, and are attended with the lamblike, dovelike spirit and temper of Jesus Christ....”

“Gracious affections soften the heart, and are attended and followed with a Christian tenderness of spirit.”

“Those affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from those that are false, is beautiful symmetry and proportion.”

“Another great and very distinguishing difference between gracious affections and other is, that gracious affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual appetite and longing of should after spiritual attainments increased.”

“Gracious and holy affections have their exercise and fruit in Christian practice.”
In all, as we can see, Edwards acted as an assistant between every individual soul and God. In the *Religious Affections*, he is specifically talking to every individual and guiding them to take action in exploration and construction of a proper relationship with God. For Edwards, the real enemy of God’s kingdom is Satan, as he said in the introduction of religious affections;

“Satan goes on with mankind, as he began with them. He prevailed against our first parents, and cast them out of paradise, and suddenly brought all their happiness and glory to an end, by appearing to be a friend to their happy paradisiacal state, and pretending to advance it to higher degrees. So the same cunning serpent, that beguiled Eve through his subtlety, by perverting us from the simplicity that is in Christ, hath suddenly prevailed to deprive us of that fair prospect, we had a little while ago, of a kind of paradisiacal state of the church of God in New England.”

Here, Edwards interpreted the fading of people’s religious identity in the colonial New England as the suffering of invasion of the evil, the serpent. He also contended that it is the Satan, or the Serpent that put into people false and illusory affections towards God and Jesus.

Hence, in order to advance God’s kingdom in the secular world, Edwards strived to preach every people and help them build up their individual relations within their soul with God, in this way to defeat the evil. So every individual soul became Edwards’

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engaging target as he fulfilled his holy vocation.

**Edwards’ Discourse in Preach**

Via analyzing the structure and semantics of Edwards’ sermons concerning how he preached the people: the specific tones, gestures and expressions they employed, we get to see at close how he defined his relations with the people.

Here, I will look into Edwards’s most famous sermon, “*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*.” He preached sermon to his own congregation in Northampton to unknown effect, and again on July 8, 1741 in Enfield, Massachusetts. A great numbers of hearers and reader were touched by the sermon. Like Edwards' other works, it combines vivid imagery of hell with observations of the world and scripture. It is a fitting representation of his preaching style, and is widely studied by Christians and historians, providing a glimpse into Edwards’ thought and the theology of the Great Awakening.

Edwards began the sermon by quoting the scripture Deuteronomy 32:35; “*Their foot shall slide in due time.*” As he contended; “*the expression I have chosen for my text... seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to*
which these wicked Israelites were exposed;” he then went on to address four implications from the scripture:

The sinners were always exposed to destruction and fall.

They were also always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction.

They are liable to fall of themselves.

The reason why they are not fallen already and do not fall now is only that God's appointed time is not come.

All these four implications resonated with the idea that the sinners’ foot shall slide.

Edwards then turned naturally to emphasize the notion that “there is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God” with another 10 implications:

God actually is not willing to cast wicked men into hell at any moment, though he is not only able to do so, but he can most easily do it.

The sinners deserve to be cast into hell, as Edwards quoted Luke 13:7; “The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.”

They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell.

They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, which is expressed in the torments of hell.
The devil is at any time ready to size and corrupt them.

There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints.

The wicked men or the sinners have no sense of security for one moment.

It is absolutely impossible for natural men with their prudence and care to preserve their own lives.

All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment.

God has absolutely no obligation to keep any natural man out of hell one moment.

“…thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger…” as Edwards concluded the implications, he then began to talk in great details around the two sets of implications in the application part. So basically, with all kinds of vivid images and analogies, Edwards went on great length to address the extremely dangerous situation the wicked men were in, God’s huge vengeance and wrath, God’s grace, and the importance of understanding the mere pleasure of God.
Hence, as we can see, the structure of the sermon is quite simple, clear and explicit.

As Edwin Cady commented; “In the light of Edward’s reputation as polemicist one looks first to the intellectual structure of the sermon. Perhaps it is another example of his devastatingly tight, crushing logic. But a glance at the rational structure of the sermon shows it to be comparatively insignificant. In traditional form, Edwards gives his text, four implications of the text, and ten observations upon his reading of it, before he passes on to its application to his audience…”

Then, what made the sermon so famous and effective? According to Perry Miller, Edwards understood the existential assumptions of modernity and used images and terms of art that addressed the fundamental issue of communicating reality to senseless humanity. Miller emphasized; “Far from being street-corner evangelism, Edwards’ sermons are immense and concentrated efforts to get across, in the simplest language, the meaning of the religious life, of the life of consciousness… They are, we may say, explorations of the meaning of meaning.”

Edwin Cady also contended; “It uses all the weapons, conscious, and subconscious, verbal, emotional, and sensuous, of the author at his best... The great emotional power of the discourse comes primarily from the rich and versatile imagery. For “image” in this connection I mean a literary device by which the writer likens an inward state...

There are about twenty-five important “images” in “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry

41 See Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards: The American Men of Letters Series, pp. 71
God”… The most telling images fall into three main groups: the fires of hell; the tension-pressure symbols of God’s wrath; and suspension-heaviness symbols of the predicament of the sinner…42”

So, let’s try look into the “images and terms of art” in the “Sinners in the Hands of Angry God.” First of all, in the sermon, Edwards adopts a bunch of images in analogies to help listeners not only to understand the specific situation they are in, but also to feel and experience it. For example, in the application part;

“The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward.”

Beginning by compare the wrath of God to great waters that are dammed, Edwards merges his description of God’s wrath into the process of constant increase of great

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waters into finally breaching the dam. “The floods of God’s vengeance,” the image could probably help listeners form in their mind the scene of great waters rising higher and higher as well as increasing more and more; at the same time the presentation of God’s vengeance is also compact with the roaring floods.

And a couple paragraphs down, we come across this; “The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire...”

Edwards again used analogies here. God holding sinners over the pit of hell is just like one holding a spider over the fire. He also contended that sinners are ten thousand times more abominable in God’s eyes than the most hateful venomous serpent is in our eyes.

