



# On Argument at Play Alive

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## Abstract

Three themes are in this essay, “on”, “argument at play”, and “alive”, developed reversely. Alive playing with argument, and “on” as story-thinking can round them up. Section one says we alive cannot think of *alive*, though crucial. Section two tells of playing with argument that *shows* “alive”. Section three tells of how story-thinking shows argument at play, to show “alive”. Section four harvests further in interculture. Conclusion tells of joy alive as invincible as imperative. Appendix I is on “Mom vs. Zen”; Appendix II is on theoretical “cash value” of this essay.

## Keywords

Argument at Play, Play, Alive, Interculture

Subject Area: Philosophy

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## 1. Introduction

A *fun*-essay is here, dear reader, guaranteed, as mentioned by Chuangzi [1]. This sentence says of argument at play alive. “Essay” argues; “fun” plays alive. Johan Huizinga (1971) rightly says “fun” is play’s essence; “play” is irreducible to other categories, and social. Play is a “second poetic world alongside the world of nature”—how play-world interacts nature is unclear, though [2]. I must put him in my essay. I say, cosmos-actuality plays; into it playing-argument rejuvenates us; play has *its* “play-logic” as “rhythm and harmony” in “order”, to originate logic. Huizinga wavers between play as “mind” and as “irrational. His disputation on play is as ridiculous as legal edict on jokes; writing on play must be fun-reading; sadly his is not. Three themes title it, “on”, “argument at play”, and “alive”, developed reversely. Isn’t the essay’s order in Chinese order, “活生遊論說, 生命論證玩弄說?” Isn’t such ordering back and forth argument playing? Alive playing with argument, and “on” as story-thinking can round them up. Section one says we alive cannot think of *alive*, though crucial. Section two tells of playing with argument that *shows* “alive.” Section three tells of how story-thinking shows argument at play, to show “alive”. Section four harvests further in interculture. Conclusion tells of joy alive as invincible as imperative. Appendix I is on “Mom vs. Zen”; Appendix II is on theoretical “cash value” of this essay.

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## 2. Section One: Thinking about Being Alive Is Important but Impossible

Our every acting, thinking, and feeling is alive; being alive is essential to *all* our activities physical, mental, and emotional. I fail (Augustine), I think (Descartes), so I am, alive-fun. Unplugging “alive” collapses our lifeworld; “alive” is the most crucial theme for Western philosophy. Sadly, *alive* cannot be considered. I must be alive to think, so I cannot think of “alive”; I cannot see *my* seeing. I cannot think about “alive” while alive, investigating unknown-alive with unknown-alive; I cannot think of “alive” when dead.

Thus no entry “alive” is in dictionaries in Western philosophy but listing many isms, e.g., vitalism, naturalism, empiricism, etc. Proliferating isms reveals a *further* complexity in “alive.” Usually, naming identifies an object, but these isms just insinuate “alive” not a UFO, an object-flying but does the identifying.

Saying being alive is vitalistic, natural, etc., is to claim an unknown-X as vitalistic, natural, etc.; it is “alive” that makes sense of vitalistic, natural, etc. “Alive” is there *in* all our activities, and our awareness of *it* wryly shows how impossible it is to identify “it”; seeing things cannot see “seeing”-as-a-thing seen. *Many* isms show how helpless the West is at considering “alive.”

These isms tell me that my being alive I know, yet as unknown; “alive” is my unknown I know, as I cannot see my face, only seen by others whose faces are to be seen by yet others, ad infinitum; we cannot know our face our self. Worse, my face is my unknown precisely because it *is* myself; I intimate it as my intimate unknown. My being alive is the base of my face and my death. I grope after them obscurely as I touch my face, to feel me sick “unto death.” Such oddity of the “alive” as the intimate unknown!

Thus Western thinking must consider the basic essential “alive” *and* is inherently cannot. In “alive”, *must* implies *cannot!* Are Socrates and Kant turning in their graves? We are equally frustrated at handling “What is death?” But Confucius says (11/12), “Not-Yet knowing life, how [would we] know death?” Death exists not among the dead but among us alive. To know death, we must know *alive*; we are back to where we are, here. *Time* magazine (September 30, 2013) touts “Can Google Solve Death?” as if “Can Google solve life?” is less shocking [3] [4]. It is sad. All this complication says that I cannot investigate my base of investigation, my being alive. For Western thinking, conscientiously basic as it is, “alive” is a hot cake *in* it too hot to even touch.

