

Friedrich G. Wallner, Fengli Lan, Jan Brousek (eds.)  
Constructive Realism in Chinese Medicine

Edited by  
Hans Rainer Sepp

Editorial Board

Suzi Adams · Adelaide | Babette Babich · New York | Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray · Waterloo, Ontario | Damir Barbarić · Zagreb | Marcus Brainard · London | Martin Cajthaml · Olomouc | Mauro Carbone · Lyon | Chan Fai Cheung · Hong Kong | Cristian Ciocan · București | Ion Copoeru · Cluj-Napoca | Renato Cristin · Trieste | Riccardo Dottori · Roma | Eddo Evink · Groningen | Matthias Flatscher · Wien | Dimitri Ginev · Sofia | Jean-Christophe Goddard · Toulouse | Andrzej Gniazdowski · Warszawa | Ludger Hagedorn · Wien | Terri J. Hennings · Freiburg | Seongha Hong · Jeollabukdo | Edmundo Johnson · Santiago de Chile | René Kaufmann · Dresden | Vakhtang Kebuladze · Kyjiw | Dean Komel · Ljubljana | Pavlos Kontos · Patras | Kwok-ying Lau · Hong Kong | Mette Lebeck · Maynooth | Nam-In Lee · Seoul | Monika Małek · Wrocław | Balázs Mezei · Budapest | Viktor Molchanov · Moskwa | Liangkang Ni · Guangzhou | Cathrin Nielsen · Frankfurt am Main | Ashraf Noor · Jerusalem | Karel Novotný · Praha | Luis Román Rabanaque · Buenos Aires | Gian Maria Raimondi · Pisa | Rosemary Rizo-Patrón de Lerner · Lima | Kiyoshi Sakai · Tokyo | Javier San Martín · Madrid | Alexander Schnell · Paris | Marcia Schuback · Stockholm | Agustín Serrano de Haro · Madrid | Tatiana Shchytsova · Vilnius | Olga Shparaga · Minsk | Michael Staudigl · Wien | Georg Stenger · Wien | Silvia Stoller · Wien | Ananta Sukla · Cuttack | Toru Tani · Kyoto | Detlef Thiel · Wiesbaden | Lubica Ucnik · Perth | Pol Vandavelde · Milwaukee | Chung-chi Yu · Kaohsiung | Antonio Zirion · México City – Morelia.

The *libri nigri* series is edited at the Central-European Institute of Philosophy, Prague.  
[www.sif-praha.cz](http://www.sif-praha.cz)

# Constructive Realism in Chinese Medicine

Edited by  
Friedrich G. Wallner,  
Fengli Lan, and Jan Brousek

Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH

*Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek*

Die deutsche Bibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation  
in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie.  
Detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet abrufbar über  
<http://dnb.ddb.de>

Verlag Traugott Bautz GmbH  
D-99734 Nordhausen 2020

Gedruckt auf säurefreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier  
Alle Rechte vorbehalten  
Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-95948-484-8

For  
my daughter Monika  
and  
my grandson Fabian



# Contents

<i>Friedrich Wallner</i> Opening address: Constructive Realism mediating East and West	11
---	----

## PRELUDIUM: APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTIVE REALISM

<i>Vincent Shen</i> Desire, Representing Process and Translatability	17
---	----

<i>Hugo Ochoa</i> Vincent Shen: Culturalism between Chinese thought and Western science	40
---	----

## PHILOSOPHICAL CONDITIONS

<i>Friedrich Wallner and Jan Brousek</i> The Importance of Philosophy of Science for the Modernization of Chinese Medicine	57
--	----

<i>Keekok Lee</i> An Understanding of CCM (inclusive of Acupuncture) as Not-Newtonian Science: Its Metaphysical/Ontological Core, Its Implications for Methodology, Causality and Treatment	73
--	----

<i>Sarah S. Knox</i> The Science of Acupuncture: Biomedicine, Physics and Beyond	95
---	----

<i>Andrea-Mercedes Riegel</i> Constructive Realism in Chinese Medicine	109
---	-----