So far, we have seen a group of Edwards’ analogies. Most of the time, analogies with vivid images was adopted by Edwards to emotionally depict the extreme situation sinners was in or God’s immerse love, rather than explaining some profound theology. To certain extent, through such sermon, Edwards aimed to touch the people and make them feel about God as well as their sins.

As Perry Miller said, “Edwards strove to work so upon his listeners that in the act of comprehension they could not help knowing the answer.” That is, through the vivid and intense scenes conveyed through telling descriptions and constructed in listeners’
minds, Edwards successfully delivered close to real experience on sin, evil, and hell to every listener.

Second, in describing sinners’ grim situation, he used a group of severe adjective words with distinct and explicit value judgment, making the hearers or readers feel so bad at turning their back to God and Jesus. Upon this, they could almost feel the existence of hell right below them and that they may fall into it at any moment;

“Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock.”

Here Edwards piles up a group of such severe words as “heavy as lead,” “tend downwards with great weight,” “pressure towards hell,” “immediately,” “swiftly,” “the bottomless gulf.” Every single one word of these is a tremendous blow to people’s heart. The description is utterly emotion-dominated and so vivid and intense that one just can’t avoid constructing the sense of hell in one’s mind.

Besides, Edwards was good at adopting parallel structures to enhance the tone of his
speech. For example;

“Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies.”

Here, he first struck a sense of fear with a sense of abandonment by using the group of words like “not bear you one moment,” “a burden to it,” and “the creation groans with you.” And then with a a series of parallel structures of “not willingly” to relentlessly question the sinners’ wickedness, lust, and their serving of God’s enemies and thus push them into an extreme corner for repentance.

According to Perry Miller, the authority figures of studying Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* coils a monstrous accusation against mankind, until the bow of God’s wrath is bent and the arrow justifiably aimed at the entrails of the race. He contended that Edwards scientifically, deliberately, committed Puritanism, which had been a fervent rationalism of the covenant, to a pure passion of the senses, and the terror he imparted was the terror of modern man, the terror of insecurity. Miller said;

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“He overthrew the kind of religious philosophy that had dominated Western Europe since the fall of Rome, the system wherein there was always ... an ascertainable basis for human safety. Now there was none…”

“In the moment of triumph... the last remnant of scholasticism was discarded, and God was no longer bound by any promise, whether of metaphysics or of law. Edwards brought mankind, as Protestantism must always bring them, without mitigation, protection, or indulgence, face to face with a cosmos fundamentally inhuman…” In other words, such terror of insecurity provided opportunity for every individual soul to cultivate the self-awareness.

Above all, we can see in the sermon: first, Edwards did not talk about something of profound and obscure theology. Instead, he focuses more on the specific situations of emotional subjects as sinners and used a lot of vivid images in analogies.

Second, from his direct quoting of scriptures and emotional, not analytical, depiction of all kinds of situations concerning sinners’ fall and God’s superiority and grace, one can see the how he perceived the people. Regardless of the people’s actual level of education, Edwards seemed to presume that they all shared the same level of theology. They all knew about the concept of sinner, their situation of turning back to God and Jesus, God’s grace… That is to say, Edwards’ aim was not to let his hearers get to know the theology, but essentially to feel the specific dangers and God’ wrath. It is
more of an emotional engagement. Hence, Edwards focused so much on the uses of analogies and images to speak themselves, the structure and word of strong sentimental coloring in his discourse. As is known to all, to know is one thing, but to understand and practice is another. Obviously, Edwards targeted the latter.

Thirdly, based on the above two points, we can confirm again that Edwards preached the people as they stood on the same platform and faced the essentially same problem: their proper relations with God. Just as what he insisted in the sermon, “O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath…” while most people might literally have such sense of danger, they did not really feel the sense of uncertainty and in it develop a sense of urgency as in a great furnace of wrath or above bottomless pit, as Edwards did. Edwin Cady posited that Edwards’ deliberate use of images conveyed the preciousness of existence to alert his hearers to their spiritual predicament. The sermons thus broke his contemporaries down into storms of uncertainty.44

Hence, on the one hand, Edwards did not choose to reserve any superior belief with him and threw all his religious affections out with thick emotional accumulations, trying to equip the people with the sense of urgency. On the other hand, Edwards had nothing to reserve as that is Christians’ only one as well as the ultimate concern.

Finally, if we look into *Sinners in the Hands of Angry God* and *Religious Affections* together, it seems they are actually sister works. Through *Sinners in the hands of an angry God*, Edwards terminated people’s blind reliance on the antiquated doctrine and rituals for ultimate safety and, therefore, in a negative way, arouse people’s self-consciousness. People were shocked and left with an intense sense of uncertainty. Admittedly they had to rethink and reshape their relationships with God. That is the use of *Religious Affections*, which, in a positive way, constructs a comprehensive guidance for the development the proper relations with God and Jesus: what is the true love of God. Besides, they are so personal that they are all targeting the individual soul after all. People were forced to contemplate their ultimate concern in extreme uncertainty. Such terror of insecurity provided opportunity for every individual soul to cultivate the self-awareness.

### 5.2 Mencius’ Passive Subject and Patriarchal Rulers

Now let’s turn to Mencius’ Passive Subject and Patriarchal Rulers. Since Mencius’ primary goal was to take office and restore an ordered society, he had come up with a set of strategies to achieve it, which is different from Edwards’. Rather than approaching all the people as a whole, Mencius had explicit definitions towards different groups of people according to their specific social status: average people, ministers, and the kings. In this part, I will first talk about Mencius’s view on average people as passive subject and his targeting the rulers as the key for a better society.
And then I will go on to write about how Mencius preached the rulers via a comprehensive dialogue with the King.

The Ordinary People as Passive Subject

Different from Edwards, the ordinary people are not Mencius’ engaging target as he considered them Confucians so superior and the average people as mere passive subject that should be taken care of.

Mencius once said; “That whereby man differs from the lower animals is but small. The mass of people cast it away, while gentle men preserve it. Shun clearly understood the multitude of things, and closely observed the relations of humanity. He walked along the path of benevolence and righteousness; he did not need to pursue benevolence and righteousness.” While Edwards tried to reach every individual soul as in his context every one under God is essentially the same, Mencius emphasized the differences among people in the secular world: gentle man (superior man) and average people. There is no such sense of a personalized and specific holy power from what is beyond the present world to dwarf any human significance in Confucianism. As a result, those educated and possessed of unique characters could easily distance and distinguish themselves from others. Mencius and other Confucians

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45 Shun was a 23rd-22nd century BC legendary leader of ancient China, among the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors. Shun's half-century of rule was said to be long for the history of China.
are the case.

