Transcultural Philosophy and Its Foundations in Implicate Logic

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Abstract
This article provides a transcultural, “transversal” investigation. It starts from the philosophical problem of knowing non-knowing. In chapters 1 and 2, the first expressions of this problem by Confucius and Socrates are considered. Against this background, new transcultural working concepts are developed. A new key term to be established here is that of an “implicate logic”. It refers to the reflection of unity of unity and difference and therefore to the very condition of the possibility of (differentiating) thinking as such. In chapters 3 and 4, this train of thought is further developed under the influence of Niccolaus Cusanus, by reflecting on the first chapter of the Daodejing, and in view of important remarks by Niklas Luhmann. In chapter 5, the outcome is related to the idea of transversal reason in the philosophy of Wolfgang Welsch. As the most basic principle of (self-referential) thinking, implicate logic is to be discerned from Aristotelian (or similar traditions of) logic and Hegelian dialectics—albeit both are being tied to the former’s principle in one way or the other. In the end, an introductory outlook of a comprehensive work by the present author provides the starting point to validate the logical foundations of knowing non-knowing as a methodological foundation to further develop the fields of transcultural-comparative, trans-comparative, and global philosophy.

Keywords: knowing non-knowing, unity of unity and difference, implicate logic, transversal reason, transcultural

Transkulturna filozofija in njena osnova v implikativni logiki

Izvleček
Ta članek ponuja transkulturno, »transverzalno« raziskavo. Izhaja iz filozofskega problema poznavanja nespoznanega. V prvem in drugem poglavju obravnava izraze tega problema pri Konfuciju in Sokratu. Na tej osnovi razvija nove transkulturne delovne koncepte. V tem okviru avtor zasnuje nov termin »implikativne logike«. Nanaša se na enoto enote in razlike ter s tem na pogoje možnosti razlikovalnega mišljenja kot takega. Avtor to predpostavko razvija v tretjem in četrtem poglavju, in sicer pod vplivom Nikolaja Kuzanskega,
“Do I Know?” Confucius’ Reflection on the Source of Knowing

Philosophy can be defined as a methodologically supported awareness of posing questions, namely in regard to the most fundamental and general problems. The following key philosophical question was posed by Confucius: “Do I know?” (Lunyu n.d., chapter “Zihan”, § 8, tr. DB). The master provided himself with the most adequate philosophical answer: “(I do) not know” (ibid., tr. DB). It expresses the same undecidedness as his self-directed question (Bartosch 2021, 130)—or to speak with Heidegger in the transferred sense: “[…] the answer to the question is not about a process of deductive reasoning but about demonstrative ground-exposure” (Heidegger 1977, § 2, 11, tr. and italics DB). Confucius was not asking for a particular knowledge of something or about something, but in regard to his knowing as such, respectively, self-reflective knowing per se. While the former can result in an answer that can either be affirmative or negative, Confucius’s question results in an aporia. The answer can neither be affirmative nor negative. On this most foundational level of self-referential thinking, it appears to be pending and unresolvable. But this aporia is not where the thinking ends. It reveals the “implicate” (logical) foundation from whence all thinking and therefore also “thinging”

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1 I owe this part of the definition to Johann Kreuzer (Oldenburg, the birthplace of Karl Jaspers).
2 Source text: “吾有知乎哉? 無知乎.”
3 Source text: “[…], weil es in der Beantwortung der Frage nicht um eine ableitende Begründung, sondern um aufweisende Grund-Freilegung geht.”
4 This is a new philosophical expression. My use of “implicate” has been inspired by David Bohm (1917–1992), who has delivered the precedence with his philosophical term “implicate order”. The use of the word “implicate” in the present paper (without referring to Bohm’s philosophy, see below) is not to be mixed with possible meanings of “implicit”. “Implicate” is related to the Latin noun “implicatio”. It can mean “an entwining”, “interweaving”, or “entanglement” (“implicatio” n.d.). In
permanently start. It underlies and transcends all forms of “explicate” (truth value-based) logic, including modern dialectics (which, in contrast to the former, is at least already recognizing or “ratifying” its foundation). In this sense, “silence would stop speaking as soon as thinking would stop its work” (Wyller 1995, 46, tr. DB). In the following paper, this key problem is explored in transversal spotlights on key terms and passages in historical philosophies. “Transversal” means that these transcultural references can be situated in historically unconnected discourses of the world’s histories of philosophies.

Regarding Confucius’ eminent self-referential question of knowledge per se, the functional difference of question (undecidedness) and decisive answer (either knowledge or non-knowledge, either yes or no) is nullified, while the different forms of question and answer are bridged by the same undecidedness. While the form of the question is indicating a “non-knowing”, the form of the answer is creating the expectation of a ‘knowing’—which cannot be fulfilled here. The self-reflected and therefore realized nullification of the different functions of these forms of question and answer has another (implicit) function itself. It provides a semantic “pointing rod” (Scheler 1921, 546) concerning demonstrative ground-exposure—alluding to the underlying unity of both non-knowing and knowing. The “and” between “non-knowing” and “knowing” is expressing that, despite their opposition, both knowing and non-knowing cannot be thought of as independently of

its adjectivized use, “implicate”, which is used as a verb in English, also connotes the meaning of a process. This is very fitting, because the implicate logic is manifesting itself as (all) processes of thinking. It might be added that the foundations of the present elaboration on the implicite logic of thinking as such could be discussed in relation to Bohm’s philosophy. But such an endeavour does not lie within the scope of the present study.

