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The variation in western body view in China

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Abstract *In reflecting on the crisis of modernity, Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Shusterman, from their new points of view, subverted Spirit-Flesh Dualism, which originated from Greek philosophy. The “body” received more attention as a popular topic of research, which became known as the “body view”. The body view attracted the attention of scholars in China in the late 20th century. However, while this approach originated in Western academia, Chinese people have paid attention to body problems since ancient times. Scholars from mainland China, including Zhou Yuchen, Chen Lisheng, Zhang Zailin, Chen Xia, Ye Qiugui, and Qi Linhua, and from Taiwan, including Yang Rubin, Huang Junjie, and Cai Biming, used traditional Chinese culture as a basis to explain and expand the body view. When Chinese scholars adapted the Western body view into Chinese body view primarily in three aspects. First, aims. The Chinese body view try to use studies and theories from the West to explain the traditional Chinese concept of the body concept in modern words. Second, the Chinese body view focuses more on studying the relation between body and mind, or between body and nature. Third, self-cultivation becomes an essence word in Chinese study of the body, meaning that compared to the West, the Chinese body view emphasizes the practices of the body view*

Keywords *Chinese body view, western body view, variation, traditional Chinese culture self-cultivation*

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1. Introduction

As the west wind blows eastward, Western views of the body are known by Chinese scholars. As modern Western thought pays more attention to the body, studies on the body have become popular in China. Some Chinese scholars explained and extended the Chinese traditional body concept based on the Western Body View and formed a new theory of the Chinese Body View. Previous research showed that the characteristics of Chinese body view has been noticed. In the paper “Zhongguo sixiangshi zhong ‘shenti guan’ yanjiu de xin shiye” 中国思想史中“身体观”研究的新视野, Huang Junjie summarized three new horizons in Chinese body view studies, including the “body” as a method of thinking, the “body” as a spiritual cultivation and the “body” as a place to show. Yan Lianfu also discussed three directions in the studies of Chinese philosophy body view in his paper, “Zhongguo zhexue shentiguan yanjiu de sange xiangdu” 中国哲学身体观研究的三个向度, including “body” as an expression subject, “body” as a place to show and the “body” as a philosophical noumenon. These studies were very enlightening to us, but we also noticed the aspects that do not paid attention to in before. For example, the similarities and differences between Chinese and Western body view research were not distinguished in previous studies. Moreover, previous scholars haven’t noticed the variation of Western body view in China and explored the reasons for it in the inter-civilizational context.

In our paper, we would take Chinese scholars’ research on body view as our research object, which could be understood as follows: “we are doing research on research”. First some preconditions should be stated. One is that, while Chinese body thoughts have existed since ancient times, the category of Chinese “body view” was formed under the influence of the category of Western “body view”, so we couldn’t ignore those marks that Western theory have given to “Chinese body view” in our research. Meanwhile, Chinese body view is closely combined with the context of Chinese culture. Compared to West body view, variations was happened in the study purpose of body view, the study core of body view, and so on. When summarizing characteristics of Chinese body view research, we should be aware of the differences

between Chinese body view research and traditional Western body view research. Furtherly, we should return to Chinese local culture and traditional body thoughts to reflect on the reasons for those variations. This will also help us understand why Chinese scholars studied in this way. We apply variation theory to the variations happen here in Chinese body view. And base on the difference of the two cultures we try to figure out the reason why and how Chinese body view changes towards the process. That's what we are doing and the ultra-goal is to understand it.

2. Introduction of Western Body View, the Formation of Chinese Body View

2.1 Western body view: from dualism to modern study

Throughout Western thought history, many scholars were known for their view of Spirit-Flesh Dualism. They emphasized soul and thought and deprioritized feelings and the body. Plato argued that the body hinders our rational thinking as an obstacle to truth and knowledge when approaching the real noumenon and the truth. Saint Augustine believed that the soul could surpass the bondage of the body via thought. René Descartes advocated for mind-body dualism, further emphasizing the distinction and independence of reason from feeling, the mind, and the body.