## 3. Section Two: Playing with Argument Niftily Nimbly Presents Being Alive

Meanwhile, we cannot live without playing—we need “vacation”—and so we must play lest we die. In play, life-necessity implicates life-imperative. Such exciting horizon must be explored. This section elucidates a special way of thinking, A. argument at *play*, and then B. argument at play *alive*.

### A. Argument at Play [5]

Section one above shows dead-end, “must think of *alive*” and “cannot”; we stop Western logicizing, and we are surprised. Strangely, we play no more here, while kids constantly *play* to grow. They know “it’s just a play” *and* put their full self into full fun playing. “Just”, “self-loss”, “full”, and “fun” join to play to *live on*. No play, no life, but we adults fool around dead. Kids are still noisily playing so alive fighting, “You are No-K! We are OK!” Kids are absolutely correct here; “OK” is a *facetious* “all correct” against “no K”, not-correct. “OK” and “no-K” fight and argue at play—at kid-play.

“Facetious” is panacea to my silly adult dilemma in Section One above. Their *arguing* is their play, no one is more alive than they, and it is fun playing with argument. Arguing, argument at play, and fun, compose kids *alive*. Free roaming finds home at play, where Chuang Tzu 莊子 invites us from China millennia young. In 1982 my first book showed him as “world philosopher at play,” arguing playing; playful argument mirrors actual logos, Tao of actuality, and we are so happy at home at kid-play, self-effaced self-fulfilled, to grow into us into actuality. Now let us watch Chuang Tzu.

He and his logician friend Hui Shih 惠施 stroll over the Hao bridge 濠梁. Chuang Tzu said, “Such swimming leisurely is the fish’s joy!” Hui Shih asked, “You are not fish, how do you know fish’s joy?” Chuang retorted, “You are not me. How do you know I don’t know?” Hui said, “You are clearly not fish, so you certainly don’t know fish’s joy.” Chuang said, “Let’s trace to our origin. You asked how I know; so you know I know and ask *how*. I know it above River Hao” [6].

Chuang Tzu said, “Don’t you see? We enjoy quibbling; fish enjoy swimming. I know fish’s joy swimming, as we know our joy arguing.” This is argument at play fun-showing *alive!* I could not tell apart my two granddaughters, so I asked, “Who are you?” “I’m Tessie.” “Prove it.” “I’m wearing the shirt only I wear.” She showed

herself! We laughed together. This concrete story demonstrates—shows-proves—*alive*, as trees confront me stark-present, as crickets embrace me soft-serenading co-alive.

The whole book *Chuang Tzu* tells of story-bits playing argument-bits. I wrote on him world philosopher humming cosmic music, and on him intimate companion [7], and he overflows me softly smiling; his Chapter One tells tall tale-bits wildly instructive, fish biggest-tiniest turned biggest-friendliest bird, laughed at by small ones (what fun!), 8000 years as one season, huge yak useless, completing years (what amazement!).

His Chapter Two is reversed; it has argument-bits in stories of actual things, self-ing self-forgotten in winds, beginnings, penumbra demanding umbra, dream opposing awakening, yet both identical. Chapter 29's brigand Chih 盜跖 scolds sagely Confucius. Chapter 18's dry roadside skull—our rock-bottom misery—Ultimately Joyous does seasons with Heaven and Earth. Wow! Play is friendly even to brigands and death, contrasting sharply with Greek myths so violent beneath respect that Plato leaves for staid reasoning, unaware that reasoning must play fun, alive together, as China.

Wild arguments tall-told stunningly widen horizon beyond horizons, yet ever remaining as they are. Story-bits argue at play telling stories in his chapters. So, straight argument cannot capture “alive” (Section One), argument-at-*play* does; storytelling spreads argument-at-play, *joy* alive. No one sick can play; we must be healthy alive to have fun. Life is too serious to take seriously (Oscar Wilde); argument at play takes “no life seriously.” *Argument* at play is not irresponsible; argument at *play* is not serious. Chuang Tzu is profound when frivolous, frivolous when profound. As said by Lin (1942), “One should read him as one would a humorist writer, knowing that he is frivolous when profound and profound when frivolous.” We cannot explain humor; he just announced it. Argument playing can elucidate humor, here [8].