The meaning of “implicate logic” is not to be confused with the form of a logical bi/implication, that is, a conditional or a biconditional statement in propositional calculus. In the sense of the present paper, these kinds of mental operations belong to the conceptual extension of explicite logic. Furthermore, the term “implicate logic” is not to be confused with the discourses on “metalogic” since the second half of the 20th century.

This is another expression that can be traced back to David Bohm. He used it in his term “explicate order”. Like in the case of “implicate”, I am using “explicate” in the exclusive sense of the present line of thought, without further reference to David Bohm’s own theories. (Although a combined discussion would be possible in another context.) The adjectivizing use of the word “explicate” here is related to the meaning of the Latin noun “explicatio”, which means “an unfolding” (“explicatio” n.d.). See also in this publication fn. 15.

Karl Jaspers’s term “world history of philosophy” (Jaspers 1982) has been influenced by the older term “Weltliteratur” (world literature) by Goethe. Today we should apply the plural tense on “history” and “philosophy”.

“Thought” means the activity of a self-processing consciousness. Furthermore, the knowing is not to be thought of as specified (in the sense of particular knowledge) here. Thus, I am using the gerund form for the negation as well (“non-knowing” instead of “non-knowledge”).
each other. In Confucius answer “(I do) not know”, thesis (knowing) and antithesis (non-knowing) coincide without alternative while the tension of the contradiction, that is, its undeciderness, is preserved. This allusive Confucian “coincidentia oppositorum” is hidden in the form of a negative answer. It is important to note that it actually does not express a negation (of a particular knowledge) but complete abstainment from judgement instead.\(^9\) It cannot be decided in the form of truth values (true or false) either. Confucius is crafting the semantics in a way to show the ineffable “meta-form” of knowing non-knowing itself: his self-reflective and self-directed question-and-answer symbolism is hinting at the unity of unity and difference of knowing and non-knowing as the mental source-dimension of all possible (finite) knowledge. Its unresolvable undeciderness is alluded to as running through all thought processes (Bartosch 2017, 108). It means a hint at what is, mutatis mutandis, ineffably “wording” in all words (Nicolai de Cusa 1959, 54): an implicite foundation of all thought.

**Socrates Joins: Meta-Reason and Logical Reasoning as its “Downstream”**

Basically, philosophy has two “modes”: (1) The one that is related to the source of thinking and has just been alluded to means the level of implicite (enfolding) logical self-reflection. (2) The other, which is included in and from the latter’s perspective (as meta-reason), has a conceptual and explicite (unfolding) logical appearance. It means the process of differentiation without the possibility to reflect the (encompassing) pre-condition of differentiation itself. The implicite logical self-reflection of knowing non-knowing is excluded from it in terms of its own possibilities or capacities of reasoning.

The implicite logical mode of reflection (1) means a meta-recognition. It includes the self-reflection of the thinking subject, which apprehends\(^10\) the unity of unity and difference of knowing non-knowing as the immanent source of all conceptualization itself. While this meta-recognition includes itself as a condition of the possibility of its products, (finite) concepts, their redirected application towards the source must fail. As in our initial example, it can only be semantically alluded to, namely by way of including the (unity of the) contradiction. After Confucius,

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\(^9\) From a modern analytical position, one could say that the answer could be affirmative or negative, or even in the dialectical form of a double negation (synthesis of affirmation and negation), or triple negation (negation of synthesis of affirmation and negation).

\(^10\) The first apprehension in this sense can be characterized as an “aha-experience” (Karl Bühler) of the most basic intellectual relevance.
Socrates also *hinted* at this *knowing non-knowing*: “I neither know nor think that I know” (Plato 1892, St. 21[d], 113–14, tr. B. Jowett). Socrates *knows* that he does not know whether he is knowing or not. This means a transcultural “family resemblance” (Wittgenstein 2009, § 67, 36, 36e) on the higher level of implicite logic.

(2) However, clearly this insight does not keep Socrates from thinking and arguing, especially when joyfully engaging in the deconstruction of alleged knowledge. Moreover, the insight into what the contradiction “knowing non-knowing” implies becomes Socrates’ driving stimulus with regard to philosophizing in the other, more “exoteric direction” of reasoning (in the form of clear, finite distinctions of meaning). Philosophically speaking, we can only truly *always merely start to know* when we *know* what it means *not to know*—and to always proceed from there. So it is *not despite but because* of his knowing non-knowing that Confucius adds the following: “But if a mean person, who appears quite empty-like, asks anything of me, I set it forth from one end to the other, and exhaust it” (*Lunyu* n.d., chapter “Zihan”, § 8, tr. J. Legge).12