PRACTICE OF CHINESE MEDICINE  
FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF CONSTRUCTIVE REALISM

<i>Fengli Lan and Ephraim Ferreira Medeiros</i> Acupuncture for Sleep Disorders: General Theories and a Specific Analysis of Insomnia	129
<i>Andrea-Mercedes Riegel</i> The Eight Extraordinary Vessels and their Impact on Sleep Quality	157
<i>Fengli Lan, David Resneck-Sannes, Ephraim Ferreira Medeiros, Friedrich Wallner</i> Classical Chinese Understanding of Migraine: Key to Effectiveness of Acupuncture and Herbal Remedies	180
<i>Ephraim Ferreira Medeiros, Kwon Jong Yoo, Wung Seok Cha</i> Emotions, Qi, and Pain: The Treatment of Qi Pain (氣痛) in the Chapter 30th of the Saamdoinchimgyogyueol 《舍岩道人鍼灸要訣 - 諸氣痛門》 by Acupuncture and Moxibustion	208
<i>Yanfen She</i> Body surface resistance of Yuan-source point in 3 yin meridians of foot responding primary dysmenorrheal	228
CONSTRUCTIVE REALISM IN DISCUSSION	
<i>Friedrich Wallner</i> The different origins of Constructive Realism	245
<i>Nicole Holzenthal</i> Life-world or Culture as breeding ground for sciences— From Herder and Fichte, via Mach, Avenarius and Husserl, to Wallner and Bueno	253
<i>Jan Mehlich</i> Between Inter-culturality and Culture-Specificity— Constructive Realism applied to Global Ethics	289

<i>Jan Brousek</i> Constructive Realism— an epistemological basis for intercultural conflict transformation	313
<i>Gerhard Klünger</i> Arguments to Overcome Brain-Based Deterministic Concepts of Mind	330



Opening address:  
Constructive Realism mediating East and West

*Friedrich Wallner*

*(University of Vienna, Sigmund Freud University Vienna, Austria)*

This day is a day of a great joy, if I look back. In the year 1990, I met Vincent Shen and we have seen in short time that we have similar intentions in philosophy. At the same time, Hugo Renato Ochoa has translated my work “Acht Vorlesungen über den Konstruktiven Realismus” into Spanish. I want to give some reasons why it would be good that Chinese audience can read about *Constructive Realism* in their own language.

*Constructive Realism* started in a situation in Europe, or even the whole world, which is usually named *postmodernism* in English. This situation was dangerous for science because at that time they believed that “anything goes”, to use the famous formula by Paul Feyerabend. The problem was that Karl Raimund Popper, one of the last serious philosophers of science, has not been successful. All together, they made an interesting cultural turn. People, who did not like postmodernism, looked to the Far East, first to India then to China; people like Francisco J. Varela, Evan T. Thompson or Eleanor Rosch, who were connected to *Enactivism*, a special form—or somehow a precursor—of *Constructive Realism*. At that time, I started in Vienna interdisciplinary seminars with scientists from different fields. We discussed specific problems about the one or the other science and we found that these problems always are leading to linguistic procedures. There have been striking situations for me when I have invited people from physics and they have not been able to say in normal language what they have so wonderful shown for us in their formal language. At that time, I had two questions into my mind: what is western science? And, could it be that western

science is going to become lost, or even going to an end? Especially today, some tendencies in western science show that the claim for truth has already been lost.

At that time, I was concentrated in the question what is happening when a group of scientists is developing a scientific theory or a scientific law. Most of you know already that model in which *Life-world* is in the middle between *Wirklichkeit* and *Reality*. Reality is this aspect of *Wirklichkeit* which we can experience, while *Wirklichkeit* we can only experience in a negative way. With these ideas in mind, I went to the National University in Taiwan, having been invited by Vincent Shen, in December 1992. When I have shown my ideas about Constructive Realism, I was wondering how easy they have understood what I mean. Even my friend Herbert Pietschmann probably did not understand the concept of *Wirklichkeit* until now. He was prisoned in a relation to Kant. However, the Chinese audience understood it immediately. When I asked whether this really was so clear to them, one of the students answered that such ideas were common to the Chinese thinking.

That was actually the starting point of my scientific interest on China and Chinese culture. It has been some years before my work about Chinese Medicine started. At that time, I started to offer ideas about culture and ideas about the dialogue between cultures. I was always shocked that colleagues from the cultural sciences like Sinology or Indology have been—not exclusively but—mainly working with European concepts to explain these other cultures. For a philosopher who was trained in methodology this was a shock. May be, they did not understand me but it was a shock for me that they use so naively our methodological framework and concepts as well as our ways to experience for experiencing other cultures.