Let us come back to a quote of Mencius; “Hence we have the saying: ‘To raise a thing high, we must begin from the top of a mount or a hill; to dig to a great depth, we must commence in the low ground of a stream or a marsh.’ Can he be pronounced wise, who, in the exercise of government, does not proceed according to the ways of the former sagacious kings?” Admittedly, Mencius believed that only gentle men could be qualified for the official positions because they have the vision and horizon that average people don’t have.

Furthermore, Mencius commented, “Is it the government of the kingdom which alone can be carried on along with the practice of husbandry? Gentle men have their proper business, and average people have their proper business... Hence, there is the saying, ‘Some labor with their minds, and some labor with their strength. Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by other support them; those who govern others are supported by them.’ This is a principle universally recognized.”

Hence, as far as Mencius is concerned, the average people as those who labor with their strength should be governed by the gentle men as those who labor with their minds. And by the word “govern,” Mencius meant that gentle man in office should

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think for his people, create better lives for them, and educate them to obey the social ethics. In other words, they never expected to develop and enlighten on his people’s wisdom. They are always passive subjects. So, in Mencius’ mind, general people are not his engaging target.

**Approaching and Addressing the Kings**

In Confucianism, it is the kings and dukes that Confucians like Mencius tried to target in order to realize their ideal society. In Mencius’s context, Kings are the patriarch and the people are their sons and daughters. More importantly, Mencius presumed that what the king did, everyone else copied. In this case, Kings are naturally the keys. Mencius once said; “*if the parent of the people causes the people to wear looks of distress and after the whole year's toll, yet not to be able to (... have supplies and better lives...) where, in such a case, in his parental relation to the people?*”

[49] Here Mencius just called the kings as parent of his people and thus stressed that the people should be treated in “a comfort way” by their parents. He contended that if the people were involved in crime and then punished because of their lack of a fixed heart and failing to obtain a certain livelihood, it is just the King entrapping his people ---It is the ruler’s fault to force his people into crimes and so it is the ruler’s responsibility to make them better off.

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Hence, Mencius tried to approach different kings, advise them, take office in their courts and design for them a whole package of public policies. For example, Mencius widely travelled to engage different rules and tried to talk them into his plans. Once, Duke Wen of Teng asked Mencius during his visiting about the proper way of governing. Mencius answered; “…The way of the people is this: if they have a certain livelihood, they will have a fixed heart; if they have not a certain livelihood, they have not a fixed heard... Therefore, a ruler who is endowed with talents and virtue will be gravely complaisant and economical... and taking from the people only in accordance with regulated limits.”

Mencius addressed as an expert of the general public ---he seemed to know what they like and need, which in Confucianism is important for governance of a state.

Moreover, while confirming the king’s pivotal role for a state, Mencius also stressed the “vocation” of Confucian literati like him in assisting a king and managing a society. He posited that “It is only the gentle man who can rectify what is wrong in the sovereign’s mind. Let the prince be benevolent and righteous, and all his acts will be benevolent and righteous. Once rectify the ruler, and the kingdom will be firmly settled.” Mencius emphasized that Confucian masters as the superior gentle men stood high above the kings and dukes in terms of their moral accomplishment. We mentioned before that, in such social turmoil, they still insisted the Heavenly

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principles of the ancient sages and so they naturally thought they were equipped with
the holy responsibility to put the society back into order. This is where their sense of
superiority from.

Admittedly, as we can see, Mencius had spared no effort in advising and addressing
the kings concerning transferring their political ideology from being a warlord to a
benevolent “patriarch.” He often adopted examples of tyrants in history to
demonstrate his argument.

For instance, he once said; “Chieh and Chau’s losing the throne arose from their
losing the people, and to lose the people means to lose their hearts. There is a way to
get the kingdom--- get the people, and the kingdom is got. There is a way to get the
people--- get their hearts, and the people are got... People turn to a benevolent rule
as water flows downwards, and as wild beasts fly to the wilderness.”

Once upon a time, King Hui of Liang consulted Mencius on how to attain the royal
dignity. Mencius replied; “If your Majesty will indeed dispense a benevolence
government to the people, being sparing in the use of punishment and fines, and
making the taxes and levies light, so causing that the fields shall be ploughed deep,
and the weeding of them be carefully attended to, and that the strong-bodied, during

52 Chieh was the last King of Xia and Chau was the last king of Shang. They were both famous tyrants in Chinese
history. There inhumanity and atrocity finally led the fall of their dynasties.
Books in 1990, pp. 300
their days of leisure, shall cultivate their filial piety…” In this case, Mencius concluded that such a harmonious and united state could defeat the great powers as in great powers, their strong-bodied were rob by the Kings of their time of ploughing and weeding their fields for military expansion. This is what Mencius emphasized as “The benevolent has no enemy.”

Mencius’ Discourse in Preach

Since we have studied Mencius’ self-positioning, and how their distinct self-positioning in the secular world finally leads to their different engaging targets as well as engaging patterns for realization of their visions, now let me get down to examining Mencius discourses.

In the book Mencius, there recorded a dialogue between Mencius and Duke Qi of Xuan, from which we can see how Mencius preached a king and gradually in his discourse revealed his public policy package.

The dialogue began by the king asking Mencius if he had heard of any transactions of Duke Qi of Hwan and Duke Wen of Jin. It is obviously that the King tried to learn

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57 Duke Qi of Hwan and Duke Wen of Jin were the greatest of the five rulers who played so conspicuous a part and once dominated the whole central plain at similar times of Confucius and before Mencius’. Yet, Confucius and
from Mencius methods to seek hegemony in the world. While replying with an negative answer, Mencius then said he did know a feasible alternative for military dominance, like ruling through benevolence government. In this way, Mencius continued to size the King’s interest ---seeking dominance. Upon the Duke’s inquiry, Mencius answered; “The love and protection of his people, with this there is no power which can prevent a ruler from attaining to it.” This is summary of Mencius’ political platform.