This, metaphorically speaking, “downstream direction” of philosophical reasoning is originating in the former, albeit less easily “accessible”, implicite (core-) dimension of thinking. As soon as the process of mind(ing) starts to differentiate “things”, the implicite logical undecidedness of knowing non-knowing is transformed into its opposite. Now, logical decisiveness becomes the major hallmark: “You, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you *know a thing*, to hold that you *know* it; and when you do *not know (a thing)*, to allow that you do *not know (it)*—this is knowledge” (*Lunyu* n.d., chapter “Weizheng”, § 17, tr. J. Legge, brackets added and italics DB).13 As soon as the question is not related to knowing *per se* but is posed in regard to a particular “thing” (a respective content of thinking or a particular fact), we have to decide whether we know about it or not. Put differently: With regard to the possibility of knowing *something* or the “knowledge of” there is *either* a “knowing of” or non-knowledge, but not both at the same time. Those who are not aware that this, in a more or less implicit yet eminent fashion, *represents* the source of the enfolding, implicite logical foundation *at the same time* will be merely caught up in the latter’s logical exteriorization and conceptual creativity, that is, its unfolding.

Self-reflective implicite logic and reasoning in the (unfolding) form of explicite logic can also be discerned in relation to the important expression “unity of unity

11 Source text: “ὅτι ἃ μὴ οἶδα οὐδὲ οἴομαι εἰδέναι.”
12 Source text: “有鄙夫問於我，空空如也，我叩其兩端而竭焉。”
13 Source text: “由！誨女知之乎？知之為知之，不知為不知，是知也。”
and difference”. As in regard to the question of knowing per se, the use of the word “unity” in that semantic constellation does not refer to “the unity of (something)” but to the unity in and for itself, that is, regarding the pure intension of its meaning (either by way of putting all possible conceptual extensions into brackets or by setting the extension ad infinitum). The designation of unity per se contains that it cannot be separate or different from anything. If it would be thought of as differing in at least one way, we would not have properly grasped it as the (uncountable) indeterminate unity but in the sense of a “unity of …”, that is, in the sense of the internal coherence of a single (countable) unit. Therefore, the meta-intension of unity as such has to include the designation of difference, hence the formula “unity of unity and difference”. To think in single units—that is, well-defined (finite) concepts (in the sense of a plurality of points and levels of reference)—on the other hand, means the unfolding mode of thinking of something. In this common dimension, proper distinction—also of the concepts of unity and difference—is of course necessary. From the perspective of the implicates logic, this difference is “enfolded” in the underlying unity of this difference, however.

Exploring Laozi’s “Secret’s Deeper Secret” with Nicolaus Cusanus

More than anyone else, the German-Italian Renaissance thinker Nicolaus Cusanus has focused on these insights of what is called knowing non-knowing here. In contrast to the aforementioned unlimitedly self-containing (self-“enfolding”) meta-reason, Cusanus has described the differentiating mode of thinking (which is based on excluding the (unity in the) contradiction) as “explicatio”, that is, as the self-unfolding mode of thinking of something. In this common dimension, proper distinction—also of the concepts of unity and difference—is of course necessary. From the perspective of the implicates logic, this difference is “enfolded” in the underlying unity of this difference, however.

14 Cusanus himself has used the traditional term “docta ignorantia”, which has been translated into German as “wissendes Nichtwissen” (literally “knowing non-knowing” in English). Although Cusanus emphasized to have had reached the insight of knowing non-knowing all by himself, he has picked up this term from others. He also said that he later found the knowing non-knowing represented in many earlier philosophers’ works (Bartosch 2015, 503).

15 Regarding Cusanus’s terminology, the translation terms “(to) enfold” (complicare) and “(to) unfold” ( explicare), respectively, “enfoldment” ( complicatio) and “unfoldment” ( explicatio) relate to the German expressions “einfalten” (complicare), “Einfaltung” (complicatio), “ausfalten” ( explicare), and “Ausfaltung” ( explicatio), which are commonly used to translate Cusanus’s Latin terms. The English expression “(to) enfold” has the same etymological origin as the German “einfalten”. “(To) unfold” and “unfoldment” are related to German “entfalten” and “Entfaltung”—which have a very similar meaning or can even be used synonymously to “ausfalten” and “Ausfaltung”. (Also, these words differ only in regard to the prefixes “ent-” and “aus-.”) The English terms have also been used in the philosophy of David Bohm, which is related to modern quantum, respectively, relativity physics. Bohm has been influenced by Cusanus’s terminology as well as by Hegel’s use of the word “entfalten” in this regard (Bohm and Wilkins 1987, n.p.). Possible implications of the present chain of thoughts
to be valued as an aspect of science (\textit{scientia}), particular knowledge must adhere to the principles of two-valued Aristotelian “either-or” logical progressions (ibid., 428). Cusanus identifies this process of \textit{explicatio} (unfolding) as the working \textit{ratio}. This has been correctly translated as \textit{Verstand} in German. Hegel is using this word for exactly the same form of thinking (which adheres to Aristotelian logic). For theoretical intentions which will become clearer, I am using the word “reason” for it here (in correlation with the expression “meta-reason”).