#### B. Argument at Play *Alive*

“Argument” follows an expected logic; “play” has *its* logic, subjective and objective. “Argument at play” is free iconoclasm pan-critical, pan-accepting pan-friendly, in a self-critical Socrates; cynical Kafka and Sartre must join argument at *play*, critical dialogue inter-revolutionizing assumptions in actual risky uncertainties.

A *useless* tree completes its years, away from axes, yet a *useless* goose is cooked. So uselessness has *and* lacks survival value. Chuang Tzu said (20/1-7), “We must then live *between* useful and useless, now up, now down, now dragon, now snake, in time-harmony, thing-ing things, not-thing-ed by things”. “Thing-ing things” tunes in with things, disturbing no natural grouping; “thing-ed by things” objectifies, even persons. “Thing-ing things” lets things be; objectifying things pollutes *us* to pollute nature. I render “材 talented-useful” and “不材 not talented-useless” [9] Beautifully rhymed 物物而不物於物 is rendered “thing-ing things and not thing-ed by things” [10]. Marcel describes “my body” as *not* “chosifié (thing-ed)” (translated “objectified”) [11].

We thing things, not controlling, not being controlled, going between things’ logically exclusive alternatives “do, wei 為” and “not do, pu wei 不為” to “no do, wu wei 無為”, now dragon-soaring, now snake-slithering, harmonizing timely. You say, “Wow! All is spooky, wedging into ‘no room!’” But all this describes things common and ordinary, though surprising pal. Here is a simple concrete example of “no do.”

Tommy is yelling, “I don’ wanna nap!”; the world is too exciting to miss out in silly nap, you see. But his shout tells Mom he is ready for nap. So Mom cannot let him go out to play; it would be “not do,” to hurt. But Mom cannot push him into bed; it would be to “do” into a WWII disaster. Instead, Mom calmly goes between do and not-do. Mom says, “OK, Tommy, don’t nap; sit on your bed. I’ll read your favorite story, OK?” Tommy nods. “Once upon a time” and he hits the pillow.

Tommy protests nap that stops his freedom, unaware of his need to nap. Mom satisfies him by reading his story, and he goes home napping to fill his need. Mom’s caring no-do skill allows him free to nap. Wow! Mom *and* Tommy have had fun arguing. No Western logic of “either ‘do’ or ‘not-do’” can slip into Tommy’s shout, hitting the pillow *himself*; story alone shows such argument playing.

#### C. Round up

It is time to take stock, enthralling. “Just a minute, pal! You never defined four key words, argument, at, play, alive.” Well, “at” shows how “argument” is one with “play” tautological delightful, but the rest cannot be defined. In fact, “fun,” as “pain” and “child,” is indefinable. They just hit us, and we then know. They are synonymous with “alive.” Thinking on how indefinable “alive” is takes care of them, though “child” is constantly story-described; I cannot help it. All right, then, let us begin here. They are all “primitive notions,” “notion” noted *in* actuality (not “concepts” forceps-ed abstracted from actuality), “primitive” primal, defining all other notions not defined by them. All we do is to note (here we go again) their features, in five points.

1) *Argument* is logical reasoning dia-logical, logic inter-moving. Confucius and Socrates lived logic inter-

moving but were never gazed at to surprise Western logic that is set in the firmament of ideas. Waismann has “many logics” actual; Kuhn proposed “paradigm shift” in sacrosanct science. Waismann is ignored; Kuhn is accused of “relativist” [12]. But in the West, argument dialogical has actually been routinely going, logic [a] moving [b] communal, [c] fun alive. “Tao-Way walks and forms; thing called and is so” (Chuang Tzu 2/33). Things move their Way sensible, not irrational; it is “argument” actual formative, playing.