In contrast, Western scholars in modern times have rebuilt the subject of the body and have attempted to liberate the body from the soul. In reflecting on the crisis of modernity, scholars also restructured the bridge between the subject-object relation in old mind-body dualism. For example, Nietzsche himself declared in *Thus, Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885), “there is more reason [Vernunft] in your body than in your finest wisdom” (Acharya and Johnson 68). Merleau-Ponty emphasized the integration of mind and body and the blending of subject and object in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and other works. Mark Johnson also opposed mind-body dualism, describing the body as the “body and soul as one” like Dewey in *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics*

of Human Understanding (2007). Schusterman redefined “body” as the “soma”, and endowed “soma” with connotations of “living”, “feeling,” and “sentience”. The “soma” is distinct from the “body” under mind-body dualism. Schusterman said that the “soma” is living, sensitive, and perceived, differs from the body in mind-body dualism, and has the ability to be subject and object in different aspects. Schusterman’s theory shocked the tradition of dualism in historical Western thought by bringing the “Body-Mind as one” into the study of the body (Zhu 8).

In modern times, Western scholars focus on explaining the “body” to different levels. Mary Douglas divided the body into two categories: the social body and the physical body (Douglas 72). Mark Johnson believed that a complete body has five levels: 1) the body as a biological organization, 2) the ecological body, 3) the phenomenological body, 4) the social body, and 5) the cultural body (Johnson). Quite several other Western scholars focused on the shaping and intervening of social culture on the body. Foucault focused on the discipline of power on the body by stating that the body is not just an objective being but is associated with power, politics, culture, society, and aesthetics and even gradually becomes a metaphor in this process. Bryan S. Turner also regarded the body as a natural resource of social metaphor (Turner 9).

2.2 From West to East, from Western Body View to Chinese Body View

As the west wind blows eastward, Western views of the body are known by Chinese scholars. As modern Western thought pays more attention to the body, studies on the body have become popular in China. Since the late 20th century, “body writing” and “body subjectivity” have become hot topics in the field. Many scholars have contributed to Chinese body study. Scholars such as Wang Anming, Xie Youshun, and Ge Hongbing focus on taking points from aspects of literature and art. Others such as Pang Xuequan, Yang Dachun, Zhang Qinxiong tried to explain the Western Body View from a new perspective, such as the phenomenology of the body or the physical view in Christian philosophy. In addition to extending those existing theories, some Chinese scholars look back to those body concepts in Chinese traditional culture. Referring to the study on the Chinese body concept

from Japan and sinologists, China scholars Yang Rur-bin, Huang Junjie, Cai Biming from Taiwan, and Zhou Yuchen, Chen Lisheng, Zhang Zailin, Ye Qiugui, Qi Linhua, and Wang Xiaohua from mainland China explained and extended the Chinese traditional body concept based on the Western Body View and formed a new theory of the Chinese Body View.

The study of the Chinese Body View became more popular from a self-reflection by Chinese academia. It was realized that the rich thoughts about the body in the long history of traditional Chinese culture were previously ignored. As Zhang Zailin said, “Unlike traditional Western philosophy, which uses ‘thinking’ to learn the world, Chinese philosophy, as a kind of which starts from ‘body’ to experience the world, has special liking for the body since its inception”(Zhang 316). For example, *Shangshu* 尚书, the body-respecting doctrine, is “cautious of his body and always cultivate his thoughts” 慎厥身, 修思永. *Zhouyi* 周易, is the body cosmology of “The Dao of Qian forms the male; and the Dao of Kun forms the female” 乾道成男, 坤道成女. And the notions of self-reverence (Jingshen 敬身) and self-cultivation (Xiushen 修身) in *Liji* 礼记.

Meanwhile, the subversion happened in Western thought history to devote great attention to the study of the body, coincidentally aligning with the thoughts in the Chinese traditional culture. Moreover, the Chinese body concept can be found in the study of Western body view. The dimension of “practical somaesthetics” put forward by Shusterman, which emphasizes that “the self-improvement of the body (whether it is appearance, experience or the scope of execution) with meditation, rigorous training and demanding physical practice”, was considered to refer to Xunzi’s concept of self-cultivation (Shusterman). In other words, when using the traditional Chinese body concept to explain the Western body view in modern times, in addition to the closely aligned part, those referring to the Chinese concept give new meaning to body study, which resulted in variations of the Western body view in China.