More importantly, \textit{Cusanus has developed approaches to demonstrate the very foundation} of the delimiting formation of concepts as well as of all possible operations in the sense of Aristotelian logic \textit{itself}. While the productions of the latter (reason) are \textit{delimiting quanta} of knowledge and therefore can be explicitly communicated, the possible \textit{tacit} insight of the implicate logical foundation (meta-reason) relates to that which is \textit{without delimitation} (implicitly) “enfolded” (Cusanus: \textit{complicare}) in all aspects of particular knowledge (Duclow 2006, 231; Bartosch 2015, 514). The (self-) reflection of this unlimited \textit{complicatio} of all \textit{possible} knowledge means the same experience of an unlimited undecidedness and sameness (\textit{aequalitas}) as an immanent and unchanging foundation that we have encountered earlier. I hasten to say that, while from the perspective of \textit{explicatio} (or explicate logic), \textit{complicatio} and \textit{explicatio} have to be discerned, the actuality of self-reflexivity as meta-reason (implicate logic) means to view the \textit{explicatio} as the major descending function and therefore as an intertwined mode—and even as an indispensable logical condition—of \textit{complicatio} itself.\textsuperscript{16} We might also imagine the implicate dimension of thinking metaphorically as an \textit{imperceptible} yet all-consolidating “drone tone”\textsuperscript{17} of meta-reason, which, in an ineffable way, is implicitly omnipresent \textit{in} and \textit{by} all thoughts, regardless of whether we are aware of it or not (Bartosch 2015, 233–300; id. 2021).\textsuperscript{18} Cusanus is using the word \textit{“intellectus”} to express

\begin{itemize}
  \item in regard to Bohm’s philosophy are not the topic of this paper but could be discussed in follow-up projects.
  \item Remember that “\textit{implicatio}” originally means “an entwining”, “interweaving”, or “entanglement”, see fn. 4.
  \item In music, a drone means a note (or chord or tone-cluster) which is continuously sounded as a background in a musical piece and which is therefore characterizing the latter’s experience as a whole. In the sense of the above-stated metaphor we have to envision an \textit{imperceptible} “drone” consisting of all “sounds” that might possibly be played in the distinct development of the individually sounding notes, chords, or note-clusters in the “foreground” of the “music”—which metaphorically stands for the perceptible “appearance” of the infinite “drone”.
  \item Another philosophical enigma is that of the “surface” of an infinite “mirror”. Although it is impossible to perceive this surface as such, it is \textit{implicitly} reflected as the (self-reflective) condition of the possibility of any of the finite experiences (including all the possible processual forms involved) presently manifesting in this “mirror” (also Bartosch 2019, 56).
\end{itemize}
this implicate logical foundation and to distinguish it from its explicate logical productivity, respectively, *explicatio* as *ratio* or *Verstand*. The most fitting translation for *intellectus* in German would be *Vernunft*. To avoid possible confusion in English, we can subsume *ratio* as a reflection under the comparative category of *transversal reason* and relate Cusanus’s “*intellectus*” to the transcultural field of *transversal meta-reason*.²⁰

In the first chapter of the *Daodejing*, the unity of unity and difference of meta-reason and reason, that is, the (self-reflexive) enfolding unity of the “source-relatedness” and the “downstream direction”²¹ of producing finite knowledge by way of differentiation, has been represented in an eminent fashion. Moreover, the *systematic implicate logical connection* between Laozi and Cusanus also becomes obvious. The paradoxical use of the word “*dao*” for that which cannot be named does not relate to a particular *dao*. It implies the “source-relatedness” of meta-reason: thereby “pointing towards” the ineffable source which enables the recognition and naming of “things” or “events” as such. Emerging from this implicate foundation of knowing non-knowing, *dao* might then be ‘traced’ back as *indiscernible process of discerning as such*, while “having (distinctive) names” (*you ming* 有名) means to reflect upon, to unfold the mutually delimiting productions of the former. In the sense of an implicate logical *tertium comparationis* (keywords: unity of unity and difference, ineffability problem), the nameless “*dao*” is just another semantic equivalent to Cusanus’s ineffable “*complicatio*”. “*You ming* 有名” relates to all possible processes of particular knowing, and it therefore becomes the “mother of the ten thousand things” (*Daodejing* n.d., § 1). *Mutatis mutandis*, that is, in this more general sense, it stands in analogy to Cusanus’s use of terms “*explicatio*” and “*ratio*”.²²

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19 Cusanus has also expressed this as the “the infinite unity (which), as a consequence of (its) infinity, precedes all opposites, where all (beings and things) are enfolded in the simplicity of unity (and thus) devoid of (any) composition, […] where man is not different from the lion and heaven is not different from the earth, and yet […] [where everything is itself] in the truest way—not according to (its) finiteness, but enfolded as the greatest unity itself […], which, in so far as it is to be unity, is all (beings and things) and which, in so far as it is the [infinite] minimum, is (thus) the [same infinite] maximum” (Nicolai de Cusa 1932, 49, tr. DB).

20 Apart from Cusanus and Hegel, the use of the words “*Verstand*” and “*Vernunft*”, especially in the contexts of translating “*ratio*” and “*intellect*”, can be quite confusing. Sometimes the meanings, or applications, or translations of the terms are reversed.

21 The image of the stream also alludes to the water-allusions of the *Daodejing* and to the fact that in ancient times a way (*dao*) could also mean a waterway (*Shangshu* n.d., “Xia Shu”, chapter “Yu Gong”, § 3).