The King at the moment seemed puzzled and asked if such a one as him competent enough to achieve that. Mencius then talked from the King’s life experience. He recounted that there was one time that when the King saw an ox led by a man to be consecrated with its blood, he ordered to let the ox go because he cannot bears its frightened appearance, as if it were an innocent person going to the place of death. “The benevolent heart seen in this is sufficient to carry you to the royal sway... Your conduct bore a sense of benevolence. So is the gentle men affected towards animals that having seen them alive, they cannot bear to see them die... Therefore he keeps away from his slaughter-house and cook-room.” Here Mencius connected his political idea, gentle men’s sense of superiority with the King’s personal experience, emphasizing that what he was talking about was in line with the sages, but actually not only not far from the King after all. More importantly, Mencius kept talking

Mencius were so positively refused their approval casue they mainly ruled the world with their overwhelming military advantages.

around the theme “royal sway” to drag the King’s attention. This is a typical Confucian approach to persuade the rulers to pick up benevolence by learning from the sages and in self-mediation.

Besides, Mencius’s analysis began to establish his prestige in the King’s mind. The King quoted verse from the Book of Poetry to praise Mencius’s keen discovery; “The minds of others, I am able by reflection to measure. This is verified, my master, in your discovery of my motive.”

And then Mencius went on to answer the King’s further question on how the sense of benevolence in his heart is equal to the royal sway. Mencius used an analogy to help the King better understand ---A man capable enough to lift three thousand catties is not sufficient to lift one feather. It is just because the man simply refused to do so. Similarly, the King’s kindness is sufficient to reach to animals. Yet, no benefits were extended from it to the people and, as a result, they are not loved and protected. It is because kindness was not employed. So, Mencius concluded; “your Majesty’s not exercising the royal sway is because you do not do it, not because you are not able to do it.” Analogy is also often adopted by Mencius in preaches.

At this point, Mencius turned back to the concept of benevolent government; “Treat with reverence due to age the elders in your own family, so that the elders in the families of others shall be similarly treated; treat with kindness due to youth the
young in your own family, so that the young in the families of others shall be similarly treated. Do this, and the kingdom may be made to go round in your palm.” Again, Mencius stressed the importance of the King first behaving good for his people to follow. Moreover, he also quoted verse from the Book of Poetry and connected his idea to the ancient sages.

Mencius did not stop there. Instead, he went on to talk about the potential severe consequences of seeking hegemony via conventional idea --- launching wars. Mencius first touched upon the King’s desire; “…what your Majesty greatly desires may be known. You wish to enlarge your territories, to rule the central plain… by doing what you do (launching wars) to seek for what you desire is climbing a tree to seek for fish.” As the King lost in thought and seemed a little scared, Mencius stressed that the King would assuredly afterwards meet with calamities because it was impossible for his state, occupying only one ninth of the whole central plain, to successfully tackle the other six states all together. “For, with such a desire, you must turn back to the proper course for its attainment;” Concluded Mencius. Mencius seemed to have put himself in the King’s position and tried to think for him concerning the realization of his desire.

The King seemed utterly convinced and hurried to consult Mencius for proper guidance; “I am stupid, and not able to advance to this. I wish you, my Master, to

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assist my intentions. Teach me clearly; although I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will essay and try to carry your instructions into effect.” In this case, Mencius then began to talk in great length his political platform, including the benevolent government via his specific well-field farming system.

This is a whole dialogue between Mencius and the King. As we can see, through his preach, Mencius not only succeeded in make the King reconsider and reflect on his conventional governance, but also managed to win over the King’s trust and admiration. Moreover, he was invited by the King to take office in implementing his benevolent government.

Looking into Mencius’s rhetoric help us understand how he achieved these goals. Firstly, he spoke to the King with a sense of superiority in scholarly attainment. He gradually talked the King into his plan and idea as if he was educating and coaxing a child. In his preach, one can feel, On the one hand, Mencius did not try to make the King a Confucian master. He seemed natural to be the King’s teacher. On the other hand, he, in the whole process, adopted the simply and explicit languages, together with all kinds of dramatic and lively analogies, which the King is familiar with and thus easier for him to understand. What’s more, Mencius was adept in striking a sense of superiority, from the ancient sages’ noble characteristics and classic books, for the King to look up to. Secondly, Mencius was always flexible enough to size the initiative over the king in dialogue, from talking about the King’s personal
experiences and later his desire to the severe result of launching wars at will to natural lead-in to his own political ideas. In other words, Mencius was often adaptively responsive to the king’s questions and in a concealed way switched the topic or content at the right moment. In this way, he developed the dialogue in his plan. Thirdly and most importantly, Mencius sticked from the very beginning to the King’s primary concern--- seeking hegemony, seemingly having put himself in the King’s position and thinking for him.

With a sense of superiority as gentle man, Mencius tends to “look down upon” not only the average people, but also the rulers. He stood at the platform that intellectually higher than anybody else. He preached the Kings as if an adult teaching a child. In all, this is a great master’s imbalance engagement with an immature King and even more immature his people.

5.3 Brief Summary

As everyone is essentially sinner, Edwards, with a deep sense of holy vocation, Edwards approached the people, the sinners, and tried to guide them in understanding and embracing God and Jesus. While Mencius, unique sense of superiority, defined different kinds of people according to their social status, and thus targeted primarily the rulers, hoping that they could buy his ideas, be a nice role model, and actively take care of what he contended as passive subject, the average people. But no matter it is
the rulers, or the other people, they were not encourage to think about themselves, but just simply following the rules after all.

More specifically, when preaching the general public, Edwards encouraged his hearers, pushed them, and made them emotionally touched, with no reservation. In this way, individual thinking was encouraged and a personal bridge to God is built in people’s mind; while Mencius chose to speak to the Kings from high above on a morally perfect standpoint and to persuade them to take his policy. Mencius did not require the rulers to be the same gentle man with strict sense of self-positioning and self-discipline. The people, including the rulers and the ordinary men, were educated to just mind their own business and faithfully fulfill their social responsibilities, rather than being pushed to develop a sense of the self. Hence, as a result of the different intellectual engaging model, there developed different types of people in society.