3. Chinese Body View and its Representative Works

Japanese scholars, including Yuasa Yasuo, first studied the concept of the Chinese body view. Western sinologists Kristopher Schipper, Wu Guangming, and Roger T. Ames interpreted the Daoist body view, Zhuangzi's body thinking, and the "body" in classical Chinese philosophy, respectively. They believed in traditional Chinese philosophy that the "body" is a process of "infiltration between body and mind". Since the 1990s, Chinese scholars have studied the Chinese body view by giving new meaning to the categories of the Western body view.

In 1991, the Department of Chinese Literature of National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan hosted a seminar on the *Qi Theory and Body View in the History of Ancient Chinese Thought*, and the namesake book was later compiled with Yang Rur-bin's selection of 20 conference papers and officially published. As the first collection of essays to summarize the existing study of the Chinese body view, this book is of great significance in Chinese literature. It also opened up the study of this topic in Taiwan's academic circles and provided basic documentation and thoughtful approaches. Taiwan's scholars Yang Rur-bin, Cai Biming, and Huang Junjie, conducted an in-depth review of the Confucian body view, the East Asian body view, the relationship between the body and politics in modern China, and the body view in traditional Chinese medical science. Mainland scholar Zhou Jin (Zhou Yuchen) extended the results of Taiwan's scholars from different cultural perspectives and comprehensively organized the Chinese body view in his book *Shenti: sixiang yu xiuxing: yi zhongguo jingdian wei zhongxin de kuawenhua guanzhao* 身体:思想与修行——以中国经典为中心的跨文化观照. Chen Lisheng shared his in-depth study on Wang Yangming's view of the body in his works "*Wang Yangming sixiang zhong de 'shenti yinyu'*" 王阳明思想中的“身体隐喻”. In the book *Zuowei shenti zhexue de Zhongguo gudai zhexue* 作为身体哲学的中国古代哲学, Zhang Zailin changed the previous method of sects and analysis of the Chinese philosophical body view, from an all above perspective of Western phenomenology, using philosophical ontology to explain the Chinese philosophical body view in a reflective way

of combining history and theory. Chen Xia combined the ecological perspective to explain the Daoist body view in her book *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观：一种生态学的视角. Based on ancient Chinese culture, Qi Linhua summarized and compared and contrasted important concepts of the body from the discourse system of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism in his doctoral thesis *Zhongguo gudai wenhua zhong de shenti guannian ji qi fazhan* 中国古代文化中的身体观念及其发展. Ye Qiugui discussed the body view of Chinese Buddhists in combination with the theory of body sociology and the actual case of “Temple L” in Shanghai in his master thesis *Fojiao xinyang zhe de shenti: mianxiang zongjiao, shehui yu geti* 佛教信仰者的身体：面向宗教、社会与个体. Wang Xiaohua tried to reconstruct Chinese poetics by integrating the body view in the paper “*Shenti sixiang de zhenghe yu zhongguo shixue de chongxin chuchang*” 身体思想的整合与中国诗学的重新出场. The next part will provide more details about the books mentioned above.

3.1 *Zhongguo gudai sixiangzhong de Qi lun ji shenti guan* 中国古代思想中的气论及身体观 [Qi theory and the body view in the history of ancient Chinese thought]

This book is a collection of the essays from an international seminar, “*Zhongguo gudai sixiangzhong de Qi lun ji shenti guan*” 中国古代思想中的气论及身体观 (May 31 to June 2, 1991) co-sponsored by the Department of Chinese Literature and Institute of Literature at National Tsing Hua University and the Pacific Cultural Foundation. The themes discussed in this seminar focused on the concepts of “Qi” and “body” in Pre-Qin thought and the presenter’s debated theory or thought from individual theorists or schools. A total of 20 papers were collected and divided into four parts: (1) The theoretical structure of the “Qi” and the “body”; (2) The political and social nature of the body; (3) The body view in books such as the Simeng School, Xunzi, Lüshi Chunqiu, Zhuangzi, and the Huainanzi; and (4) The body view in Buddhist thought.