Therefore, I started to apply the method of *strangification*, which I have originally mainly used in interdisciplinary work, onto the dialogue between cultures, especially the dialogue with China. And here I have to stress that this is not comparative philosophy. *Strangification* means that I am brave enough to go with the other one into a situation in which our own and the other's convictions and prepositions can become absurd. Over a process of many years, by this way the intellectual structure of classical China and Chinese medicine could be researched. Today, when I speak with good experts of Chinese medicine in Europe, they all have the tendency to reduce the difference in the structure of the two medical systems because they are not trained in *strangification*. Insofar, the first translation of the concepts of Constructive Realism into Chinese language is very important for Chinese

audience. Because in China, Chinese medicine has got a different life. In Europe, there is also the same great interest with big misunderstandings. Under these three aspects you can presume Chinese medicine in Europe. There are really good experts and even extremely good doctors who have a really good success in healing. But sometimes we can find that the understanding is not clear enough and therefore Chinese medicine cannot be developed. This is a deficiency which is very bad for medicine and very bad for culture. The future of CM should be that western medicine and CM are *strangified* against each others, and are cooperating on the background of *strangification*. In this sense, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Vincent Shen for the work he has initiated his efforts to get this book done. And we really hope that it will be discussed in China. The interesting thing that sometimes in former years I have found a reaction by mostly female Chinese doctors that they would know Chinese medicine from their grandmother; being a part of Chinese culture.

However, to develop it to a real science they must make such studies about their own thinking structures, otherwise it would only be working with know-how: like a mechanic who is repairing my car. I would only not ask him to explain me why the car did not work. However, it would be better when he can explain it; and the same it is with a medical doctor. Here it is also a possibility to fight against the loss of reference of knowledge which modern science faces. *Strangification*, especially with other cultures, is a way to renew the claim of science which is typical for the western science. You must see that I use the idea of culturalism in an uncommon way. Usually, it is understood as a form of relativism. Rather, culturalism in our understanding means that many cultures have different types of scientific knowledge, and the scientific knowledge of Chinese Medicine is totally different to the western type of scientific knowledge. We should not mix them because then both are losing. But we should be aware that there are possibilities for the human mind to get deeper insights into the world.

*Note of Acknowledgement*

I express my deep gratitude to my colleague Professor Hans Rainer Sepp for his help in finalizing the format of this book.



PRELUDIUM:  
APPROACHES TO  
CONSTRUCTIVE REALISM



# Desire, Representing Process and Translatability<sup>1</sup>

Vincent Shen (University of Toronto, Canada)

## *The Primacy of Body*

Both Phenomenology and Confucianism pay high regard to the role of body in their notions of the human, especially on the body-mind relationship issue. In the context of the twentieth century Western philosophy, Heidegger switched from the Cartesian “*Je pense, donc je suis*” style of subjectivity interpreted by Husserl’s phenomenological “transcendental ego” to the interpretation of human being as *Dasein*, as transcendence regarding specific space-time determination in manifesting Being, thus emphasizing the ontological transcendence beyond intellectual subjectivity. Later, the Heideggerian *Dasein* was replaced by Merleau-Ponty’s notion of *corps propre*, seen as the original encounter of myself with the world. The body is therefore seen as the original locus of manifestation of Being. In its phenomenological incarnation, body has become the core of all human concerns, featuring the distinction between lived body (*corps vécu*) and organic body (*corps organique*), in the exclusive preference of the organic body. The concept of body has then become the basic tone of civilization in the twentieth century.

As I see it today, human body, although the most basic point of departure of meaningfulness, when self-enclosed within itself, is also a no-outlet-road. I would say that in body contemporary philosophy comes down to the lowest bed of its valley. If without the possibility of going beyond, for

---

<sup>1</sup> This text was originally published in the Journal *Philosophy East and West*, University of Hawai‘i Press, Volume 69, Number 2, April 2019, pp. 316-336 (10.1353/pew.2019.0028). It is identical with Vincent Shen’s last lecture, which was held at the Conference “Constructive Realism in East and West”, on 29<sup>th</sup> of September 2018 at the Sigmund Freud University Vienna (organized by the publishers of this book). In this regard, we would like to express our sincere thanks to University of Hawai‘i Press for the permission to reprint this paper.

example without life and reason, without variety of life stories, human body has no hope.

With much longer and older history, Chinese philosophy has emphasized the importance of body since the times of Warring States. In the recently unearthed Confucian bamboo slips titled *Wuxing*, said to belong to the Si-Meng School, the word *ren* (仁) was written in a form composed of body and mind 上身下心,<sup>2</sup> instead of the morphology in two persons (二人為仁). This would mean that for the early Confucians, body and mind were mutually related and sensible to each other so that one person could open to many others and be responsive to them. In fact, a life of sanity is a balanced yet creative state of body-mind in which human desire could conduce itself, at least hopefully, to the ultimate degree of meaningfulness, the full unfolding of its total potentiality.

