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'Now I Know in Part': Holistic and Analytic Reasoning and their Contribution to Fuller Knowing in Theological Education

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A WISE OLD MONK once lived in an ancient temple in Japan. One day the monk heard an impatient pounding on the temple door. He opened it and greeted a young student, who said, 'I have studied with great and wise masters. I consider myself quite accomplished in Zen philosophy. However, just in case there is anything more I need to know, I have come to see if you can add to my knowledge.'

'Very well,' said the wise old master. 'Come and have tea with me, and we will discuss your studies.' The two seated themselves opposite each other, and the old monk prepared tea. When it was ready, the old monk began to pour the tea carefully into the visitor's cup. When the cup was full, the old man continued pouring until the tea spilled over the side of the cup and onto the young man's lap. The startled visitor jumped back and indignantly shouted, 'Some wise master you are! You are a fool who does not even know when a cup is full!'

The old man calmly replied, 'Just like this cup, your mind is so full of ideas that there is no room for any more. Come to me with an empty-cup mind, and then you will learn something.'[1]

Indeed, to learn something it is necessary to admit one's limited knowledge with humility and to make room for the contributions of others with a

1 Heather Forest, *Wisdom Tales from around the World* (Little Rock, Ark.: August House, 1996), p. 41.

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teachable spirit. Now it is interesting to note that this old monk not only seemed to try to teach a lesson about the pre-requisites for 'adding' more knowledge, but also about the usefulness of 'non-conventional' processes that guide to fuller knowing. Thinking that one knows a lot seems not to be the only impediment to learning and to coming to fuller knowing. Thinking that one's own reasoning processes are sufficient seems to be just as much an impediment. Similarly, when Paul reminds the Corinthians that all 'know in part' (1 Cor. 12:9-12), could it perhaps be that he also has in mind both impediments? Could it perhaps be that he is referring not only to the finite character of human knowledge, but also to the finite character of cultural ways of knowing? After all, in the beginning of the letter he mentions that Jews and Greeks have different (cultural?) criteria for validating knowledge about God (1 Cor. 1:20-25).

Most education—including theological education—is done according to the Greek analytic way of reasoning, which is often considered to be the most elaborate way of reasoning. After all, formal logic, deductive mathematics, and the theoretical nature of science are a legacy of the Greeks.[2] However, through holistic ways of reasoning—also present in Hebrew thought—the ancient Chinese were able to explain the behaviour of the tides, and had the knowledge of magnetism and acoustic resonance much earlier than their Greek/European counterparts.[3] Moreover, recent studies in cultural variations of reasoning suggest that, 'it appears that East Asian folk psychology, as it relates to causal attribution, better corresponds to the findings and theory of scientific psychology than does American folk psychology'.[4]

It seems that in order to come to fuller knowing it is necessary not only to 'add' more content to what one knows, but also to use different ways of reasoning, i.e., different ways of perceiving and processing information. At least, this is what researchers who have conducted empirical studies among contemporary East Asian college populations—who tend to use holistic reasoning—and European counterparts—who tend to use analytic reasoning—seem to suggest. They propose that, 'ideal thought tendencies might be a combination of both—the synthesis, in effect, of Eastern and Western ways of thinking'.[5] Hence, this article will (1) give a brief description of the main differences between holistic and analytic ways of reasoning, (2) highlight the strengths of both and suggest how they can contribute to coming to fuller knowing in theological education, and (3) propose

2 Ara Norenzayan, 'Rule-Based and Experience-Based Thinking: The Cognitive Consequences of Intellectual Traditions. Ph.D. Diss'. (University of Michigan, 1999), pp. 2-4.

3 Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, Physics and Physical Technology. Part I: Physics, vol. 4 (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), p. 293.

4 Ara Norenzayan, Incheol Choi, and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Eastern and Western Perceptions of Causality for Social Behavior: Lay Theories About Personalities and Situations', in *Cultural Divides: Understanding and Overcoming Group Conflict*, ed. Deborah A. Prentice and Dale T. Miller (New York, N.Y.: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999), p. 257.

the pilgrim journey as a helpful way of rethinking the conceptual framework for intercultural theological education in which variations of reasoning 'aid' each other and contribute to fuller knowing.

I Holistic and Analytic Ways of Reasoning

Nisbett and colleagues point out that for too many years psychologists have wrongly assumed that cognitive processes are the same across cultures.[6] They suggest that social organizations with their practices—such as those that reflect collectivistic and individualistic orientations—guide and form cognitive content and process. East Asians (Easterners) stand in the tradition of Ancient China with its social organization and practices, while European-Americans (Westerners) stand in those of Ancient Greece.[7] Now, how do their ways of perceiving and processing information differ? Here some examples of what they found in their empirical research.

Attention and Control

Everybody is selective and applies screening processes while attending to information in the surrounding environment. However, the above mentioned researchers suggest that people within a given culture use similar 'guidelines' for screening and processing what they perceive.

Ji, Peng, and Nisbett found that East Asian populations coming from China, Korea, and Japan are 'more attentive to the field and to the relationship between the object and the field', while Americans are 'more attentive to the object and its relation to the self'.[8] Hence, the former showed greater ability to perceive relationships within a field (covariation judgment) than the latter.

Moreover, the meaning and importance of control also seems to be influenced by culture. In the above mentioned study, Ji, Peng, and Nisbett added a control manipulation dimension (illusionary control) to the experiment. They found that Americans

5 Kaiping Peng and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Culture, Dialectics, and Reasoning About Contradiction', *American Psychologist* 54, no. 9 (1999): p. 751.

6 Richard E. Nisbett and others, 'Culture and Systems of Thought: Holistic Versus Analytic Cognition', *Psychological Review* 108, no. 2 (2001).