In the introduction of this book, Yang believed that a major feature of Chinese body view is that the body is not only composed of the organs, but also contains the “Qi” inside of them. He argued that the

concept of “Qi-Body” is the theoretical basis of both traditional Chinese medical science and Chinese empirical science, such as divination, astrology, and martial arts, and so on. Moreover, without the theoretical presupposition of the “Qi-Body”, many important propositions in Confucianism and Daoism cannot stand. In Yang’s opinion, the theoretical source of “Qi-Body” could be traced back to the Spring and Autumn Period or the Western Zhou Dynasty, which was theorized until the Warring States Period. Yang guessed that the emergence of “Qi-Body” thought might be related to the primitive religious experience or witch doctor.

3.2 *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身体观 [Confucian philosophy of the body]

Yang Rur-bin’s *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身体观 remains close to its main theme of the relationship between body and mind and the history of Mencius, from the Pre-Qin Mencius to Xunzi, Gongsun Nizi, from Wuxingpian to the “the bodily basis” of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism. Although this word “the bodily basis” originates from Western terminology, it is quite different from the “basis of the body” of human rationality and sense of meaning proposed by Western scholar Mark Johnson. Yang Rur-bin integrated Chinese Confucianism, combined its immanence and transcendence in the theory of “Siti Yiti” 四体一体, claiming that the ideal body view in Confucianism comprises the body of consciousness, the body of form, the body of natural “Qi”, and the body of social. The four meanings of the body are inseparable, coming from the same “Ti” (body).

At the same time, Yang Rur-bin believed that the Confucian body view in the Pre-Qin period had two sources and three schools. The two sources refer to the “Weiyi” body view centered on Rites of *Zhou* 周礼 and the Chinese medicine centered view of “Xue-Qi” or the concept of treating blood and “Qi”. The connotations of the three schools include the following:

- (1) Jianxing guan 践形观: the structure of the “body-Qi-mind” 形-气-心 emphasized by Mencius, advocating the unity of life and morality, where the body is a spiritualized body;

- (2) Ziran Qihua guan 自然气化观: emphasizing nature and the human body are both produced by Qi and interact with each other in their inner essence;
- (3) Liyi guan 礼义观: socialized bodies, emphasizing the essence of the human body, are inseparable from the construction of society. Xunzi is a well-known representative of this theory.

3.3 *Shenti: sixiang yu xiuxing: yi Zhongguo jingdian wei zhongxin de kuawenhua guanzhao* 身体：思想与修行——以中国经典为中心的跨文化观照 [Body: Thought and self-cultivation: Cross-cultural reflection centered on Chinese classics]

Zhou Yuchen used his own doctoral thesis *Duoyuan wenhua shiye zhong de shenti: yi zaoqi Zhongguo shenxinsixiang wei zhongxin* 多元文化视野中的身体——以早期中国身心思想为中心, which was written in 2003, as the basis for *Shenti: sixiang yu xiuxing: yi Zhongguo jingdian wei zhongxin de kuawenhua guanzhao* 身体:思想与修行——以中国经典为中心的跨文化观照. This book is the first book in mainland China to talk about the traditional Chinese body view. The book extensively surveyed the existing work of Japanese and Taiwan's scholars, especially the latter, and explored the "ideal type" of the Chinese body view in contrast to the basic context of Chinese culture. The book summarizes the physical and mental discourse and practice in classic Chinese thought and highlights the basic characteristics of the Chinese body view from the cross-cultural perspective. Reflecting on the Chinese body and mind tradition in reference and comparison, Zhou Yuchen explored the possibility of self-renewal and creative transformation based on the Western body view.

Zhou Yuchen's book first revealed the basic landscape of early Chinese thought: "Tian" 天, "Di" 地, and "Ren" 人 are harmonious and coherent, mysteriously echoing unity of life and filling life with "Qi" 气, and are supported by basic structures such as Yinyang and Wuxing. Second, this book expanded the level of research on the Chinese body view. For Chinese scholars, although the subject originated from Western and Japanese academic circles, it should not be a simple reflection of Western body thinking and Japanese Chinese studies but

should have our own problem awareness in the study of the Chinese body view.