2) *Play* is also primitive and life-essential. Kids our “primal paradigms” play to *be* kids. Play is free not random, romping *around* not just *fooling* around, argument playing exploring, fun, self-abandoned self-com-posed, at home fighting with pals. Play elucidates—lighting pellucid—“argument” self-goaled fun alive, playing. O how does Haydn fool around so enthralling! Szell in his 4 CDs, *Decca* (that’s all he did) of Haydn miraculously, methodically, displays his beauty. How could “fooling around” be so beautiful!? [13]. Play unifies logic-moving beginning, free all over exploring, fun spontaneous, alive; we *must* be alive kid-playing. No play, nothing is alive.

3) *Alive* clinches “argument” “playing”. Being *is* alive; it is so obvious and primal that we cannot explain, much less logically define, as Section One above shows. We can only smile that kids’ “argument” is “playing” “alive,” that these three co-imply as actual synonymy. This essay delightfully shows argument playing, to show and tell of *alive*, as all kids show and tell constantly. Argument playing is kids embodied, expressing their story-thinking.

4) *Kids* are our primal paradigm guiding us in argument playing, our be-all end-all, ever beginning to be “we.” Mencius sighs at baby-heart as the great adult (4B12). We respond, surprisingly, that we can begin to be kids at our “failure” to advance into them, in five points.

a) I say, failure is my hurt mental, physical. Mentally, we bump dead-ends frustrated “failed” (Section One). Physically—you take over, my reader. b) We look at kids amazingly without failure! They are tumblers, “seven falls, eighth up”, toy-fun. だるま Bodhidharma patterns Japan’s tumbler-toy, 起き返りこぼし (小法師) or 不倒翁 who “七轉び八起き”. Being children’s favorite toy, it *is* children [14]. Really hurt, they wail; Mother Nature binds wounds. They bounce back giggling noisy, going tumbling again. They are master-“fail-ers” guiding our way [14].

c) We judge “failed”, looking back with standards now. Kids never look back, without standard, but they are enthralling turnouts *as* they try on ahead. “What are you drawing, Tommy?” “How’d I know? I’m not done yet.” He draws a dog, oops, it’s a car, O my, now it’s a turtle his drawing is alive, so much fun! Where is failure? He hums silly tunes concocted as he draws—such fun!

Kid’s creativity has no failure; creativity is *its* own *goal*, so doing attains itself. And so, whatever kids do is done perfectly. They say, “It’s magic!” We must be Tommy drawing *life*, changing as we draw, guided by him fun-trying vague ideas, mumbling, “How’d I know? I’m not done yet”, “alive” playing-arguing till “coffin covered, assessed, set 蓋棺論定”.

d) Kid Oscar sings hoarse-throated, “I love trash!” He doesn’t mind being “trash” himself! “I love trash!” is “I love failure!” Enemy loved, enemy gone; failure loved, failure lost. We play with failure *and* with goal. “Social-security” draws Tommy-turtle against pan-poverty. Playing-*on* fun-beats failure, even anger; no one can play while angry, you see. Playing melts anger.

e) Now, fun is in joining these four points, storytelling way. “Failure” is melted away in our joining playing, and failure hurts no more as we play with it. “How can failure not hurt?” Failure is now Tommy-exploration, “romping around” toward achievement unnoticed until “failure” comes as “Oops!” In all this, “failure” is argument kid-playing.

5) “Show and tell” *story-thinks* freely—playfully—guiding us between things in logical exclusions, alive fun. “Tommy shouts against what he needs, nap. Mom soothes him to satisfy his protest and his need. Likewise, Jesus’ New Contract-Testament satisfies both justice and mercy (Matthew 5:17, Luke 15:31-32, John 8:7-11). Mom and Jesus’ amazing feat is shown in routine storytelling story-thinking [15].

What an incredible story all this is! Helpless logical dead-end is tamed, as things emerge as daily routine of Mom soothing her recalcitrant Tommy against nap into his happy needed nap, all natural. Such a humble event, told by a humble story, turns spectacular. Story-thinking works miracles.

#### 4. Section Three: Story-Thinking Tells of Argument at Play Alive

A story of Mom taming Tommy elucidates an amazing entrance between logically exclusive alternatives, as the

story mirrors facts. “Fact” has “many a slip ‘twixt the cup and the lip” (Homer), logically unexpected. Telling stories of facts photogenically presents the slips, to flexuously enter, disturbing nothing, coaxing out maximum benefits for all; Mom enters between Tommy’s protest *against* nap and his need *for* it, and satisfies *both*, pleasing her and Tommy! Parental care educes win-win joy.