6. Influences and Transformation

Having discussed the three key questions and made comparisons between Edwards and Mencius’s ideas, I would like to look into some subtle changes of these “intellectual--- people” interactions in later ages between these two distinct cultural contexts. I am not going to focus on the comparisons or contrasts of their unique changes within the systems themselves. Also, this part is not the focus of this thesis. It seems to me this part could form another perspective to look into the “intellectual---
people” patterns within each culture on a historical basis. I would like to use this part as an endnote as I winds down the thesis.

Hence, I will briefly look into two specific cases in modern times accordingly: Billy Graham’s re-preach of Jonathan Edwards’ *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* in 1949 in America and Shu-ming Liang’s rural construction experiment during 1931-1937 in China. Though these two cases were both took place at similarly times, the first half of 20th century, they were set in utterly different developmental stages. While Graham addressed the public on the relationships with God in modernized and democratic social setting, Liang and his fellows were still searching for potential paths for China’s modernization. That is, there seems nothing in common to compare between these two specific cases. What I aim to, however, is to present how each of the two distinct engaging patterns were changed according to their modern or pre-modern settings.

6.1 Billy Graham’s Re-preach of *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*

As such a prominent pastor, Edwards’s teachings had great influences on later Americans. Let’s try look into Graham’s re-preach of Edwards’ *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* as an example.

Billy Graham is an American Christian evangelist and a famous Southern
Baptist minister. He is also a really popular speaker through mass media and best-selling book writer. It is said that more than 3.2 million people have responded to the invitation at Billy Graham Crusades to accept Jesus as their personal savior. Besides, as of 2008, Graham's estimated lifetime audience, including radio and television broadcasts, topped 2.2 billion\textsuperscript{60}. Moreover, Graham has repeatedly been on Gallup’s list of most admired men and women. He has appeared on the list 55 times since 1955 (including 49 consecutive years), more than any other individual in the world\textsuperscript{61}. He is definitely one of the most prominent pastors in the states of modern times.

Admittedly, no one in history has preached to more people in live audiences than him. In late 1949, Graham launched the first of his major crusades in Los Angeles, which lasted a total of eight weeks and in later years several other notable ones like a twelve-week crusade in London in 1954 and a 16-week one in New York City in 1957. It was through the Los Angeles crusade that Graham rose to national prominence and became a well-known pastor.

During the remarkable crusades in Los Angeles, Billy Graham re-preached Jonathan Edwards’ famous sermon, \textit{Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God}. In retrospect, it is said that it was a fascinating set of circumstances: the man who would become the most famous preacher of the 20th century preaching America's most famous sermon

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\textsuperscript{60} See Barry M. Horstmann, \textit{Billy Graham: A Man With A Mission Impossible} (Special Ssection), “ Cincinnati Post, pp. 105

\textsuperscript{61} See Gallup's most admired man and woman poll
to a new audience many generations later\textsuperscript{62}.

At the very beginning of the sermon, Graham praised highly Edwards' intellectual credibility and his willingness to preach about the dangers of sin and, therefore, establish him as a role model. As he recounted the huge awakening movement initiated by Jonathan Edwards;

\textit{It was 200 years ago, it was the year 1740. It was a cold, blistery day in New England, in Northampton, Massachusetts, when an aging man stepped to the platform before a congregation of people. The people were expectant, there had been a semblance of revival throughout New England, and people had been praying, souls were being saved, thousands of Christians were being stirred, revival fires were spreading, very much as they are at the present time across America.}

And then he came to emphasized that \textit{Jonathan Edwards was one of the greatest scholars that America ever produced, one of the greatest preachers, a man of tremendous conviction, a man that we look back on today and revere, and pray that God might raise up again such men on the American scene…}

After setting the tone of the sermon, Graham stepped onto the footprints of Edwards and began to develop the sense of tension within his people's mind and raised their

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\textsuperscript{62} See Billy Graham & Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God: A Digital Exhibit: Los Angeles, 1949: The "Canvas Cathedral" Crusade from The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University
awareness of God:

*I’m bringing to you that message that was preached 200 years ago by Jonathan Edwards... I’m going to read it, and extemporize part of it, but I want you to feel the grip, I want you to feel the language. I’m asking tonight the same blessed Holy Ghost that moved in that day to move again tonight in 1949 and shake us out of our lethargy as Christians and convict sinners that we might come to repentance.*

Similar to Edwards, Graham interpreted “Their foot shall slide in due time” from Deuteronomy 32:35 by emphasizing that sinners were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction and they are liable to fall of themselves. In this case, Graham raised the importance of embracing God. At the same time, however, he also contended that the reason why they are not fallen already, and do not fall now, is only because of the mercy of Almighty God, dramatically different from Edwards' contribution to God's arbitrary pleasure. In other words, Graham offered more potential for hope and less uncertainty, while mentioning; *thither is the wicked man bound, outside of Christ every unconverted Man properly belongs in Hell.* It is almost like saying God’s love is always there for you once you decide to turn to Him.

As it went on, Graham continued to use *Edwards' words like the voice of a prophet to a corrupt generation some 250 years later*[^63]. He adopted the vivid scenes of analogies

[^63]: Los Angeles, 1949: The "Canvas Cathedral" Crusade
in Edwards original Sinners in the Hands of Angry God: for the present God restrains their Wickedness by his mighty Power, as he does the raging Waves of the troubled Sea, saying, *hitherto shall thou come, and no further…* if Sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the Soul into a fiery Oven, or a Furnace of Fire and Brimstone. He also argued that the justice of God demands that they die, and it's only the mercy and love of God that keeps them alive tonight. So basically, Graham, to some extent, maintained the sense of danger and insecurity in Edward’s original preaches while always offering comforts. It seems he tried to strike a subtle balance between God’s sovereign justice and mercy/love of God, between despair and hope.

More specifically, Graham targeted the unconverted in his audience and took them walking through Edwards' horrifying rhetoric: unconverted Men—listen to this—Unconverted Men walk over the Pit of Hell on a rotten Covering, and there are innumerable Places in this Covering so weak that they won't bear their Weight, and these Places are not seen. Walking in this tent, down that sidewalk, out on the street, every step you take, on every rock and cover, and underneath, is so weak that any step you might fall through and be into eternity, so says Jonathan Edwards…

Besides, he also elaborated on Edwards' point about the inability of human beings to save their own lives by using an account of a man with a germ-phobia⁶⁴. *Natural Men's Prudence and Care to preserve their own Lives, or the Care of others to*

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preserve them, do not secure them any Moment... Men's own Wisdom is no Security to them from Death... How dieth the wise Man? And then it answers: as the Fool...