3.4 *Zuowei shenti zhexue de Zhongguo gudai zhexue* 作为身体哲学的中国古代哲学 [on Traditional Chinese Philosophy as the Philosophy of the Body]

Zuowei shenti zhexue de Zhongguo gudai zhexue 作为身体哲学的中国古代哲学 is a collection of Zhang Zailin's series of essays on the body view. From the perspective of Western phenomenology, Zhang Zailin realized that the body in Chinese philosophical thought is the philosophical body, and that the body could be explained in the phenomenological sense. In the article, "Zuowei shenti zhexue de Zhongguo gudai zhexue," Zhang Zailin's definition of body is different from Yang Rubin's definition of the "body-Qi-mind" 形-气-心 trinity of the body in traditional Chinese thought, and it also differs from Roger T. Ames' theory of mind and body. This explained the body from the perspective of "Shen" 身, "Xing" 形, and "Ti" 体 to understand the different paths of thought in the body in Chinese philosophy.

However, Zhang believed that in Chinese philosophy, the body embodies the self and the nonself, the soul, and the original unity of the "being in the midst of confusion" of the flesh, the inner world, and the outer world. "The body" is not only the "a body of seven feet in height", but as the "self of nonself" (无我之我), and instinctively connected with the infinite universe as a whole. In this way, the body is not only limited to the physical "body-Qi-mind" level but also to a kind of unsubstantial "potential body" in the phenomenological sense, i.e., a "possibly movable body", thus showing the metaphysical infinite transcendence. Chinese philosophy not only uses the body to construct the world schema, but also promotes social ethics from the body and seeks spiritual transcendence from the body. Zhang believed that traditional Chinese philosophy, which is based on the body, is a philosophy of body ontology.

Following this conclusion, Zhang Zailin further analyzes the ontological status of the body in traditional Chinese philosophy in the three aspects of cosmology, ethics, and religious view.

3.5 *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观：一种生态学的视角[**Daoist body view: An ecological perspective**]

Chen Xia's *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观：一种生态学的视角 is based on her postdoctoral thesis *Body in Daoism: An Ecological Interpretation*. In this book, Chen Xia believed that the body is most capable of reflecting the borderless relationship between “Dao” 道 and “Wu” 物, which is the original metaphor of Daoist ecological philosophy. In this view, the body runs through the three realms of “Wu” 物, “Sheng” 生, and “Shen” 神. Daoism refines “Qi”, which transforms and then refines spirits via the gradual transformation of “Wu” 物 into “Shen” 神. Daoism is a view of ecological evolution.

The Daoist body is not only an individual's natural body but also a living body that symbolizes society and nature. It condenses human society and the natural world into the body and forms an isomorphic relationship, which not only improves the value and quality of personal life but also enhances the sense of responsibility to society and the love of nature. Moreover, the Daoist body is neither a pure physical existence nor an abstract self or pure consciousness but exists as a material with the mind that exists as a spirit inextricably unified in the body. This Daoist body is the experiencing subject that exists in the world, interacts with others and nature, and observes and discovers the meaning of the object.

The Daoist body view has sufficient rationality to sublimate the binary opposition, the subject-object opposition, and the separation of mind and body. Daoism's ecological ethics not only require the protection of nature but also call for respect for humans. In the relationship between humans and nature, Daoism overcomes the arrogance of anthropocentrism and broadens the vision of human moral care. It also makes up for the derogation of human subjectivity by non-anthropocentrism.

3.6 “Fojiao xinyang zhe de shenti: mianxiang zongjiao、shehui yu geti” 佛教信仰者的身体：面向宗教、社会与个体 [The body of Buddhist believers: Facing religion, society, and individual]

In his paper, “Fojiao xinyang zhe de shenti: mianxiang zongjiao、shehui yu geti” 佛教信仰者的身体：面向宗教、社会与个体, Ye studied the relationship between the body and society, as well as religion and society, by analyzing the body view of Chinese Buddhists and combining the theory of body sociology and the Buddhist site “Temple L”. In his opinion, the body, as an intermediary, connects the individual, religion, and society in religious practice. The body not only carries the relationship of social structure but is also the basis of action and experience.