7 Traditional categories such as 'Western/non-Western', 'North/South', or 'East/West' are no longer realistic ways of referring to a world that increasingly is being transformed into a global village. Nevertheless, when wanting to refer to geographical parts of the globe, the literature still uses these categories because of their practicality. In such sense they will also be used in this article. Moreover, when this article refers to differences in reasoning and uses the terms 'Eastern' and 'Western', they only indicate predominant tendencies, but not stereotypical generalizations about ways in which people of these cultures reason. It also should be clarified that holistic and analytic ways of thinking are by no means the only types of reasoning. However, they do represent variations of reasoning that tend to exist in two important cultural blocks of the world population.

8 Li-Jun Ji, Kaiping Peng, and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Culture, Control, and Perception of Relationships in the Environment', *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000): pp. 951-52.

increased their estimated covariation when they believed that they had control over the process, while Chinese judgments slightly decreased.

Explanation and Prediction

Since social organizations and practices influence attention and control, people also focus on different aspects and dynamics when trying to explain phenomena, events, and behaviour and when trying to make predictions about them. For instance, while researching the explanations that Chinese and American newspapers gave for mass murders, Morris and Peng found that American newspapers focused more on personal dispositions such as personality traits (e.g., 'very bad temper'), attitude (e.g., 'personal belief that guns were an important means to redress grievances'), and psychological problems (e.g., 'psychological problem with being challenged'). However, Chinese newspapers focused more on situational factors, such as relationships (e.g.: 'did not get along with his advisor'), pressures in Chinese society (e.g., 'Lu was a victim of the 'Top Students' Education Policy'), and aspects of American society (e.g., 'murder can be traced to the availability of guns').[9]

Overall, East Asian people seem to hold to a complex and interactionist theory of causality by emphasizing the interaction between the object (or person) and the context (or situation). Hence, depending on the dynamics of the situation an honest person can at times behave dishonestly, and it is not likely that this will cause surprise to people. However, European-American people hold to a more simplistic and dispositionist theory of causality by emphasizing the dispositions or traits of the person. Hence, an honest person is believed to always behave honestly regardless of the situation, and if this is not the case, it is more likely that situational determinants of the behaviour will be underestimated.[10]

Relationships and Similarities versus Rules and Categories

Cultural variations of perceiving information also lead to differing ways of organizing objects, events, and people. For example, Ji and Nisbett found that Chinese students were more likely to group on the basis of some kind of relationship, either functional (e.g., pencil and notebook), or contextual (e.g., sky and sunshine), and would also justify their choice based on relationships (e.g., 'the sun is in the sky'). However, American students were more likely to group on the basis of a shared category (e.g., notebook and magazine), or a common feature (e.g., sunshine and brightness), and would also justify their choice based on category membership (e.g., 'the sun and the sky are both in the heavens').[11]

9 Michael W. Morris and Kaiping Peng, 'Culture and Cause: American and Chinese Attributions for Social and Physical Events', *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 67, no. 6 (1994).

10 Incheol Choi and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Cultural Psychology of Surprise: Holistic Theories and Recognition of Contradiction', *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 79, no. 6 (2000).

11 In Nisbett and others, 'Culture and Systems of Thought', p. 300.

Formal Logic versus Experiential Knowledge

When making deductions about the studied characteristics of target objects and events the West has traditionally relied on logical knowledge and not allowed experiential knowledge to 'interfere' with it. However, such tradition has not prevailed in the East, where plausibility and sense experience is considered to be appropriate when engaging in deductive reasoning, since argument structure does not necessarily need to be analyzed apart from content.[12]

When studying university students, researchers found that Koreans relied more on experiential knowledge when evaluating the logical validity of arguments than Americans. In fact, 'the results indicate that when logical structure conflicts with everyday belief, American students are more willing to set aside empirical belief in favour of logic than are Korean students'.[13]

Dialectics versus the Law of Noncontradiction

When engaging in deductive reasoning, East Asians and Westerners do not have the same commitment to avoiding the appearance of contradiction. Peng and Nisbett point out that in folk western logic—based on Aristotelian logic—rules about contradiction, such as the following have played a central role:

1. *The law of identity*: A = A. A thing is identical to itself.
2. *The law of noncontradiction*: A = not–A. No statement can be both true and false.
3. *The law of the excluded middle*: Any statement is either true or false.[14]

However, folk Chinese logic is based on Chinese dialecticism which can be described in terms of three principles:

1. *The principle of change*: Reality is a process that is not static but rather is dynamic and changeable. A thing need not be identical to itself at all because of the fluid nature of reality.
2. *The principle of contradiction*: Partly because change is constant, contradiction is constant. Thus old and new, good and bad, exist in the same object or event and indeed depend on one another for their existence.
3. *The principle of relationship or holism*: Because of constant change and contradiction, nothing either in human life or in nature is isolated and independent, but instead everything is related. It follows that attempting to isolate elements of some larger whole can only be misleading.[15]

These differences in reasoning between West and East have been pointed out for years in the work of historians, ethnographers, and philosophers. What is interesting though is that they now are supported by empirical evidence from the psychological laboratory in contemporary populations. For instance, while conducting

12 Norenzayan, 'Rule-Based,' p. 4.

13 Nisbett and others, 'Culture and Systems of Thought', p. 301.

14 Nisbett and others, 'Culture and Systems of Thought', p. 301.

15 Nisbett and others, 'Culture and Systems of Thought', p. 301.

studies about resolution of social contradiction with undergraduate students at the University of Michigan, Peng and Nisbett made following finding. Chinese students tended to be compromising and to find a 'Middle Way' (e.g., 'both the mothers and the daughters have failed to understand each other'), while American responses were more likely to be non-compromising and to favour one or the other side within the conflict situation (e.g., 'mothers should respect daughters' independence').[16]