According to Dr. Kenneth P. Minkema, Graham erected to bring the Calvinist covenantal framework into conversation with the 20th century soft Calvinist revivalism that preferred pragmatism to theological nuance⁶⁵. At the end of the sermon, Graham turned to re-emphasized God's everlasting love to all and the option for all to let Jesus in: All you have to do is let Jesus in, right now where you sit. He continued;

And God says the soul that sins shall die. Ladies and gentlemen, tonight, men and women, tonight every one of us are hanging over the pit of hell and the only thing that keeps us from dropping in is the mercy of Almighty God. And tonight, I’m glad to tell you something, because I’m glad to tell you this, which the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary, and that God loves you with an everlasting love, and the mercy of God is everlasting to everlasting. And I don’t care who you are tonight, man, woman, boy, or girl, it makes no difference who you are tonight, the Lord Jesus Christ can cleanse you from sin, and you can be assured that you’re going to heaven, and every man, woman, boy, and girl in this place to know they’re saved before they leave this place.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful to walk out with peace in your heart, and that you walk alone not be afraid of the next step, not be afraid that some place along the way tomorrow you’re going to drop? Wouldn’t it be wonderful to have that glorious peace and joy in your heart, knowing that your sins are cleansed, and you’re ready to meet God? Well you can know it right now. Right this minute. You say, how long does it take? Only an instant. You say, what do I have to do? All you have to do is let Jesus in, right now where you sit. You can make certain that you are ready to meet the Lord God.

We can detect clear connections between Edwards’ original sermon and Graham’s re-preach as well as Edwards’s dramatic influences on Graham. In comparison, one can see it is much simpler and easier in Graham’s context in terms of embracing God. It seems to Graham that God’s universal love is always there for every sinner. That is to say, in spite of the intense imagery of impending damnation from Edwards’ original version, Graham transformed Edwards’ language and offered some succor by extemporaneously underscoring the role of God's mercy in their present survival. As we can see, first, there is still pretty much about every sinner’s individual relationship with God as in Edward’s context, including sinners’ insecurity and uncertainty and their feeling of sovereign love. No one else can force and push someone to believe in God except himself and herself. What Graham advised the sinners is to exactly let Jesus in. Second, however, Graham reduced significantly the sense of insecurity and uncertainty. In Graham’s context, one doesn’t need to worry that much about one’s sin and whether one could be saved or not. As long as one decides to turn to God and
confront one’s sin, God’s mercy and love would be forthcoming. God would want everyone to lead a happy and good life as God Himself is not arbitrary. So, in this case, compared with Edwards’ ideas, Graham seems to suggest it is up to one’s own hands to be save or not. This is much less harsh and severe than Edwards’ traditional puritan thoughts of never repentance enough.

Graham’s transformation of offering more initiatives to the sinners themselves, nevertheless, does not help enhance the general public’s individual relationship with God as well as their self-awareness. Instead, he seems to communicate a more superficial and shadow theology and pursue among his hearers simply the recognition of God and embracing God from just outward appearance. In other words, hearers of Graham’s sermon did not need to wrap their minds to explore the proper interaction with God and keep repentance at every moment, as hearers of Edwards’ sermons did. As we can see from slogan from the poster of Graham’s crusade--- Greater L.A.’s greatest revival continues! Billy Graham’s 5th sin-smashing week! Yes, they are “sin-smashing” preaches--- a more or less utilitarian logic. Graham preached huge numbers of people but communicated kind of shadow messages. While Edwards focused on the much smaller number of Christians in his church and preach much more profound theology. We may not say all these are their different subjective choices. Definitely there are a lot of objective conditions that together influence their different preaches.
In short, looking into the specific case of Graham’s re-preach, one can see though the pattern of the pastors as intellectuals in America trying to engage the general public doesn’t change, the message Graham tried to convey is somehow secularized and, therefore, seems detached to a certain extent from the original root: developing intimacy with God and trying to confront one’s sin within intense sense of uncertainty and insecurity. Besides, much as Graham talked about God here, the implication and position of God seem to have already transformed in Graham’s context. It might have been receding into a kind of chicken soup for the soul for people in modern times, as Graham emphasized for so many times: God would always be there for you, whenever you turn to Him. Graham, in the sermon, was not offering path for salvation, but actually path for self-assurance in essence.

Overall speaking, Graham did not engage the general public as intense as Edwards did. And as people are less pushed to think seriously about the self, their existence in the present world, and their relations to the otherness, consequently, maybe one could assume that less developed is people’s self-awareness in modern times.

6.2 Shu-ming Liang’s Rethinking of Engaging the General Public

During 1920-1930s, due to foreign invasions and civil wars, China’s economics, especially the dominant rural sector, was close to collapse and the people were living in destitution. Confronting such social crisis, a group of intellectuals strived to search
for remedies to reconstruct the social and economic basis in rural China. They focused on disseminating new agricultural technologies, experimenting on local self-government, civic education and so on. All these are called *Rural Construction Movements*. One of the most influential movements is Zouping Reform in Shang-dong Province during 1931-1937, led by Liang Shu-ming.  

Liang Shu-ming (1893-1988) is a prominent sociologist and was called “the last Confucian master” in China. In a time when traditional value and moral system was dismantled, Liang tried to transformed Chinese culture and social fabrics through his experiments in Zouping.  

In 1931, Liang published the book *Theory of Rural Construction in Zouping, Shang-dong Province*, in which he integrated and theorized his thoughts and put them into practice in Zouping. His experiment of rural construction was based on his profound understanding of Chinese society.  