Thus, both Confucian philosophy and Western contemporary philosophy put emphasis on the importance of body. However, there is a difference between them. When we look into the Chinese concept of body, the lived body is always in continuity with the organic body, as we can see in Confucianism and Chinese medicine; for example, in the *Yellow Emperor's Internal Scripture*, respected as the “Bible” in Chinese medicine, they are never separated.

Keeping in my mind the lesson we learn from Confucian philosophy and the phenomenology of perception of Merleau-Ponty, and the phenomenology of affectivity in the line of Paul Ricoeur and Ghislaine Florival, I consider the whole of our lived body with organic body as the locus and mode of existence of our desire, which is the original dynamism in us toward a meaningful life, both cognitive and affective. Although Merleau-Ponty is not wrong in pointing out the phenomenological importance of the existentially experiencing body, or the lived body, we should say, with Confucian philosophy and medicine, that the lived body is still in continuity with, and never separate from, the organic body. This is evidenced by our brain, our four limbs, our five organs, our hundreds of bone sections, in their support and expression of our existential emotions. We should take both as continuous yet distinct, thus making them into a whole instead of separating them into two totally different categories.

---

<sup>2</sup> “Five Conducts” (Wu Xing 五行), in *Unearthed Bamboo Slips in Chu Tombs of Guodian 1998*: 31, 149.

Now, from this lived and organic body emerges our desiring desire which is our most original force toward meaningfulness. This desire arises from the phenomenological field of the lived and organic body. Body is seen as the phenomenological field which makes our desiring desire rise, which, even if unconscious in the very beginning, will actively and continuously develop into higher forms of meaningfulness, as we will discuss in next section. Desire exists in our body and expresses itself through the movement of body. As Paul Ricoeur points out, body gives two ontological modes to our desire: first, it is where meaning first expresses itself; second, bodily movement is movement towards meaningfulness. In other words, the original desire in the body is the dynamic force towards meaningfulness, meanwhile it is also the locus where the meaningful action emerges (Ricoeur 1965: 372).

This paper will focus on one of the philosophical foundations of translatability, which concerns the transcendental psychological makeup of human beings looking for meaningful life. What I mean by “transcendental” is that which is *a priori* to meanwhile making possible the empirical, though with this there is no opposite dualistic relation, but rather in a dynamic contrast. I will start with the desiring desire that goes beyond itself toward somebody/something looking for meaningfulness with an original generosity. Desiring desire as the first movement of meaningfulness translates itself into different levels of representations. Thus it is always in the process of representing into higher and higher levels of complexities. This common origin makes up their common translatability.

#### *Desiring Desire, Desirable Desire and Desired Desire*

Starting from our infancy, the unconscious desire in the body has an undetermined, uncertain energy looking for meaningfulness. This could develop itself into various representations of meaning and still transcend each specific form of realization. This original dynamism in human desire arises immanently and goes upwards evolutionarily, thus its beginning force has not yet arrived at the “transcendental spirit” emphasized by Modern New Confucians like Mou Tsongsan 牟宗三 and Tang Junyi 唐君毅, which must be seen as a later and ulterior development of the human being. However, the desire appears in human body since our infancy is earlier than its eventual forms of development like consciousness, mind/heart and spirit. For example, as Jacques Lacan points out, a baby from birth to six months cannot hold his/her body in unity, therefore has no sense of the self at all at this mo-

ment. However, a baby has already his/her desire and is already forming various kinds of representations.

In fact, our desiring desire, as the significant force going beyond ourselves towards another person and another thing, could go up for fuller extension, and turn into the psychological and the spiritual levels, which are conventionally recognizable. This tells us a dynamic and developmental story of mind, not mind/heart in its pure and static sense. What we have in all stages of our life is this desiring desire.

Indeed, human beings are given birth by their parents, and they grow and develop among many others, therefore they receive life and learn language as gifts, and build up a life of meaningfulness first among significant others, then with many strangers. Human beings are relating with other persons and other things, that is why they desire them unconsciously as a dynamic vector towards many others. This original “directing towards” is called desire, while its conscious state could be called “will.” Basically all these come out from the same dynamic force, although they might be named differently, seen as different levels of its expression.

I am under the inspiration of Maurice Blondel who makes a distinction between *volonté voulante* (willing will), which is the primary, active, initiative act of willing, and *volonté voulue* (willed will), which is the act of already willed, therefore a secondary and explicit side of the willing process. Blondel takes these two as going along with the whole process of human existence and as a process of action. However, I would think it is too early to call it “will” before the conscious level, where we for sure already have in our infancy and everydayness a force towards meaningfulness, either conscious or nonconscious, which I prefer to call “desire.” Based upon these considerations, I make a distinction between “desiring desire,” “desirable desire,” and “desired desire.”