In a different study which investigated preferred argument forms, Chinese and White American natural science graduate students at the University of Michigan—but who were not physicists—were presented with several issues that had two types of arguments. One was logic-based and refuting contradiction and the other was dialectical. For instance, one issue dealt with the existence of God, and the logic-based argument was a variant of the so-called 'cosmological' or 'first cause' argument by Hume, while the dialectical argument applied the principle of holism, deducing the existence of God via the fact that it is necessary that there exist a Being who is above every individual perspective and who is able to see the 'whole', the truth. The findings indicated that American participants preferred the logic-based arguments, while the Chinese participants preferred the dialectical arguments even for scientific issues.[17]

II Allowing Holistic and Analytic Reasoning to 'Aid' Each Other in Theological Education

Theological Education has entered an exciting era in the twenty-first century, an era in which cultures impinge on one another in unprecedented ways. In fact, Ionita affirms that 'monocultural contexts hardly exist anymore', and encourages seeing cultural differences 'as a source for sharing among one another and as mutual enrichment'.[18] Hence, if rationality were seen—in Hiebert's words—as 'a many-splendored thing',[19] if holistic and analytic variations of reasoning were taken seriously how could they contribute to a mutual enrichment in order to come to fuller knowing in theological education? Before exploring some answers for this question it will be helpful to highlight in a more detailed way the strengths of both types of reasoning.

Strengths of Holistic Reasoning

Research indicates that East Asians have a tendency to attend more to the total picture of the environment or the field. For instance, Masuda and Nisbett concluded their study by saying:

> Japanese may simply see far more of the world than do Americans. Japanese were able to report as

16 Peng and Nisbett, 'Culture, Dialectics, and Reasoning About Contradiction'.

17 Peng and Nisbett, 'Culture, Dialectics, and Reasoning About Contradiction'.

18 Viorel Ionita, 'One Gospel and Diverse Cultures: Towards an Intercultural Mutuality', *International Review of Mission* 86, no. 340/341 (1997): pp. 54, 55.

19 Paul G. Hiebert, *Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts: Affirming Truth in a Modern/Postmodern World* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1999), p. 87.

> much detail about the focal objects as Americans were, but could report far more about the background and about relationships involving inert background objects.[20]

They also realized that Japanese seemed to 'bind features' in such ways that they formed a blended representation which differed from the two features separately. Park, Nisbett, and Hedden summarise their research findings in similar words: '(T)he evidence suggests that Asians, relative to their western counterparts, are more likely to integrate target information with contextual information and excel at observing relationships that require integrative skills.'[21]

Hence, it is no wonder—as pointed out in the introduction—that researchers make comments such as, '(I)t appears that East Asian folk psychology, as it relates to causal attribution, better corresponds to the findings and theory of scientific psychology than does American folk psychology.'[22]

Moreover, in light of their findings, Ji, Schwarz, and Nisbett suggest that 'collective cultures have more detailed representations of mundane behaviors available in memory than do members of individualistic cultures.'[23] They suggest the following explanation for this finding:

> (C)ollectivist cultures put a premium on fitting in, which requires considerable monitoring of both one's own behavior and that of others to avoid inappropriate conducts. Hence, Chinese respondents… [obliterate] the need to use an estimation strategy.[24]

This close monitoring of behaviour, as well as the ability to correlate many variables at the same time and to perceive relationships in the field (covariation judgment) is closely related to dialectical thinking. In fact, East Asian dialectical thinking seeks for a middle way in the resolution of social conflicts, relies on the 'whole picture' when providing a rationale for an issue, tolerates apparent contradictions, and takes into account many variables when making decisions.[25] Hence, Peng

20 Takahiko Masuda and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Attending Holistically Versus Analytically: Comparing the Context Sensitivity of Japanese and Americans', *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 81, no. 5 (2001): pp. 933-34.

21 D. C. Park, R. E. Nisbett, and T. Hedden, 'Aging, Culture, and Cognition', *Journal of Gerontology* 54B (1999): p. 3.

22 Norenzayan, Choi, and Nisbett, 'Eastern and Western', p. 257.

23 Li-Jun Ji, Norbert Schwarz, and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Culture, Autobiographical Memory, and Behavioral Frequency Reports: Measurement Issues in Cross-Cultural Studies', *Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin* 26, no. 5 (2000): p. 7.

24 Li-Jun Ji, Schwarz, Nisbett, 'Culture, Autobiographical Memory, and Behavioral Frequency Reports', p. 7.

25 The researchers acknowledge the fact that dialectical thinking is not totally alien to western thinking. Plato and Aristotle used the dialectical method of reasoning, Kant and Hegel were the first to differentiate dialectical reasoning from formal logic, Marx and Engels used materialistic and dialectical perspectives to analyse society, Habermas and Goldman proposed dialectical argumentation for interpersonal discourse, and Tetlock has used it to differentiate levels of integrative complexity in people while they reason and make deci-

and Nisbett suggest that this type of reasoning 'may be preferable for negotiating intelligently in complex social interactions'.[26] After all—Peng and Ames remind their readers—Kant 'maintained that logical reasoning is very effective within the confines of science, but "all the worse for the beyond"'.[27]

In the area of religion and theology, the following observations are made by Asian theologians. Chang points out that often a non-linear approach to the Bible—which is an Asian preference—is able to capture better its complexity. In fact, while making reference to Alonso-Schökel, he emphasizes that, 'propositional statements, commonly regarded as a higher form of expression, are actually a truncated form. They are less holistic.'[28]

In a similar way, Lee suggests that over against western compartmentalization and fragmentation, 'in Asia religion is believed to provide a comprehensive system which enables us to perceive humanity, nature and the universe'.[29] Moreover, Asian thinking also does not dichotomize between subject of research and object of learning. In fact, Lee points out that the translation of *theology* in East Asian countries is *shinhak* (*shin* meaning God and *hak* meaning learning), and hence, he summarises the characteristics of Asian *hak* as follows: '(T)he subject immerses into the object of learning, not to obtain theoretical knowledge but to internalize and personify the object through awakening and orthopraxis.'[30]