Mom’s parental no-do with yelling Tommy is her care slipping into his protest, fulfilling his need. Slips are actuality playing; we play according to actuality. Inscrutable Occident and Orient initiate kid-spooky “scrutiny.” Capturing such slippery playful logic, factual fun, is story-thinking, “fact-logic” producing literary history of China for millennia.

“What about this essay itself? Isn’t it arbitrary wandering? Play is not argument, argument playing is not “alive”, and you add “fun” to these incompatible pieces, putting them together, so impossible!” Far from it, pal. Playing with argument is not illogical. Thinking that logic cannot play, that play is beyond logic, cannot stop logic being played, in kid-fun inter-fighting “*You* are no-K! *We* are OK!” More, play has its own logic of argument-at-play, as kids at play are alive and fun. Its logic playfully wanders logically, all over; play is logic-at-play all-comprehensive.

I know “argument” is equivocated on reasoning and quarreling, fighting fun in “undistributed middles.” Once “distributed”, things are set dead; play equivocates, “fun” *alive*. Alive is creative in maximum connections, expanding; metaphors creates illogical, seeing all actually relates to all, beyond logic. “Be creative” is “pursue what I like”, for I cannot live otherwise, and what I like connects all I like to all else I like, and even to what I dislike; such shady “kickback” deliciously punches. All this makes fun to make for healthy longevity [16].

This is story-thinking that is a telltale sign of sense, as story-bits are half-baked argument-bits of things flickering senses, now blissful, now baneful; story-bits are half-baked by us, all “factual” *as* fanciful. Our tales are tall tales frivolously serious; our “serious” science, politics, economics, etc., are story-bits to be played. Story-thinking is fun-kids at play, with *its* logic to naturally argue. “Play” plays with argument; bare “argument” is not at play fun alive—unsuspected not random, connecting all fun alive.

More, these kid’s four features—play, argument, alive, fun—have two irresistible points. One, they co-implicate inevitable necessary; two, such “logic” beyond logic is alive surprising, fun-exploding. In fact, what you said before is no complaint but a surprise, pal. This four-kinship beckons at us all—you, too—to join in, the more the merrier, in argument playing all-fun all-alive!

“But why must we *play* with argument? Why must we not just argue?” The reason is that actuality is alive, “self-moves” (Aristotle); actuality plays, we are its part. “Rory Story-Cubes” is a do-toy of nine cubes, each with six images [17]. We roll the cubes, and chances decide image-sequence to compose a story logically unexpected. “Chances decide” as actuality plays at our imagination into stories. Actuality at play with infinitely many cubes in story-creation guarantees “*no* wrong answer”.

Refusing to play, we in actuality are out of actuality; Kafka and Sartre call this monster “absurd,” refusing to play, refusing to admit actuality playing as things flicker, now profiting, now hurting, and such flickering is partly *our* doing, showing us part of actuality. “Our *doing*” composes story-thinking storytelling, playing with argument-bits and story-bits.

“But, still, why must we combine ‘play’ with ‘argument’? Does the combination have any cash value?” Wow, here’s a jackpot, pal. Relativity-idea plays to flicker; time warps to spatial-ize, as space expands and is timed. All this while, nuclear-energy arrives tiniest-vastest. “We spin, spinning life-world,” to smile-spin relativity-ideas; idea argues playing life, kid-fun. Play creates as creation plays, actualizing kid-growth of things. “Creative writing” writes life, fun-playing [18]. An argument stays put; argument at *play mobilizes* many things inter-contradicting, none complete, all with some sense, all inter-complementing, alive and fun. Such is how argument plays—to turn things alive.

Argument playing plays with sense that then shimmers and shifts, alive with unheard-of implications, inter-cutting inter-enriching, all story-told, setting hearers into exploring hidden senses, one at a time, several at a time, and life turns rich, fun alive. I explored three readings of Chuang Tzu’s Chapter One, four of Chapter Two, then three of Chapter Three; my book bulged to 500 pages and he overflowed them, playing with argument-bits, telling story-bits [19]. Storytelling compresses many arguments in many senses for us to unpack in joy, now three, now four, all different, poetry provocative.

