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Chung-ying Cheng is an Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. Over the last fifty years, he has developed a theory of human existence in the light of an onto-cosmological theory, comprehensive observation, and reflection on the nature of change in both the cosmos and world. These insights are derived from classical Chinese philosophy rooted in the tradition of “the Book of Changes” (Yijing 易经).

Cheng's theory of human existence has two dimensions: First, a concept of reality that accounts for creative formation and transformation of all things in both nature and the world. This is evident in the binary system of being and non-being, *yang* and *yin* in the *Yijing*. Second, his theory includes an explanation of how human existence participates in the creativity and vitality of the cosmos. This entails a capacity to understand the world, to create symbols, language, and texts for every civilization, and thus, allows for the formation of *new understandings* and *new interpretations* of things and events in the world. Toward that end, he introduces a concept of the human self and the human mind that has the ability to access and construct several categories of understanding in different and yet related fields of concreteness and abstraction.

Cheng develops ten primary categories of human understanding: internality, externality, internal transcendence, external transcendence, unity of the internal and external, unity of internal and external transcendence (to be called in Chinese “chaorong 超融” or transcendental integration), the telos, the root, the periodic laws of bodily life, and the ultimate creativity. These categories refer to the process by which the human person integrates epistemology and hermeneutics from within the structure of onto-cosmology. Hermeneutics is thereby rendered significant to every language, culture and, tradition and applicable to various undertakings, including translation and comparative philosophy.

Concerning comparative philosophy, and particularly comparisons between classical Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy, Cheng expands hermeneutics beyond Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer to include onto-cosmological foundations that he believes they presuppose.