

THE ESSENCE OF NATURE¹

A synthesis of Occidental and Chinese philosophy, and the expression of this synthesis in landscape painting.

This doctoral dissertation has three sections.

SECTION I. In the field of philosophy, the author examines the writings of those Occidental thinkers closest to the Chinese philosophy reflected in the Yi Jing: Leibniz's "pre-established harmony" and the importance of Nature in understanding the Spirit, Spinoza's theory of ethics as a link between knowledge and behavior, Husserl's phenomenology as a method to grasp the Spirit through the study of natural phenomena, and Wittgenstein's perception of silence as a way to comprehend the mystery of paradoxes.

In the field of social science, the author examines the development and the unique perspective of humanistic geography, which liberates human beings from a deterministic relationship with nature and creates a new field of knowledge that includes the Spirit.

In the field of art, expressionism is studied as a method to illuminate the essence of the world of human beings.

The second part of this section opens with a geographical and historical survey of China. With this background, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism, and Taoism are analyzed to provide clues to the understanding of the Yi Jing.

SECTION II: This section is an in-depth analysis of the Yi Jing. The internal structure, ways of knowledge, aesthetic meaning, ethics and analogy of the landscape are studied in order to discover the links among Nature, human beings and Spirit.

At the end of the study of each of the 64 chapters, the author develops a synthesis, and expresses it in a philosophic, poetic and artistic way. The artistic part represents the visual component of the dissertation, and consists of 64 painting corresponding to the 64 chapters of the Yi Jing.

SECTION III: Conclusion. Using a metaphor of the painter Kandinsky, the author establishes the importance of discovering the essence of Nature. This essence is Goodness. The contemplation of Nature enables human beings to more directly perceive the Goodness within them. Nature and Human Beings can, in this way, be harmoniously reunited and, at the same time, unified with the Spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Since the dissertation is an interdisciplinary study, the bibliography refers to the fields of philosophy, geography, history, aesthetics and ethics.

¹Cristina Bertrand, El Sentido de la Naturaleza: síntesis del pensamiento occidental y chino y su expresión en la pintura del paisaje. (Doctoral dissertation, Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1987).