Ye discussed the body view of Chinese Buddhist believers from three aspects. First, the view of the body in Chinese Buddhist classical tradition is consistent with the ultimate pursuit of Buddhist belief. Therefore, to achieve the ultimate goal, Buddhism puts forward a series of self-cultivation methods and norms. Second, the body is the basis of cultivation, which is combined with practice and has the characteristics of practicality. In the long-term development process, the practice of self-cultivation is closely related to the daily life of believers. Third, Ye analyzed the body concept and self-cultivation practice of Chinese Buddhists from the three dimensions of religion, the individual, and society.

First, the fundamental appeal of Buddhism has always focused on breaking away from the suffering of samsara and becoming Buddha through Nirvana. Second, from the social dimension, Buddhism’s concept of body and self-cultivation practice are affected by social development. The extension of body and self-cultivation practice is most important in social dimensions, such as identity, communication, authority. In addition, the individual factor is also an important direction. Individuals gradually realize that the body is private and inviolable, and generally pay attention to the body. In the specific practice of self-cultivation, individuals have their own private selectivity.

4. Variations of the Western Body View in China in the Inter-Civilization Context

After the introduction of the Western body view into China, Chinese scholars did not blindly follow the principles of Western scholars. Instead, they used the body concept opened by Western scholars and carried out a new study based on the theoretical results of the Western body view. These new studies focused on elaborating thought on the body in traditional Chinese culture and resulted in variations of the Western body view.

Variation theory can be used to examine the variation phenomenon of the literature and literary theory of different civilizations in influence exchange and mutual interpretation (Cao 47). Here, it can be used to look back on changes in the Western body view. In the inter-civilizational context and in the dialogue between Chinese and Western discourses, the discourse of Western body view involved in Chinese academic circles has been integrated into the context of Chinese culture. Specifically, this variation is embodied in three aspects. First, aims. The Chinese body view try to use studies and theories from the West to explain the traditional Chinese concept of the body concept in modern words. Second, the Chinese body view focuses more on studying the relation between body and mind, or between body and nature. Third, self-cultivation becomes an essence word in Chinese study of the body, meaning that compared to the West, the Chinese body view emphasizes the practices of the body view.

4.1 Variation of the study purpose: re-elaboration of the body mind in traditional Chinese culture

The rise of Western study of the body has its own distinct background, notably the collapse of dualism. Traditional Western dualistic thinking has aggravated the separation of the subject and object, the soul and flesh, and reason and perception, which has even led to the modern spiritual crisis in the West. The second is the impact of modernity and modern natural sciences on the Christian theological and cosmological views. The soul and the subject lose their superior position and no longer override the body and the object. The third is the promotion and

influence of the tide of deconstruction, in which traditional dualism is challenged and rebuilt. Fourth, when consumerism prevails, the materiality of the body and the sensibility, perception, and desire based on the body are manifested. Therefore, the study of the body in the West can be summarized by the following: resisting and dismantling the traditional mind-body dualism of Western concepts, deconstructing the traditional “subject” and “subjectivity”, bridging the gap between the mind and the body, the subject and the object, and at the same time, paying more attention to the perceptions, experiences, and desires that accompany the body, as well as to the discipline and influence of society, politics, and culture on the body.

However, as Yang Rur-bin argued in *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身体观, in the Confucian body view, there is no body without mind, nor mind without body. The body embodies the mind, and the mind also embodies the body. (Yang 1) Traditional Chinese culture, represented by Confucianism and Daoism, has emphasized the unity of body and mind since ancient times. Humans are a unit of the body and mind, and the body and mind are always blended. However, at the same time, the human body in traditional Chinese culture is not purely a body in a physiological sense but is isomorphic with the world and the universe and is composed of “Qi” 气. Humans are not separated from the world or nature. Both the subject and the object are based on “Qi,” where “Qi” as the noumenon. They are all connected and blended with each other. As Chen Xia mentioned in the book *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观：一种生态学的视角, Daoists regard the human body as a small universe while the external nature as the big universe and holding the viewpoint of “Tian di yuzhou, yi ren zhi shen” 天地宇宙，一人之身.(Chen Preface)

Therefore, in the context of traditional Chinese culture, there is no such thing as the dichotomy of body and mind and the separation of subject and object as in the context of Western culture. The purpose of Chinese scholars in studying the body therefore differs from the West and aims not to break the duality and highlight the body but to use the “body view” and Western body theories to create a new interpretation of the body of Confucianism and Daoism. The turn of the Western body view and the concept of “body mind as one” put forward by Merleau-

Ponty, Shusterman, and other Western scholars coincide with traditional Chinese body thought. The introduction of the Western body view provides a new opportunity for the exploration of Chinese Confucian and Daoist body thought in the field of body view and contemporary context.