I understand the desire arising in our body as our original dynamic force tending towards meaningfulness. Body is therefore to be considered as the locus whereof emerges the first project for meaning. I agree with Merleau-Ponty that one’s own body (*corps propre*) is the phenomenological field (*champs phénoménologique*) of our desire, the field in which appears the unconscious yet active desire towards meaningfulness. Jacques Lacan says, “the unconscious is structured like the language,” and that “the unconscious is the discourse of the other” (Lacan 1966: 16, 1993: 167). These words could be understood as expressing the basic truth that desire moves always towards the other, saying that the desire is first of all a moving beyond oneself to-

wards other persons/things, taking them as the signified of an inner yet directing signifier, the desiring desire within us. Therefore, the first moment of desire, the desiring desire, is unselfish, it moves beyond oneself toward the good in the other; this could be called the *benxin* 本心 of each person, or the original generosity in each person to go beyond oneself to the good in the other.

The second moment of desire is desirable desire. What is desirable is the good in the other, towards which the desiring desire orients itself and becomes the desirable desire. As St. Thomas and Mencius both say, “the good is that which is desirable,” the desirable is the good, thus it gives a direction to our desire. Our movement towards the good is the second moment of our desire, in which our desiring desire is given a direction, the direction towards the good. This could be called *chuxin* (初心), or the starting mind/heart. Up to now, we have the *benxin* which is the first moment, the desiring desire, the moment of original generosity; the second moment is the desirable desire, the *chuxin*, which is a direction towards the good in the other, or in many others.

At the third moment, the desirable desire is specified in an object or a group of objects, such as longing for drinking when thirsty, for food when hungry, or sexual desire or other more abstract desires such as desire for money, reputation, and power, or other desires caused by habits or preferences, when we have a determinate object. The objects of these desired desires are finite, specific, and determined. It is in laboring towards these objects and in enjoying them, that is to say in the *jouissance* of them, that one becomes self-enclosed and selfish.

In sum, desire, in its first moment, the *benxin* or the desiring desire, goes towards many others generously; and in its second moment, the desirable desire, the *chuxin*, it tends towards the good in many others. Both of these moments are generous and good. Only in its third moment, that of laboring towards and of enjoying the specific object(s), could it become self-enclosure, and therefore selfish, and need what Confucius calls “subduing one’s self and returning to ritual,” or Zhu Xi calls an effort of “discarding human selfish desire,” or what Aristotle calls the virtue of temperament.

In this sense, I see the “virtuous nature” emphasized by Neo-Confucians under the influence of the *Zhong Yong*, or Laozi’s notion of “de” (power), or the Buddhist concept of “three good roots,” being understood as denoting human and/or all things’ original good nature, original dynamic power, or *benxin*. As to what Laozi says “when power is lost, the righteous-

ness is lost accordingly; when the righteousness is lost, the ritual is lost accordingly” (Laozi 1999: 37), or when Mencius talks about the *benxin*’s getting lost, or the metaphor of the treeless Mt. Tong, or even the fallen state of the unbridled indulgence of human desires and passions; or according to Buddhism, the three poisonous natures of lust, anger, and stupidity; all are talking about the enclosed selfishness of various degrees after the getting lost and fallen state of the original good nature or *benxin*. These have to be targeted as objects of corrections or therapy in order to liberate the mind and return to the original mind, or the desirable desire taking the good as its direction, or even the desiring desire with its own generosity to go outside of itself to many others.

*Desire, Body Movement and Representing Process*

The dynamic process towards a meaningful life proceeds from body, but it does not limit itself to body, as the process of representability and appropriation of language should also be involved in the step-by-step transcending process in the formation of meaningfulness. On the level of body, the construction of meaning begins from translating desire into representations, and then from representations to the emergence of language and finally consummates in interpersonal interaction.

At the start, in everyday life, we experience the original tension between intimacy and otherness of our body. My body’s intimacy to myself means I am my own body, or, that my body is closely related to myself, so that it is unlike my house, my car, my belongings, that it is an authentic part of my self. On this level, one can say “my body is myself.” On the other hand, my body is also the first other to myself, in the sense that it sometimes resists my own will and is open to many others, that is, to many other people/things in the world. This fact proves that my body is other than myself.

In body movement, intimacy and difference are integrated in the process of strangification and self-reflection. We can say human desire moves towards meaning by way of strangification. Here, “strangification” is understood in its etymological meaning as the act of going towards strangers, towards the others. Thus it is seen here as the process of going beyond oneself towards many others and connecting with them in order to constitute a meaningful existence. For me, human desire is the original dynamism in us tending toward the other. It could be considered as an original power of strangification.