This observation seems to be a good contemporary illustration of what Munro meant while summarising the difference between early Platonists and Confucians: '(T)he Platonists were more concerned with knowing in order to understand, while the Confucians were more concerned with knowing in order to behave properly toward other men [*sic*].'[31] And in consonance with what this article is suggesting about the consequences of perceiving and processing information in different ways, Lee points out that 'the "otherness" of Asian style of doing theology can be found in its methodology to perceive and comprehend Christian truth beyond logic and rationality'.[32]

sions. But, they say that while 'there are clear similarities between Eastern and Western dialecticism,… the differences may be great enough that using the same term for both may prove to be more confusing than helpful'. Kaiping Peng and Richard E. Nisbett, 'Dialectical Responses to Questions About Dialectical Thinking', *American Psychologist* 55, no. 9 (2000).

26 Peng and Nisbett, 'Culture, Dialectics', p. 751.

27 K. Peng and D. Ames, 'Dialectical Thinking, Psychology Of', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Baltes (New York: Elsevier, 2001), p. 3634.

28 Peter Chang, 'Steak, Potato, Peas and Chopsuey: Linear and Non-Linear Thinking in Theological Education', *Evangelical Review of Theology* 5, no. 2 (1981): p. 283.

29 Moonjang Lee, 'Identifying an Asian Theology: A Methodological Quest', *Asia Journal of Theology* 13, no. 2 (1999): p. 269.

30 Lee, 'Identifying an Asian Theology', p. 271.

31 Donald J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1969), p. 54.

32 Lee, 'Identifying an Asian Theology', p. 272.

Strengths of Analytic Reasoning

Now, what are the strengths of European-American or western ways of reasoning which are predominantly analytical? Masuda and Nisbett found in their studies that American participants 'made fewer mistakes than did East Asians on the Rod and Frame task, which requires decoupling objects from a background',[33] and hence were less vulnerable to the change of backgrounds. This suggests that Americans seemed to 'bind features' in such ways that they 'remain independently represented, but associated'.[34] Park, Nisbett, and Hedden summarize their research findings in similar words: 'Westerners may excel at dealing with information-processing tasks that require componential analysis and the learning and use of categorical information.'[35]

Moreover, Ji, Schwarz, and Nisbett who studied culture and autobiographical memory in mundane behaviours—since it is less likely that meaning of mundane behaviours differs across cultures—recommend that in the future different behaviours be studied. They expect that when this is done, 'members of independent cultures may be particularly knowledgeable about behaviors that reflect personal uniqueness and achievement', and hence be less influenced by frequency scales than Chinese respondents, who—because they belong to an interdependent culture—'are particularly knowledgeable about behaviors that facilitate smooth social interaction'.[36]

In the area of religion and theology, Chang points out that the dominant mode in the western academic scene is linear thinking, which is 'largely analytical, objective, logical and systematic'.[37] This way of thinking does have its limitations. However, it also has advantages, such as objectivity in Bible study, which 'avoids the danger of reading one's own mind into the text'.[38] Moreover, Lee, while pointing to the dangers of western 'compartmentalized theology' and the predominance that logic and rationality have in it, nevertheless says:

> It is not either possible or desirable to abandon logic and rationality, for these are important, though not sufficient, tools for us to use to comprehend and communicate Christian truth…. In this sense, it is not sound at all for us to argue that logic and rationality are to be discarded in our theological methodology.[39]

Other strengths could also be pointed out. However, since most of formal higher education has been done within the framework of analytical thinking, its strengths are better known. Hence, the aspects that have been highlighted will suffice for now.

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33 Masuda and Nisbett, 'Attending Holistically Versus Analytically', p. 933.

34 Masuda and Nisbett, 'Attending Holistically Versus Analytically', p. 933.

35 Park, Nisbett, and Hedden, 'Aging, Culture and Cognition', p. 933.

36 Ji, Schwarz, and Nisbett, 'Culture, Autobiographical Memory', p. 7.

37 Chang, 'Steak, Potato, Peas and Chopsuey', p. 279.

38 Chang, 'Steak, Potato, Peas and Chopsuey', p. 286.

39 Lee, 'Identifying an Asian Theology', p. 269.

Building towards Fuller Knowing

When aiming at a process of allowing holistic and analytic reasoning to 'aid' one another in order to come to fuller knowing, it is not a matter of merely attempting to deparochialize horizons of people and of getting to know 'exotic' ways of reasoning. Also, it is not a matter of simply respecting cultural differences and trying to meet the needs of 'others' in multicultural educational settings. Nor is it a matter of simply acknowledging the disservice of packaging and exporting 'western' theology to other cultures, or of championing the need for contextualized theology.

Moreover, it is not an attempt to be 'incarnational,' i.e., wanting to understand culturally 'others' in order to help them in a better way. Although the desire to be incarnational has its validity, it nevertheless often has had the connotation of 'reaching out' or 'reaching down' in order to help culturally 'others' who are in need. However, the emphasis here is that all are inherently in need of being 'aided' in their way of reasoning by cultural 'others.' No one in the created order is inherently self-sufficient. Only God can 'reach out' or 'reach down' in the full/true sense of the word, and has no inherent need of the 'other'.