22 Of course, Laozi doesn’t develop an approach of formal two-valued logic. The parallel is indicated by the more general term “particular knowledge” which implies finite and distinguishable meaning in a most general comparative sense.
Moreover, in relation to the *Daodejing* as well as, for example, in additional comparison with thinkers like Heraclitus of Ephesus (Wohlfart 2001, 165–78), we have to assume that the implicite (self-) enfoldment of the “supremae regionis” (Bartosch 2015, 370, 812) in which all logical oppositions coincide must be older than the Aristotelian logic (also Günther 1976, 199 [75]). Like many philosophers who had approached the implicite logical foundation of knowing non-knowing had to develop their own ways of “eloquent silence” (*beredtes Schweigen*) (Kreuzer 2001; Bartosch 2021), we might work with particular forms of “dialectical” negations (starting from the double negation in the sense of a synthesis of affirmation and first negation) as, for example, in some Vedic, Buddhist, Neo-Platonist, or German Idealist contexts (Sturm 1996; 1998; 2002; 2004; 2014; Bartosch 2015, 233–300). From a transversal, transcultural perspective, the implicite logical foundation can be found in many civilizations independently of each other, especially also in the extended sense of “implicit philosophy” (Liat 1953, 72), that is, implicite philosophical *symbolism* which relates to the (self-) enfoldment of meta-reason. For example, in ancient Mesoamerican (Toltec) thinking, the implicite logic is symbolized by a highest “deity” which is “at the same time unity and duality” (Leon-Portilla 1970, 30, tr. and italics DB).23

This *symbolic* character is directly related to the basic problem that the limitless enfoldment of possible conceptualization (meta-reason), which is represented in the actual unfolding of processes of (finite) knowing (reason), cannot be expressed by these (de)limited products of itself. In this sense, meta-reason(ing) is (self-) experienced in a mode which Cusanus has called “intellectual vision” (*visio intellectualis*): a productive correlation of the faculties of *imaginatio* (imaginative power, German: *Einbildungskraft*) and the implicite logical faculty of *intellectus*. Put simply, and apart from negating finite designations as mentioned further above, one can also work *symbolically* (Friedmann 1949, 3), that is, with the help of philosophical similes. Cusanus has called this form of reflection “*aenigmatica scientia*” (Bartosch 2015, 512).

This form of meta-reasoning can lead to the (personal) insight that and how the *explicatio* of the *ratio* is integrated into and springing forth from the implicite logical realm of *complicatio*—or to transfer the same melody of the unity of unity and difference to a Daoist key: how “the mother of the ten thousand things” (*Daodejing* n.d., § 1) is one with the unnamable *dao*—or, *mutatis mutandis* again, how processes of conceptualization and even two-valued logic in the Aristotelian sense are an implicit “appearance” of the implicite logic.

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23 This, in turn, presents us with many parallels, like, for example, the Roman god Cupid, symbolizing unity through the difference of male and female elements (Nicolai de Cusa 1932, 52). Also the symbolism of *yin-yang* 隱陽, which is a representation of the implicite logic, comes to mind, etc.
Walking on Cusanus’s “Wall of Paradise” with Niklas Luhmann

Niklas Luhmann has provided a proper starting point for the present reflection on implicate logical foundations. It is related to the philosophical problem of form: “[The form] ‘is’ in any case not only the boundary, it also contains the two sides that are separated by it. It has, one could say, an open world reference, and perhaps this is underlying the enigmatic phrase ‘distinction is perfect continence’” (Luhmann 2001, 245, insertions, italics, and tr. DB). Under this background, and in relation to the ligation of “every [present] elevation of the world into form” (Cassirer 1985, 52, insertions and tr. DB) to the dimension of time (Luhmann 2001, 245), namely as “a real act of world creation” (Cassirer 1985, 52, tr. DB), and, furthermore, also in view of the expression “draw a distinction” (Luhmann 2001, 247, italics DB), we can imagine the workings of the mind in analogy to drawing a line: “The line or boundary which draws all individual forms is in itself without any limit; it is in [itself] undivided” (Bartosch 2021, 136, insertion DB). The mental activity of distinction is in itself undivided, and only in this way enables differentiation: distinction presupposes non-distinctness in its act and regarding the relation of the distinguished at the same time.24

Luhmann himself was very fond of Nicolaus Cusanus and the latter’s approach of knowing non-knowing (Rossbach 2004). Luhmann’s illustration can be mapped on Cusanus’s aenigma of the “wall of paradise” (murus paradisi) (Nicolai de Cusa 2000, 43, 71, 79), namely to elucidate how “split[ting] the world into two sides […] can only happen in the world [as a whole]” (Luhmann 2001, 245, insertions, italics, and tr. DB). The “wall of paradise” is an image to symbolize the difference between the infinite, that is, the indetermined implicate logical self-reflexivity of the mind, and its finite representations (the mental dimensions of you ming 有名, explicatio). The finite, respectively, its recognition as such in the form of explicate logical operations (reason), is only possible in a paradoxical self-distinction from the infinite (and everything else finite) in the sense that it can only be an expression of the infinite—while the latter cannot be distinct from that which is distinguished in the process of differentiation. Otherwise, we would have used the word “infinite” in relation to a finite designation (in the sense of a μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος, that means, a confusion of meta-reason with reason). Therefore, we have to think of the separating “wall” as that which is also bringing together the two sides at the same time. The murus paradisi is creating both “paradise” and “non-paradise”, the designation of infinity and that of finiteness as well as their unity and distinction.