Liang began expounding his ideas by first looking into the problems. As he contended that Chinese society is originally constructed on the rural basis and, therefore, dominated by rural-oriented culture accordingly. As we can see, all the cultural systems, including the law, the rituals and rites, and trade and commerce, are all

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66 See Yan Zhu, *Thrity Years of Rural Construction: Liang Shu-ming and his Zou-ping Experiment*, Shanghai: Phoenix Press, pp. 20  
originated from the rural settings. He insisted that during the past 100 years, both the imperial invasions and the Chinese intellectuals and other Chinese people’s efforts of self-reform have actually dramatically destroyed the rural basis. And in this case, the past 100 years of Chinese history is the history of rural destruction.\(^{68}\)

According to Liang, the fundamental problem of current China lay in its cultural lag. That is, the traditional values and moral systems have been dismantled, while the alternative has not yet been built. Hence, any reconstruction and reformation should be implemented on the original rural basis. Only in this way can there achieved a relatively smooth and effective transformation and modernization.\(^{69}\)

Besides, Liang insisted that there has never been any real sense of revolution in ancient China. In other words, though there are from time to time changes of dynasties and emperors, the social fabrics and political ideology remain essentially the same, including Confucian literati’s self-positioning as well as their relationships with the ordinary people.\(^{70}\)

More specifically, as far as Liang is concerned, in traditional Chinese society, Confucian literati as intellectuals represent reason and thus manage ethics, morals and social justice. Though, from the outward appearance, they do not directly produce or

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\(^{68}\) See Yan Zhu, *Thirty Years of Rural Construction: Liang Shu-ming and his Zou-ping Experiment*, Shanghai: Phoenix Press, pp. 10

\(^{69}\) See Liang Shu-ming, *Theory of Rural Construction*, Zou-ping, pp. 19-21

\(^{70}\) See Liang Shu-ming, *Theory of Rural Construction*, Zou-ping, pp. 31
manufacture any material goods, they are actually responsible for civilizing the society, enlightening the general public and maintaining the social order, whose significance can’t be emphasized more. While the other social members of other occupations like farmers and businessmen take a back seat in social management and civic engagement accordingly. These are exactly traditional Confucian ideas we have talked about before.

Admittedly, one of the major factors that finally led to the Chinese cultural collapse, according to Liang, is the lack of sense of community among the general public. That is to say, Chinese people tend to be undisciplined and scattered, peaceful but also negative, and inability to gather together. Hence, Liang came to realize that in order to achieve modernization, the general public, especially farmers in the massive rural areas, who make up the largest part of Chinese population, should be educated and motivated into the civic participation.

Hence, in actual practice, Liang organized the scattered farmers into groups---peasants’ cooperatives. He made them gather together not only receive training in new agricultural technologies and improve productivity, but also to address public concerns like public security and combating crimes.

One of such major experiment Liang carried out is the establishment of local farmers’

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71 See Yan Zhu, *Thrity Years of Rural Construction: Liang Shu-ming and his Zou- ping Experiment*, Shanghai: Phoenix Press, pp. 30
schools in every town in Zouping. The so-called local farmers’ schools are not only actual schools for farmers to learn all kinds of agricultural technologies, but also acting as important self-government institutions. A local farmers’ school is made up of the flowing four parts: Board of Trustee, who are civic leaders and intellectuals of the region; President, who are selected from the Board of Trustee and responsible for the daily management and operation of the school; Teachers, all kinds of professionals, technicians, or literati hired by the school to teach courses; and Farmers of all ages and sexes as students.

As Liang emphasized, to solve the fundamental rural problems, we have to rely mainly on the farmers themselves. So it is important to organize them into a community, equip them with pragmatic knowledge, and develop their sense being on their own.

Liang wanted to use such organization to gather both the local intellectuals and general public together and work on public concerns. For example, the teachers not just simply offered lecture classes, but also use their expertise to lead public discussions on local affairs, like construction of irrigation works and fighting banditry. And then the farmers could further talk to the Board, the civic leaders, and exchange views. Significant decisions in the region should be approved by the majority of the people. In this case, the ordinary people are encouraged to participate in the local

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72 Local Farmers' Schools: literally translated from Chinese, “乡农学校”.
73 See Liang Shu-ming, *Theory of Rural Construction*, Zou-ping, pp.181
74 See Liang Shu-ming, *Theory of Rural Construction*, Zou-ping, pp.183
social managements, interact with the civic leaders, and make sure every policy implemented reflect their interest. Moreover, together with all kinds of pragmatic courses, such school could be a significant theater to help famer develop their self-awareness as well as their sense of community. They were no longer sitting at the back seat and acted as passive subject. On the other hand, local civic leaders were also inspired to be together with the public and implement public policies in a collective way in such social management model.

To ensure all these principles be carried out and every individual fully participate in the community life, Liang designed a whole series of code of conducts. For example, he insisted that every people in the community should be aware that one is living in certain social relationships and people are inter-dependent. Hence, he encouraged every people to put the community first, be active in public discussions, follow the will of the majority while at the same time respect the opinion of the minority, being respectful and well mannered towards the seniors and remain on friendly terms with the neighbors… As we can see, Liang tried to add on the collective values onto the traditional rural culture based on Confucian ethnics\textsuperscript{75}.

Above all, in such institution, the intellectual elite would not be unrealistic and impracticable, while the farmers would not be short of expertise. This could be a perfect combination. It is a local self-government authority led by civic intellectuals

\textsuperscript{75} See Liang Shu-ming, \textit{Theory of Rural Construction}, Zou-ping, pp.198-202
and participated by the general public.

Liang’s idea on motivating the general public is so rare at the time. Note that there are two major forces at beginning of the 20th century, about 20 years earlier than the time Liang began his experiment: revolutionists, people like Sun Yat-sen who strived to overthrow the corrupted Qing court and the emperor and directly established a modern democratic government in American model; and the constitutional monarchists, who are mostly Confucian literati that asked to maintain the monarchy but gradually transfer into the Britain system. The majority of intellectuals of both these two camps fought for their goal solely. That is, they either planned uprisings together with some Mafia-style organizations or advocated for constitutionalism under current monarchy within their civic leaders, seemingly taking no notice of the ordinary people and their potential influences on their missions.

Great as Liang’s ideas were by contrast, we have to understand to design a theory is one thing, but to practice is another. Liang has come across all kinds of difficulties in experimenting on his ideas in Zouping from 1931 to 1937. As he reflected on this journey later in his life in 1981 in his letter to a former colleague of the Study Center for Rural Construction in Shang-dong Province, he mentioned; “Zouping is the place where I tried to test my ideas of rural construction. I spent almost 8 years in total there and received great helps from the local people. I feel sorry that I was not able
to bring actual benefits to the people.”