Hence, when aiming at a process of 'aiding' one another, it much rather points to the need of what Vanhoozer calls a 'pluralistic theology'. In his programmatic proposal for Evangelical futures—among other aspects—he rightly points out that in order to disclose the truth about Jesus Christ it took four Gospels, which articulate different aspects of the truth:

> The richness… of the event of Jesus Christ calls for multiple *perspectives* to do justice to the many *aspects* of its truth. It is the many voices taken together that correspond adequately, though not necessarily exhaustively, to the reality of Jesus Christ. If this is true of the canon, might the same hold for theological traditions?[40]

He then suggests—in light of a concrete example—that one possible avenue to pursue the different aspects of truth is to allow different cultures to come together to interpret the Bible:

> I know of at least one book in which contributors from a number of different cultures came together to interpret the Bible, not with the intent of exploring how this or that group read the text for themselves, but rather with the goal of providing a richer appreciation of the historical meaning of the text.[41]

Such practice—which responds to a critical realist epistemology[42]—may indeed be helpful to take theological education beyond colonial/positivistic and contextualization/relativistic dichotomizations. In fact, a thoughtful reading of the strengths of the holistic

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40 Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'The Voice and the Actor: A Dramatic Proposal About the Ministry and Minstrelsy of Theology', in *Evangelical Futures: A Conversation on Theological Method*, ed. John G. Stackhouse, Jr. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), p. 79.

41 Vanhoozer, 'The Voice and the Actor', p. 79.

42 A critical realist epistemology affirms the existence of objective truth, but recognizes that it is apprehended subjectively and hence in need of hermeneutical communities. See Hiebert, *Missiological Implications*.

and analytic variations of reasoning, suggests that they could help God's people in theological education transcend also the theory/praxis and objective/subjective dichotomizations. Hence, we may explore some practical suggestions for teachers and students who perceive and process information differently and who want to foster learning/research relationships that are 'aiding' in nature in order to come to fuller knowing?

'Aiding' for Fuller Knowing in Teaching/Learning Interactions

Space needs to be created in teaching/learning interactions if the strengths of both types of reasoning—holistic and analytic—are to contribute towards fuller knowing. This might take some readjustments, since typically western populations affirm the agentic self which takes control and is independent, while those which affirm harmony control—such as East Asian populations—value interdependence, flexibility, and adjustment.[43] For one group independent thinking and action is a sign of maturity, while for the other interdependent thinking and taking responsibility for the other is a sign of true community. For one group it is important to get to the point via a clear and precise logical argument, for the other it tends to be important to tell stories, to weave together contributing strings, and to speak about the whole context in which the issue is embedded in order to make a point. Both groups complement each other; however, active listening will be required of all.

Palmer gives some good suggestions for creating space in order to hear and perceive God and others in a more effective way. He mentions activities such as beginning class sessions with a period of silence, using periods of silence in the middle of a class, teaching by questioning, and ending with corporate evaluation of how the class went.[44] It certainly will be important to enter the teaching/learning experience with expectant anticipation, respect, and preparation for positive surprises.[45] Moreover, it also could require being willing to experiment with different modes of seeing and thinking, such as imagination, which Vanhoozer qualifies as follows:

> The imagination is not merely the faculty of fantasy—the ability to see things not there—but rather a means for seeing what *is* there (e.g., the meaning of the whole) that the senses alone are unable to observe (and that the propositional alone is unable to state). The imagination is our port of entry into other modes of experience, into other modes of seeing and thinking, and as such is the unique and indispensable condition of participating in the communicative action of others.[46]

Hence, it is also important not to overestimate the value of formal logi-

43 Beth Morling and Susan T. Fiske, 'Defining and Measuring Harmony Control', *Journal of Research in Personality* 33, no. 4 (1999).

44 Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We Are Known* (New York: HarperSan Francisco, 1993), pp. 75-87.

45 Maria Harris, *Teaching and Religious Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1987).

46 Vanhoozer, 'The Voice and the Actor', p. 84.

cal reasoning, and to underestimate experience-based and intuitive reasoning while interacting in teaching/learning situations. Becker tries to illuminate this dynamic from different perspectives when he writes as follows:

> Many Westerners may be convinced of the importance of logic, and of its superiority to emotive intuition. Yet we need to be careful not to discard those areas of human life and communication in which intuition may be extremely valuable, in our efforts to quantify and mathematize. We may agree with Habermas that an ideal-speech situation requires equality of participants, freedom from social coercion, suspension of privilege, and free expression of feeling.... But we should realize that this is at best a very Western ideal, both impractical and even theoretically inconceivable to traditionally-educated Chinese and Japanese.... [W]e should not forget the long and relatively peaceful histories they have experienced, entirely without the benefit of our methods of discussion and rhetoric. Before imposing our own models of communication upon them in another gross display of insensitivity and cultural imperialism, let us remind ourselves that our own presuppositions about ideal communications are also culture-bound.[47]

Argumentative debate has its place in teaching/learning interactions; however, it is often control oriented and fuelled by an 'either/or' search of truth. It does not always create space for the strengths of holistic reasoning which is more integrative and 'both/and' oriented. The voice of the control oriented is the voice that is heard most often, and often it is expected that those who are different accommodate to this type of voice. Hence, Jones considers that

> what is most significant to the other's movement across the rocky terrains and borders of difference, and into the centers of power, is not the *telling*, but the *hearing* of stories. Most important in educational dialogue is not the *speaking voice*, but the *voice heard*.[48]

She continues to point out, that since the less dominant always hears the dominant's voice, it is the dominant members who are excluded from the dialogue, since they hear only their own voice. On the other hand, individuals with tendencies for holistic reasoning and less strong convictions may deprive others with what could be their inclinations toward a certain issue, and thereby not contribute sufficiently towards coming to fuller knowing.

When it comes to making social causal attributions—which are not absent in interpersonal relationships within teaching/learning situations—Norenzayan, Choi, and Nisbett point out that misunderstandings may arise when a person's behaviour is attributed to divergent causes: situational versus

47 Carl B. Becker, 'Reasons for the Lack of Argumentation and Debate in the Far East', *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 10 (1986): p. 90.