24 Put differently: As the term “precision” derives from a transferred meaning in relation to “cutting off” (Bartosch 2015, 480), we might also think that in the act of scissoring a piece of paper, the cutting person, the scissor, the act of scissoring, and the paper that is cut actually form one unity, one “thing”, in the process.
As, again, the “wall” is separating and connecting at the same time, its (self-) enfolding “secret” is that true “paradise” is not to be found inside of the encirculation of the wall of paradise, that is, on one side of it, but by “standing” or “walking” on it. It is, in the sense of aenigmatica scientia, symbolic reasoning, the “wall”, the distinction, which is in itself not differentiated and which therefore differentiates two sides. The distinction is literally creating “paradise” (full and boundless self-integration of the mind) when we self-consciously “walk” on “it”, that is, when we participate the implicate logical unity through difference.

Luhmann has referred to this when he said that “the distinction is containing itself” (Luhmann 2001, 245, tr. DB). If the distinction contains itself, which means infinite self-referentiality, it can itself not be separated from anything else in the world. Therefore, I have to mention this in passing here, it is a representation of what Hegel also evinced as the foundation of his particular way of dialectical reasoning, that is, unity of unity and difference. From the meta-formal view of implicate logic, infinite unity could not be properly reflected if we would exclude the element of difference from it. From this perspective, that is, “observed as a paradox, each [finite] form symbolizes the [infinite] world” (Luhmann 2001, 247, insertions, and tr. DB).

To observe the first chapter of the Daodejing in this sense means to “see” the unity of the unity and difference of (1) indefinite dao 道 (without name, wu ming 無名) (“source-relatedness” of philosophy) and (2) all name-bearing (you ming 有名), finite appearances of dao, that is, in the second “mode” as the “mother of ten thousand things” (wan wu zhi mu 萬物之母) (Daodejing n.d., § 1, tr. DB).25 These two aspects of dao have to be seen as one at the same time. In analogy to the unity of unity and difference of “paradise” and “non-paradise”, both have to be reflected in their sameness: the former means to “(meta-) observe its wonderful contrivance” (yi guan qi miao 以觀其妙) (ibid., tr. DB); the latter means to have intentions and therefore to think in terms of its distinctions, makes one see its boundaries (qi jiao 其徼) (ibid.), that is, its individual (and therefore nameable) “outside” forms:

“Both emerge in sameness and yet (they) are named differently. Sameness is their secret, (and) the secret’s deeper secret is the gateway of a massive and miraculous ingenuity (ibid., tr. DB).”26 The “deeper secret” of the “secret” that implicate logical dao (“without name”, wu ming) and “meaning-delivering” dao (“having names”, you ming) emerge as inherently the same is that this very same sameness represents a boundless unity of the unity and difference. This “source dimension” of thinking is all inclusive: there are not two separate appearances of dao, the unnameable dao is ineffably producing itself as every word or name and therefore “thing”. This is

25 Source text: “無名天地之始；有名萬物之母。”
26 Source text: “此兩者，同出而異名，同謂之玄。玄之又玄，衆妙之門。”
also the deeper meaning of the distinctive, adjectivized use of “implicate” in the present philosophical category of reflection “implicate logic”: it implies the idea of an inseparable intertwinedness.\(^\text{27}\)

Across cultures and times, this first paragraph of the *Daodejing* is very similar to Nicolaus Cusanus’s understanding of the (self-) enfolding and (self-) unfolding “wall of the coincidence of (intellectual) complicatio and (rational) explication” (*murus coincidentiae complicatio et explicatio*) (Nicolai de Cusa 2000, 40, tr. DB). To intellectually “envison” both major “directions” of the reflection—that which (1) indistinctly runs “through” all particularizing reasoning as well as (2) exactly this process in its distinction-boundness—*in their unity* means the same implicate logical insight: If we imagine ourselves walking on the ineffable “path” (*dao 道*) of the *murus paradisi*—not being part of either one or the other side of the distinction—all division becomes the unlimited connection at the same time.

### Methodological Perspectives for Transversal Philosophizing

What can we derive from all this in a methodological perspective? Already in one of his earlier works, the transcultural philosopher Wolfgang Welsch, who coined the term “transversal reason”, said: “Today, and in terms of plurality, we regard reason precisely as a capacity for connection and transition between forms of rationality. No longer cosmic, but earthly, no longer global, but linking functions shape its image” (Welsch 2008, 295, tr. DB). In my view, the logical meta-form of the unity of unity and difference presents us with the most basic *tertium comparationis* and permeability—a foundation that runs through everything and even connects the remotest ‘regions’ of global philosophy. In this sense, Welsch’s concept of “transversal reason” (*transversale Vernunft*) has to be extended. It contains a distinction between *Vernunft* and *Verstand* which allows it to be, and which should also be exchanged with the transcultural categories “meta-reason” (in the sense of the implicate logic) and “reason” (in the sense of concept-formation and (two-valued) logic) which have been introduced on this occasion.