As we can see, in his own opinion, there exists a large gap between Liang’s expectations for the experiment and the actual outcome.

Though unsuccessful as he envisioned, Liang seems to be one of the first intellectuals in early modern China that strive to engage the general public, especially the large population of farmers and cultivate their motivation for civic participation. He advocated for gradual reform, rather than radical changes through violent revolutions and respected the traditional Chinese society based on Confucian values. His profound ideas had great influences on later rural construction movements in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.

In all, talking about Liang’s ideas, it evolved within the traditional Confucian foundation. On the one hand, Liang is equipped with a strong sense of responsibility, really authentic characters of traditional Confucian masters. As Mencius once said to his disciples:

“It is a rule that a true royal sovereign should arise in the course of five hundred years, and that during that time there should be men illustrious in their generations.

From the commencement of the Chou Dynasty till now, more than seven hundred

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76 See Yan Zhu, Thrity Years of Rural Construction: Liang Shu-ming and his Zou-ping Experiment, Shanghai: Phoenix Press, pp. 23


78 The Chou Dynasty (c.1046–256 BC)
years have elapsed. Judging numerically, the date is past. Examining the character of
the present time, we might expect the rise of such individual in it.”

“But Heaven does not yet wish that the kingdom should enjoy tranquility and good
order. If it wished this, who is there besides me to bring it about…”

Liang perfectly interpreted Mencius’s works. In times of social turmoil, Liang
confronted directly the problems and strived for a potential solution. He is truly a
Confucian master in modern times.

On the other hand, Liang seems to think that the intellectuals should take the lead in
social management. But he tried to transform the relations between intellectuals,
people who have the vision and knowledge, and the general public like farmers,
people who are probably more familiar with actual situation. In other words, as he
was getting the ordinary people involved, Liang did not presume the average people
as passive subject that should be taken good care of. Neither did he think the
intellectuals know everything. In this sense, Liang is Neo-Confucian literati.

As we can see, intellectuals’ way of engaging and their specific discourses changes
along time in different social context. After touching briefly on Edwards and Mencius’
influences on later generations and their transformations by using Graham and
Liang’s ideas respectively as examples, I am now moving to the closing conclusion.
7. Conclusion

With the model “Values/beliefs --- Intellectuals --- The People” in the introduction, I have dealt mainly with three questions in the paper, focusing on the intellectuals (Jonathan Edwards and Mencius) and their ideas regarding themselves and their ideas towards other people.

Who did they think they are?

Religious mindsets originate from their contemplation on the divine. In the Protestant Christian context, a personal, specific, and distinct God with immense power dwarfs human beings and beyond in the physical world. No one can be God and no one can surpass God. In this case, people as a whole tend to develop more equal relationships with one another. In this context, Edwards differed himself from others as a minister with a holy vocation—one of many professionals, instead of any intellectually or morally unique feature. It is a differentiation by category, not by quality after all.

In Confucianism, without a distinct and specific concept of God, certain people who obtained wisdom from the divine were deemed as sages. As a result, there developed a division between these sages who became leaders, and the common people being led. For the sages, there came a sense of intellectual and moral nobility. Admittedly, by
embracing the so-called divine order and practicing strict self-discipline, Mencius defined himself with a natural sense of superiority.

**Who did they think they should engage?**

They each led the trends of reviving some sort of social and cultural thoughts, or in another sense, they strived to “evangelize” their ideal social and moral ideological system in their society. With such distinct self-awareness, they then took on to different paths. Each set of intellectuals sought an ideal for their respective societies, but did so in different ways. Edwards confronted evil by preaching to the masses, acting as a bridge between the people and God. By contrast, Mencius, in a patriarch social model, targeted the rulers, without concerning himself directly with the common people.

**How did they think they should engage?**

In the discourse of preaching their targets, Edwards encouraged his listeners to develop their individual thinking and inflicted upon them a strong sense of uncertainty, but also God’s graceful love. People were left with plenty of space to reconstruct their personal relationships with God. While Mencius chose to speak to the kings from a superior moral standpoint and persuade them of his ideas, he did not require the rulers to be the same gentle man with strict sense of self-positioning and self-discipline that
he was. The people, including the rulers and the commoners, were educated to just mind their own business and faithfully fulfill their social responsibilities, rather than being pushed to develop a sense of the self. Hence, as a result of the different intellectual engagement models, there developed different types of people in society. In the Colonies, people tried to have their voice heard and were enthusiastic to participate in public issues, while in ancient China; people were confined by all kinds of rules and lines, with no awareness and participation in public issues.

Having walked through these three key questions, I come to conclude that intellectuals’ different self-understanding contributed to their development of different views on the people in society. And such different attitudes remarkably affect their ways of engaging their people in the specific cultural contexts. In the process of interactions, people’s characters were established in their specific environments. Though I am not going to contend that intellectual’s self-awareness solely determined people’s characters, I do think that it helps develop different types of people in society. Admittedly, intellectuals acted as intermediary between the core values/beliefs and the people. Fundamentally and ultimately it is our conceptions of God and our thinking of messages from Heaven that determines not only intellectual’s self-awareness and their views on the people, but also people’s actual self-understanding.

Moreover, note that with the contrast between people of self-understanding and those without, I am not arguing that people’s self-understanding is the only significant
factor in forming active civic society. Rather, I am trying to demonstrate that those lacking of sense of self-understanding were so tough to develop public awareness and take initiatives in civic participation, just like people in traditional Confucian society in ancient China. People of colonial New England were directed to cultivate their personal relationships with God and so also their sense of the self, which is compact with their active civic society. While I emphasize in this paper the importance of people’s development of sense of the self, I am not trying to neglect other potential significant factors in establishing a civic society.

Above all, according to the model I showed in the introduction;

Values/beliefs ---
(The messages from Heaven)

Intellectuals ---
(Intellectuals’ self-awareness and their views on the people/ their targets)

The People ---
(People with relative mature self-understanding and people as passive subjects)

People in Protestant Christian environment in colonial New England tended to develop more fully the sense of self-understanding than people in Ancient China. Here, by “people”, again I mean all the people in society, including the rulers and the other ordinary people.
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