48 Alison Jones, 'The Limits of Cross-Cultural Dialogue: Pedagogy, Desire, and Absolution in the Classroom', *Educational Theory* 49, no. 3 (1999): p. 90.

dispositional (i.e., personal traits).[49] They indicate that this is likely to happen especially when the information about a given situation is made salient. In this case individuals with analytic reasoning are more likely to attribute the cause of behaviour to personal dispositions or traits, and any inconsistency is interpreted as dishonesty or inauthenticity. Such polarizations in interpersonal relationships will not contribute to coming to fuller knowing, but rather sever the community.

Hence, it will be necessary to deconstruct prejudices and allow these differences to be illumined and corrected where necessary, so that they can lead to fuller knowing. Was Jesus perhaps trying to do this when the adulterous woman was brought to him, and he asked the accusers to analyse their own lives before casting a stone on her? Was he perhaps indicating that had they been a more caring community—and hence been with less sin—this woman would not have had a need to engage in sinful relationships? At the same time, he does not relieve the woman of responsibility, since he asks her not to sin anymore.

If this is a possible reading of the story, then Jesus was avoiding polarizations in social causal attribution and helping all involved in the incident to come to fuller knowing about themselves and about the problem at hand.

'Aiding' for Fuller Knowing in Learning/Research Relationships

Learning and research in theological education—especially at the graduate level—is often guided by analytical reasoning. While engaging in reading assignments it is important to be able to detect the main argument, its supporting evidence, and then to critique it in logical and abstract terms. In research and writing it is important to define a highly specific concept, identify the literature base on which further knowledge can be constructed/added, and then to pursue it with scientific objectivity and preciseness.

There is no question about the usefulness of analytic reasoning within learning and research processes. It has generated much knowledge and also helpful knowledge. However, what would happen if holistic ways of reasoning were incorporated as valid ways of knowing? Would experiential and intuitive ways of knowing contaminate 'true' knowledge? How can knowledge that is not of the 'either/or' type or that is not tangible and measurable be evaluated? How would it affect accreditation standards?

These and more questions could and need to be raised. Most likely they would preoccupy more those with analytical tendencies of reasoning, since they usually need to know exactly where a path will take them, have more need to be in control, and are less willing to take risks. However, as cultures impinge on one another, as postmodernism calls for a review of what it means to know, and as research gives evidence of complementary differences/strengths in reasoning processes of contemporary populations the unknown path of 'what will happen if…' cannot be avoided any longer.

Moreover, if diversity is a pre-requisite for unity in the body of Christ—as

49 Norenzayan, Choi, and Nisbett, 'Eastern and Western'.

Fee points out in his commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians[50]—then theological education also needs to take seriously diversity of reasoning represented in the body. After all, when Paul affirms, 'now I know in part' (1 Cor. 13:12) it is part of the discourse about diversity and unity in the body of Christ.

So, how and where do we start if learning and research in theological education is to incorporate holistic ways of knowing alongside analytic ways? The old Kpelle proverb captures the difficulty of answering this question well: 'I know how to begin the old mat pattern but I do not know how to begin the new.'[51] Hence, the following suggestions are only starters for further thought.

To allow holistic and analytic ways of reasoning to complement each other may imply that it be just as important to discern the driving forces behind a narrative as it is to discern the rationality of the narrative.[52] It may imply that pushing back boundaries in research happens just as much through the pursuit of new topics and of missing pieces in a topic, as through weaving together existing topics with a different pattern, or coming up with a new blend of what is there already. It may imply that intra-disciplinary research is just as necessary as inter-disciplinary research. It may imply that to explain and predict is just as important as to point out mystery and complexity without need to come to a resolution—at least not for now.

Since research papers, theses and dissertations usually follow a very analytical way of reasoning, and there is not much precedent for how to do this type of work in a holistic way, it would be worthwhile pursuing other ways of research, such as case studies. Among other advantages, the following four—mentioned by Mullino—seem to have a close bearing on the present search for ways to allow analytic and holistic reasoning to contribute towards fuller knowing, since they require all the skills of both types of reasoning:

> [1] a case helps bridge the gap between theory and practice,… [2] helps persons develop skills of discernment and decision making,… [3] helps persons see a large, complex picture, without artificially extracting particular element,… [and] [4] can be used to study the dynamics of change.[53]

While exploring new pathways, it would, of course, be very helpful if people with different tendencies in reasoning could work as a team on a same project, research paper, thesis, or dissertation in order to get at the issues from both an analytical and holistic perspective. Individuals with the tendency to think analytically would probably be good for detailed analysis of issues/concepts, for handling abstract/

50 Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), p. 601.

51 Quoted in M. Cole and S. Scribner, *Culture and Thought: A Psychological Introduction* (New York: Wiley, 1974), p. 201.

52 Parush Parushev, 'East and West: A Theological Conversation', *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 1, no. 1 (2000): pp. 1-2.

53 Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, *Teaching from the Heart: Theology and Educational Method* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1991), pp. 34-35.

theoretical concepts, as well as for conducting etic research. On the other hand, individuals with the tendency for holistic reasoning would be especially good at seeing the bigger picture, the dynamics and connections at work between issues/concepts, for dealing with concrete/practical ideas, and for giving thick descriptions while doing emic research.

Many more alternatives will arise as people in learning/research relationships work together and listen to each other with a willingness to learn from one another. After all, it is through 'journeying' together that ways are discovered. It is through acknowledging that nobody has 'arrived' that fuller knowing can be pursued. Hence, the final section of the article will suggest the pilgrim journey as a helpful metaphor for rethinking the conceptual framework of theological education which is willing to engage in processes of 'aiding' in order to come to fuller knowing.