4.2 Variation of the study core: emphasizing body-mind and body-nature relations

Although some Western scholars, such as Merleau-Ponty, Mark Johnson, and Shusterman, try to subvert the dualism of mind and body and explore the possibility of unity, most studies on the body in modern Western academic circles only develop or show an aspect of the body from a certain angle or attribute. Western scholars mainly focus on the following aspects of body research, namely, the metaphorical meaning of the body in social culture, the body and desire in a consumer society, the relationship with the self, the relationship between body, desire and self in consumer society, the political restraint and discipline of the body, and the sexual and gender issues of the body.(Ouyang 24-34) Although Western academic circles liberated the body from the suppression of the soul and highlighted the status and characteristics of the body, their study was not completely free from mind-body dualism and seldom discussed the body as a whole. Rather, they divided the body into different levels and focused on each aspect separately.

Body thought in traditional Chinese culture adheres to the three-phase structure of “body-Qi-mind” 形-气-心 and emphasizes the isomorphism of body and mind and the world. Body and mind are penetrated and merged into one by “Qi”, and the individual’s body is connected and integrated with the universe and nature, which that are also filled with “Qi”. Chinese scholars absorbed an abundance of thought resources and thinking modes on the body from traditional Chinese culture. Although research on Chinese bodily thought is influenced by Western body theories and carried out under the Western “body view”, it is based on local bodily thoughts. Compared to Western research on the body, the focus of research on the Chinese body view has changed in the local cultural context. More attention has been given to the “Qi”, which blends and focuses on the relation between the body and mind and the

body and nature.

Zhongguo gudai sixiangzhong de Qi lun ji shenti guan 中国古代思想中的气论及身体观, which was edited by Yang Rur-bin, takes “Qi” as the theoretical presupposition and fundamental principle of the Chinese body view and uses “Qi theory” as the entry point to trace and interpret the body thoughts of the Pre-Qin scholars. Yang Rur-bin’s *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身体观 closely follows the main theme of the relationship between body and mind, fully explores the spiritualization of the body, and argues the induction of human beings and nature are also products of “Qi”. In *Shenti: sixiang yu xiuxing: yi Zhongguo jingdian wei zhongxin de kuawenhua guanzhao* 身体:思想与修行——以中国经典为中心的跨文化观照, Zhou Yushen believed that “body-Qi-mind” 形-气-心 is the “ideal type” of the Chinese body view and revealed the role and function of “Qi” in communicating the body and mind and keeping “Tian” 天, “Di” 地, and “Ren” 人 in harmony. In *Zuowei shenti zhexue de Zhongguo gudai zhexue* 作为身体哲学的中国古代哲学, Zhang Zailin also focused on the connection between the body and nature and the universe. In *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观: 一种生态学的视角, Chen Xia believed that the Daoist body encompasses the triple meaning of individual, society, and nature, emphasized the connection and isomorphic relationship between the three, and paid attention to the balance of individual body-mind, body-society, and body-nature.

4.3 Emphasizing self-cultivation (Xiushen 修身)

Long before Shusterman proposed the dimension of “practical somaesthetics”, Confucians and Daoists in the Chinese tradition used “self-cultivation” (Xiushen 修身) as the essence, emphasizing the cultivation of the body and mind. As Laozi said in the Tao Te Ching: “Xiu zhi yu shen, qi de nai zhen; xiu zhi yu jia, qi de nai yu; xiu zhi yu xiang, qi de nai zhang; xiu zhi yu bang, qi de nai feng; xiu zhi yu tian xia, qi de nai pu” 修之于身, 其德乃真。修之于家, 其德乃余。修之于乡, 其德乃长。修之于邦, 其德乃丰。修之于天下, 其德乃普, while Liji put forward the idea of “Xiushen, Qijia, zhiguo, Pingtianxia” 修身、齐家、治国、平天下. Both Daoism and Confucianism emphasize the importance of “self-cultivation” as

the starting point and foundation and extend it to the outside world. Shusterman's body aesthetics theory absorbed the Confucian thought of "self-cultivation" which Xunzi mentioned in "Quanxue". Shusterman promoted his practical somaesthetics on this basis, emphasizing the use of meditation, rigorous training, and demanding physical practice to finally achieving self-improvement to the body.