To defend the new term “implicate logic” against established designations like, for example, “dialectics” or “Vernunft”, I hasten to add that the new expression refers to a dimension which is to be viewed as the *conditio sine qua non* of both Aristotelian two-valued logic and Hegelian dialectics *as well*. While the former is implicitly working with the contradiction by practically excluding it, the latter is still partly formal and two-valued (and also inspired by Aristotle) in the sense that

\(^{27}\) See also the information on the meaning of the Latin term “implicatio” in fn. 4 of the present contribution.
it works with *distinctly* opposing premises—while at the same time “keeping in view” the unity which *enables* the contradiction (Günther 1976, 199–200 [75–76]). This allows Hegel to develop the opposing meanings in an alternating mode of analytical differentiation and dialectical synthesis, as it has been called. However, the meaning of implicate logic is *more basic* than the *particular* form of systematic dialectical progression of concepts that Hegel has derived from it. To avoid confusion, I abstain from using the expression “dialectics”—and as I have done without the Hegelian term “*Vernunft*”, also from operating with the transformative rendering of the term in Welsch’s expression “*transversale Vernunft*”. The meaning of “*meta-reason*” is more profound and more general than that of Hegelian *Vernunft*. Moreover, the latter term can become an object of analysis and transversal comparison in the sense of the former (but not vice versa). This is why I propose to “novate” the reading of Welsch here, that is, by including the new terms which have been developed in the present study (in an experimental fashion, so to speak):

The decisive feature that distinguishes [meta-reason] from [mere reason] has been preserved [in the new concept of transversal meta-reason]: that of the greater reach, which is in principle not redeemable by rational understanding [in the sense of Aristotelian or comparable forms of logic]. [...] [Reason] is called the faculty of concepts, which enables the exact comprehension and practice of an area. In this sense we still speak of cognitive, ethical, aesthetic, religious, technical etc. reason. In relation to such area-specific forms, [meta-reason] is the transcending faculty. This becomes relevant where the forms of rational understanding find themselves limited, meticulously confined to their domain. (Welsch 2008, 295, insertions and tr. DB)

We have seen that the implicate logical integration of “source-relatedness” and the “downstream direction” of philosophy are, for example, both represented in the *Daodejing* and in the works of Nicolaus Cusanus. This provides an important starting point for further methodological considerations in regard to comparative and post-comparative approaches. It is this connection which then allows us to transversally differentiate between particular contents. For example, we have seen that Confucius and Socrates share a connection. Both are expressing their insight into the metalogical foundation of knowing non-knowing. From here, we would have to start looking for differences then. For example, (Plato’s) Socrates viewed all knowledge as ἀνάμνησις (primordial reminiscence). In view of this, we could ask whether Confucius or other Confucian thinkers like Wang Yangming have advanced in a commensurate direction or not (Nivison 1973, 125–26; Bartosch 2015, 305).
Apart from this process of differentiation *in regard to specific contents of the analysis*, we then also even have to include *ourselves* into the equation: our *own* transcultural analysis itself shares its implicate logical foundation with the ancient texts that we are exploring. Despite different conceptual contexts, etc., the same meta-form of knowing non-knowing, which is the foundation of all thinking, including the actuality of our own thought processes, provides a “gateway” which connects our “research objects” to *us* and us with them in a most profound philosophical fashion—and, I repeat, *without* neglecting the respective differences on the level of the (differentiating) analysis.

In the author’s book “*Wissendes Nichtwissen*” oder “gutes Wissen”? Zum philosophischen Denken von Nicolaus Cusanus und Wang Yangmíng (*Knowing Non-Knowing or Good Knowing? On the Philosophical Thought of Nicolaus Cusanus and Wang Yangming*), a basic approach has already been developed and also been applied. Despite the difference in terminology—instead of “implicate logic”, I have used the term “*Grundlogik*” (foundational logic) at that time—(*Bartosch 2015, 17*), this approach already reflects the implicate logical foundations. On that basis, three basic perspectives have been intertwined: (1) an extensive analysis of the philosophy of Nicolas Cusanus, including perspectives on its inherent development as well as major contextual dimensions, (2) an in-depth investigation of Wang Yangming’s philosophy, including the different phases, backgrounds and contexts, and (3) the theory and application of a new method of transcultural philosophical comparison.

This transversal perspective had been motivated by three general objectives: (a) to get away from merely theorizing about the method of comparison of remote or unconnected historical philosophies and to actually *perform* such a task on a rather extended scale, (b) to set an example to disprove the opinion that transcultural philosophy is superfluous, distorting, instrumentalizing, or decontextualizing, and (c) to hopefully establish the precedent of an analytical approach which helps to *learn to differentiate* on various levels and in a methodologically supported manner in that transversal scheme, while also developing the unifying ground of the *implicate* foundation of the actuality of (self-) enfolding meta-reason in transcultural thinking. In my view, this investigation has validated the applicability of the *implicate logic as tertium comparationis*.