III Theological Education as a Pilgrim Journey: A Conceptual Framework

Pilgrim journeys were practised by God's people in the Old Testament, and by Jews and Jewish converts to Jerusalem for Passover in the New Testament. In fact, they have an international character since pilgrimages are also practised by people of religions other than the Judeo-Christian. Morgan points out that while land (sacred place) and memory (sacred traditions) tend to have a centripetal movement and contribute towards the maintenance of structure in religions, pilgrimage (religious journey toward oneness with the transcendent) tends to have a centrifugal movement and provides an element of dynamism which gives 'marginal members of a community the opportunity to search for spiritual sustenance beyond, but not necessarily outside, the organized and orthodox boundaries of their established belief system'.[54]

In the New Testament, the pilgrim metaphor illustrates the resident alien and sojourner status of God's people on earth. In the educational literature the pilgrim model has been used to suggest that education rather than being a factory (behaviourist model) or a wildflower (laissez-faire model) is a purposeful life-walk in which students and teachers form an interdependent community which practises the priesthood of all believers.[55] This and other considerations also makes the pilgrim journey a helpful metaphor to rethink the conceptual framework for intercultural theological education, since it can illustrate well some important aspects about the knower and the knowing process.

Ownership of the 'Theological House of Authority'

All those who are engaged in pursuing fuller knowing in theological education are pilgrims. All have a transitory life,

54 James T. Morgan, 'Memory, Land, and Pilgrimage: Roots of Spirituality', *Religious Education* 87, no. 4 (1992): p. 560.

55 Jim Plueddemann and Carol Plueddemann, *Pilgrims in Progress: Growing through Groups* (Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw, 1990); Ted W. Ward, 'Metaphors of Spiritual Reality. Part 3: Evaluating Metaphors of Education', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 556 (1982).

all are finite, and everything they are engaged in—including reasoning and knowing—is marked by finiteness. To conceive of themselves as resident aliens, foreigners, and temporary dwellers does not only help people in theological education to have a respectful attitude toward cultural 'others' and to be willing to learn from one another, but it also reminds them of the fact that no one is the 'owner of the house'.

It seems easier to accept the fact that no one 'owns the house' when it refers to the 'ecological house' in which the pilgrims temporarily dwell, than the 'theological house of authority' in which they teach/learn together with pilgrims from other cultures. When it refers to the 'theological house of authority' it seems as if it were so easy for a foreign language to slip in, a language in which theological education is referred to in two categories: 'at home' and 'abroad'. 'At home' is often the norm and 'abroad' usually calls for contextualization of the norm 'at home'.

Such mentality is not appropriate to resident aliens and foreigners. Since not only some but *all* are foreigners, they practise hospitality or 'homemaking' through transformation (Rom. 12:1-2, 9-13), and avoid conformity to society (and cultural ways of reasoning) which practises vengeance (Rom. 12:16-21) and exclusion by expecting that all conform to the prevalent norm.[56] Hospitality towards cultural variations of reasoning among members of the theological education community is more likely to take place if they remember that *all*—regardless of cultural background—are on a pilgrim journey as aliens and temporary residents.

Focus of Knowing

Holistic reasoning focuses more on the field and tends to be harmony-oriented, while analytic reasoning focuses more on the target object and tends to be goal-oriented. These variations may complement one another in very helpful ways. However, they may also cause tensions. In those times it will be necessary that the pilgrims on the journey—students and teachers alike—remember that, 'it is not we who seek the Way, but the Way which seeks us'.[57]

As the Way seeks the pilgrims and these concentrate on him, this also reminds them of the fact that, while they need to plan the day's journey, they still need to be sensitive to emergent, unplanned teachable moments that he provides. The pilgrim journey or walk is 'purposeful yet subject to the thousand-and-one revelations that emerge as the trail unfolds to meet the pilgrim's step'.[58]

Moreover, in similar ways to those of the Israelite pilgrims in the desert, they follow the leading of the 'cloud of fire' and set out or encamp not at their pace, but at the cloud's pace, be it for 'a long time, … or only a few days,… [or] only from evening till morning,… whether by day or by night… [whether]

56 Walter Brueggemann, *Interpretation and Obedience: From Faithful Reading to Faithful Living* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), p. 290.

57 Linda M. Cannell, 'Electronic Mail from Deerfield, Illinois to Ted Ward, Miami, Florida, 3 May', (1998).

58 Ward, 'Metaphors of Spiritual Reality', p. 297.

for two days or a month or a year' (Num. 9:19-22). After all, the metaphor of the life-walk 'fulfills the biblical teachings about human relationship, authority, and the inalienable sovereignty of God. All through Scriptures God's people are seen as strangers and sojourners, walking together with God in the lead.'[59]

At times—as Yob points out—the journey may even take a somewhat unpredictable and devious route. For the Israelites, the journey that could have taken mere months, took forty years, since 'progress had to be measured not only against approach to the final physical destination but also in personal and spiritual terms as well'.[60] This sensitive attunement of the pilgrims to the Leader of the journey allows them to handle tensions such as careful planning/respectful attendance to the surprises (and devious routs!) of the journey, or goal/harmony orientation in ways that avoid a dichotomization and allow for a dynamic interplay between them.

Sacredness of Knowing

To conceive intercultural theological education in which there are variations of reasoning as a pilgrim journey also helps to avoid dichotomizations such as 'abstract vs. concrete' or 'rational/empirical vs. experiential/transcendental.' 'Pilgrim' journey always gives the journey a sacred character. Yob points out that, although historically it might sometimes have 'political, economic, and nationalistic overtones, the pilgrimage is essentially a religiously motivated journey. It is initiated, sustained, and guided by consideration of transcendent realities or ultimate concern.'[61]

Theological education as a pilgrim journey reminds all involved in it that the journey has a sacred starting point—the cross—and also a sacred ending point—the throne of the Lamb. It also reminds them that all pilgrims are holy, since all are inhabited by the Holy Spirit who teaches them. Above all, however, it reminds them that the journey is sacred because God is present among the pilgrims. He needs to be relied upon for *all* acquisition of knowledge, since all truth comes from God. The Source of truth makes all truth sacred, and thus it needs to be acted upon with fear of the Lord and worshipful obedience. In fact, it is not so much a matter of asking: 'are we grasping truth?', but rather, 'Is Truth grasping us?'.