At the same time, Chinese Buddhist thought also emphasizes the importance of "self-cultivation". Buddhism has always had a contradictory concept of the body. On the one hand, Buddhism holds an attitude of disgust toward the body, which is considered dirty. On the other hand, Buddhism also believes that the body is very precious. This contradictory attitude toward the body leads to the concept of self-cultivation. In the concept of self-cultivation, many hardships come from the body, so we must warn all sentient beings not to covet the eternal existence of the body. It is precious for us to have the body, so we should cherish it. The body is the basis of practice, so we should cherish the possibility of practice given by the body as well. Therefore, we should restrict the desires of the body, be proficient in practice, and eliminate the troubles caused by the body on the way of practice, which is the root. Self-cultivation is a long-term and uninterrupted process. Starting from breaking the shackles of the body, we can eliminate the troubles of the body by cultivating the body to avoid the pain of reincarnation. In this process of cultivation, we should strictly abide by the Buddhist precepts and Buddhist norms for the body. This is the manifestation of cherishing the body, which is the basis of Buddhist cultivation. Practicality is an important feature of self-cultivation thought. Therefore, the cultivation of the body must be implemented and completed in the process of practice.(Ye 28)

Although Western academic circles have proposed a practical level of body view, most Western scholars are not keen on this level of study. The Chinese body view has fully absorbed traditional resources and has paid attention to the elaboration of "self-cultivation". In Yang Rur-bin's *Rujia shenti guan* 儒家身体观, the "body" is "an item closely related to human practice". Yang believed that the strict meaning of the body view of body is "self-cultivation".(Yang 83) In *Shenti: sixiang yu xiuxing: yi Zhongguo jingdian wei zhongxin de kuawenhua guanzhao* 身体:思想

与修行——以中国经典为中心的跨文化观照, Zhou Yushen discussed “self-cultivation” in a special chapter and believed that “self-cultivation” could realize the transformation of body and mind, and in this process, the body and mind cannot be separated. In *Daojia shenti guan: yizhong shengtaixue de shijiao* 道家身体观: 一种生态学的视角, Chen Xia also discussed the Daoist concept of self-cultivation. In Daoist body thought, the cultivation of the individual can achieve a balance between body and mind, making the body more harmonious with society and nature. In the paper “Fojiao xinyang zhe de shenti: mianxiang zongjiao shehui yu geti,” Ye Qiugui mentioned the self-cultivation methods for different objects. For Buddhist believers, self-cultivation is an inevitable way to achieve the ultimate goal, and the process of self-cultivation also needs to formulate methods and norms. For monk groups, there are three main components: Buddhist religious disciplines, deep meditation, and Buddhist doctrines. For individuals, there are also specific norms and requirements in all aspects of life, such as sleep, diet, and hygiene, and the code of conduct of self-cultivation needs to be practiced in daily life. (Ye 29)

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we focus on the previous research of Chinese scholars, and apply the variation theory to investigate the variation happened in Chinese body view research after the introduction of Western body view. Generally, we summarize the variation in three aspects: First, aims. The Chinese body view try to use studies and theories from the West to explain the traditional Chinese concept of the body concept in modern words. Second, the Chinese body view focuses more on studying the relation between body and mind, or between body and nature. Third, self-cultivation becomes an essence word in Chinese study of the body, meaning that compared to the West, the Chinese body view emphasizes the practices of the body view. We have analyzed the reasons for these variations, which will help researchers better understand the characteristics of Chinese body view research.

We have to admit that there are still many deficiencies in this paper.

We talked about the connection between Chinese body view and Western body view, we do not further discuss the bond of them. As for the research object, this paper selects some representative works for specific introduction, but we also not showing more details about these representative papers. Furthermore, we both agree that more discussion on some important concepts in Chinese body view should be present in this paper, such as self-cultivation, but eventually it is not added up for better understanding for the main subject.

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