How did I start? Despite belonging to discourse contexts which were not in contact at the time, both philosophers explored the same comparatively “permeable” problems. During the research phase, it became clear that both had addressed (1) the question of an all-encompassing creativity (*Kreativität*), (2) of consciousness (*Bewusstheit*), (3) generativity (*Generativität*), (4) ineffability (*Ineffabilität*), (5) knowledge and
insight (Wissen und Einsicht), (6) self-perfection (Selbstperfektion), (7) morality (Moralität), and (8) love (Liebe). This had been approached in different ways, in different linguistic contexts, and under contrasting philosophical-historical backgrounds, etc. Despite all this, those eight ‘problem horizons’ (Problemhorizonte) meant a first step towards the transcultural dimension of philosophies.

However, these above-stated fields had to be seen as comparative categories in the sense that they

[...] remain vague and logically indeterminate with respect to what is to be defined or specified by them. “Logical indeterminacy”—a term first analysed by Charles S. Peirce in the context of comparative sciences—means that a comparative category can admit incompatible applications in comparisons on an equal footing, because the argumentation-theoretical law of non-contradiction does not apply to what remains “logically indeterminate”. (Neville 2009, 37–38, tr. DB)

Upon further reflection, it became clear that the application of such a comparative view would come with a major weakness. If transversal reflection, respectively, philosophical transculturality was only to be developed on the basis of that particular level of indeterminacy, it could merely be described as logically under-determined. Put differently: in the attempt to establish transversal reason, we would have to neglect reason—and therefore to incapacitate ourselves to achieve that very same objective. The obvious self-contradiction alludes to the fact that such an approach could not lead very far. Thus, in the context of the author’s earlier investigation the following questions arose: If there is no logical determinacy attached to the categories, what could count as the foundation of the validity to view them as elements of thinking? How do we prevent ending up in mere ‘transversal linguistic imagination’? It would not have been feasible to retreat to the false excuse of alleged incommensurability. What is the way out in this regard? Or to allude to Plato in the transferred sense: Where is the exit of this particular “cave”, this basic problem of transcultural philosophy to be traced?

The solution is to render the status of the working categories from logical under-determination to that of an implicate logical over-determination. In my concrete case, this meant that the demanded feature of logical indeterminacy (in the sense of two-valued logic and the principium contradictionis) could be upheld—but in the different sense of the self-reflective, enfolding foundation of meta-reason (as in Cusanus’s “eloquently silent” word use of complicatio, “murus paradisus”, or

28 See further above.
the *Daodejing*‘s semantic “pointing rod” of an ineffable “*dao* 道” as already indicated). The appropriate new form of indeterminacy did not result from ignoring the contradiction but by consciously folding the difference back onto itself (to speak in reminiscence of Luhmann). In particular this application became possible, because both Wang Yangming and Cusanus had consciously developed their way of thinking on the basis of meta-reason themselves: both thinkers had advanced their reflections in the same implicate logical fashion, namely that in discernment and in setting the differences, the unity in the distinction is still always in view.

As this utmost basic feature of thinking (*per se*) had been explicitly expressed in both philosophies and in the respective reflections of all the above-mentioned topics on both sides, it then became possible to view it as a consistent *tertium comparationis* in itself: in their own terms and under the background of their particular preferences in topical emphasis, both thinkers had always put the task of philosophical “ground-exposure” in the first place in a contrastable fashion. In their own respective ways, both Wang Yangming and Nicolaus Cusanus had reflected on every basic problem in the form of unity of unity and difference, namely in the sense that it is at least as important to be aware of the boundless unity in all processes of thinking as it is to just confine to the finite meanings and their distinctness (as an “appearance” of the former).

The related application of the implicate logical foundation on the level of the comparative categories (which, again, could therefore be reflected as indetermined in the sense of their implicate logical over-determinacy) has secured the comparability of these categories, namely in the sense of the most basic principle of (all) transversal meta-reason(ing) itself. By constantly basing their thinking in relation to the implicate self-enfolding meta-form of “unity of unity and difference”, both Nicolaus Cusanus and Wang Yangming have nurtured the same foundations of all thinking when exploring the aforementioned eight problem horizons. This has enabled the author to analyse and compare (1) the major terms and concepts involved in both philosophies respectively, (2) both philosopher’s developments as thinkers, and (3) backgrounds and influences in the respective histories of thought. Regarding the differences, each of the eight major fields had to be subdivided. This was done by the introduction of specifying working categories. For example, regarding the general comparative category of an implicate logic of an all-encompassing creativity, Cusanus’s (implicate) logic of *creation* stands in contrast to Wang Yangming’s (implicate) logic of *transformation*. Adding general specifying categories to the working terminology became the foundation to develop the respective corridors of parallel and contrasting analysis in relation to the respective conceptual networks and possibilities of both philosophies in a very detailed fashion.
Under the background of what has been said in the preceding chapter of this article as well as in view of the prior and much more comprehensive investigation on the philosophies of Nicolaus Cusanus and Wang Yangming, I hope that this method can now be developed further, that the scope of its application can be broadened, and that it can be established.

Acknowledgement

The author declares that the paper has not been previously published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

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