Hence, theological education as a pilgrim journey makes it possible to experience God not only while reading and studying the Torah/Bible, but also while studying 'the language and literature of the Babylonians', as was the case of resident alien students such as Daniel and his friends (Dan. 1:4), who experienced that God could give them 'knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning' (Dan. 1:17). This experiential/transcendental way of knowing certainly did not preclude their rational/empirical ways of knowing, since they were among those

59 Ward, 'Metaphors of Spiritual Reality', p. 297.

60 Iris M. Yob, 'The Pragmatist and Pilgrimage: Revitalizing an Old Metaphor for Religious Education', *Religious Education* 84, no. 1 (1989): p. 522.

61 Yob, 'The Pragmatist and Pilgrimage', p. 251.

who showed 'aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, [and] quick to understand' (Dan. 1:4); however, it did require a communal prayerful dependence upon God with fellow resident aliens and pilgrims (Dan. 2:17-23).

Indeed, a pilgrim consciousness of God on the journey allows for insights about/from him that are not parochial; and although it sets the pilgrim apart—as Daniel who 'resolved not to defile himself' (Dan. 1:8)—it even brings kings—with whom these pilgrims interact—to a deeper understanding of God as they recognize that 'your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries' (Dan. 2:47). Surely such pilgrim behaviour and attunement to God could also help those in theological education with cultural variations of reasoning to come to a deeper and fuller appreciation of God, of what he is interested in, and of one another.

Wholeness of Knowing

Holistic reasoning has the tendency to be praxis-oriented, while analytic reasoning to be theory-oriented. However, wise people in intercultural theological education who are on a pilgrim journey transcend the praxis/theory dichotomization. They engage in action/reflection and *live* the journey, since they acknowledge that Way, Truth, and Life cannot be separated (John 14:6). They pray, 'Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth' (Ps. 86:11), rather than, 'Teach me your truth, O Lord, and I will walk in your way.'

When reflecting about the Israelites in the desert, Yob points out that 'pilgrimage was for them not an armchair speculation but something they engaged in "in the midst of life"—indeed, this very engagement made it happen.'[62] She continues to point out, that, as a result,

> The journey is educative in the broadest sense. According to the Exodus story, for instance, a disorderly company of self-interested people were disciplined by the rigors of the journey and personally, socially, and spiritually prepared for the final conquest of their promised land. On the way they learned the proper ways of living, worshipping, and relating.[63]

It is the journey itself, and the pilgrim's willingness to be transformed by the Way that makes it possible for them to engage in an 'aiding' process of holistic and analytic reasoning. The journey and the Way indeed have a transforming power on the pilgrims. But again, they experience it only if they *travel*; they cannot experience it if pilgrimage is an armchair speculation. Neither can the transforming power be experienced if pilgrims conceive their journey to be a game or a contest where the purpose is to win a competition.

Ward rightfully warns against using game or contest as a metaphor for defining the purpose of education. This view of education—he emphasizes—needs to be challenged on the grounds of Hebrew epistemology which values 'knowledge as that which is acted on'.[64]

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62 Yob, 'The Pragmatist and Pilgrimage', p. 522.

63 Yob, 'The Pragmatist and Pilgrimage', p. 522.

64 Ted W. Ward, 'Metaphors of Spiritual Reality. Part 1: Biblical Metaphors of Purpose', *Bibliotheca Sacra* 139, no. 554 (1982): p. 109.

However, again, such a view of knowledge which transcends holistic/analytic polarizations is more likely to be valued if theological education is conceived as a pilgrim journey.

Knowing as a Life-long Process

Lastly, wise people who are on a pilgrim journey foster an attitude of life-long learning. They never settle down before reaching the endpoint, and this endpoint is reached only when bowing before the Lamb on the throne. Hence, until then they make an effort to retain their status of pilgrims, resident aliens, and temporary dwellers—also in their reasoning processes—because to settle down is dangerous. While reflecting about the aforementioned dynamics between memory, land, and pilgrimage, Morgan makes following sobering remarks:

> Even for a people who can proudly trace their roots as a wandering and persecuted people, there comes a time when the nomadic experience gives way to a more sedentary lifestyle and a stronger sense of rootedness. Once a people have 'arrived' or feel they have a home, then they learn to reenact in the comfort of their sanctuaries or homes the past dramas of escape from enslavement and suffering. Ironically, the land possesses them as much as they think they have a hold on the land.[65]

This is what seems to have happened to the people of Israel after 'arriving' at the Promised Land, and to wise king Solomon after 'settling down' in the comfort of his palace and his established kingdom. But what an inspiring contrast is found in the way other wise pilgrims—such as Joseph and Daniel—end their lives, since they seemed to have never given up their way of thinking and living as resident aliens and foreigners. Hence, it is very important for the members of the theological education community to be continually 'uprooted' by cultural 'others' with their ways of reasoning, and avoid the danger of being possessed by their 'home land'. They do well to heed the advice of a life-long learner such as Ward, when he says: '(O)urs is not to "finish our education" and "settle down"'.[66]

Conclusion

Theological education that has not 'settled down,' that has not 'arrived,' and is still on a pilgrim journey will welcome not only what culturally 'others' have to say, but also the reasoning process that they use to come to what they have to say, since content and process cannot be separated. To allow analytic and holistic reasoning to 'aid' one another in theological education, as this article has suggested, could guide all involved in the process to come not only to fuller knowing in a quantitative way, but also in a qualitative way. However, this will require that students and teachers alike—be they representatives of holistic or analytic tendencies of reasoning—come together with 'tea cups' that are not full. It will require the humble acknowledgment that, 'now I know in part'.

65 Morgan, 'Memory, Land, and Pilgrimage: Roots of Spirituality', p. 565.

66 Ward, 'Metaphors of Spiritual Reality. Part 3', p. 297.