Poetry compresses storytelling to intone to enchant, and beauty emerges; storytelling is poetic alive. Chuang Tzu initiated the tradition of Chinese aesthetics; Confucius molded Chinese culture, handing down tradition historic-literary, and deep. This essay learns from Western logic to go tight, to story-tell of how story-thinking flexes

with actuality alive. Now here is another way, breathtaking. Thinking names, big fish, small fish, big bird, small birds; these names tell stories. Story-thinking thinks with *its* “logic” *fitting* flexing with situations; real logic *fits*. Such story-thinking webs nature no-leaking (Lao Tzu 73), this way.

Taoist Lao Tzu says, “Tao can tao, not always-Tao”; Name-Logician Kung-sun Lung 公孫龍 says, “White horse, no horse.” Both are stories accommodating contradictions. Western one-track logic calls them “contradictions”; China’s many-track logic goes dia-logical, as my two palms ill-fitted inter-need to hammer out themes. “Tao-taoable” dialogues “veritable always-Tao”; “white horse” dialogues “horse.” Inter-fitting ill, inter-needing, arguments juggle one *against* others to join, dialogue-playing. Quarrel-arguing, fun inter-hits hard “half baked ideas,” baking them into life.

Now, such messy dialogue-traffic playing is story-told story-thought alone, exhibiting *alive*. Sadly, all Sinologists, Chinese or no, talk in Western logical thinking way (in Chinese jargon). No one probes China *as China*, its unique methodology, and horizon. Story-thinking is one such [20]. History in *its* logic encompasses events brutally illogical into “stories” we *can* read, and sigh. Actuality plays “challenges”; we play back arguing playing. Story-thinking turns things unthinkable story-coherent (makes sense), fitting (conforming to contingent turns), *and* fun; thinking actual alive, each casual happening is now historic. Story-thinking this way fulfills Western three theories of truth, internal *coherence* in external *correspondence*, *revealing* the covered actual. Moreover, story-thinking turns us *playful*, fun alive, achieving *all* four desiderata, coherence, correspondence, revelation, and fun alive, at a story-stroke, in China’s many-track flexibility, historical and literary forever alive.

Story-thinking plays arguing. Camus, Marcel and Sartre did it by fictions, dramas, journals, but they are not fully literary not fully philosophical, to invite analytical criticism, “Existentialism . . . has been distinguished by a very loose and sloppy style of argument” [21]. China *thinks* alive storytelling in literature historical, history literary, “literature history, wen shih 文史” coherent, factual, and enthralling-alive. Such mode of argument is immune from analytical criticism of “loose and sloppy.”

Thus playful story-thinking demonstrates—shows-proves—*alive* beyond Western one-track logicizing. Kids are here giggling at a favorite story. “And they live happily ever after. The end! Say it again!” They jump playing story-thinking, repeatedly, alive. “What is China’s contribution *here*?” Western philosophy cannot consider “alive”; China argues-at-play story-thinking playing history-literature 文史, to show “alive.” No Western thinker, philosophical or no, plays with argument. Chuang Tzu is “world philosopher at play”; China is world wisdom playfully arguing alive presenting “alive”.

Play plays music life-festive, joy strenuous dialogical, arguing quarreling, in pain physical mental. “Pain at play”. odd as it may sound, composes play as kids playing. “Argument at *play*” shows play instinctive *and* rational; “*argument* at play” stresses cognitive joy “homo ludens” *alive*. Play shows alive; story-thinking expresses it.

## 5. Section Four: Harvests Further

Here is cornucopia harvested, carrying sheaves rejoicing home. Carrying harvest harvests more; reflecting on gains yields new gains. No logic even smiles; logic-at-play is kid-shouting alive, smiling fun. Argument rounds things up staid; argument playing explores all over, in joy all over. Joy heals, love fulfills, so joy loving has no enemy. Chronology smiles time into history. Today paints poetry of tomorrow alive, playing arguing beating season-rhythms, in two subsections, A: Harvests, child musical, B: Harvests further, concrete thinking intercultural.

### A. Harvests in the Child Musical:

1) No Western thinker seriously refers to the *child*, much less with kudos. In China, the kid roots the person (Mencius) and scholarship (Li Chih) [22]. My grandson Andrew wants to change birthday to have it every today, “happily” birthing tomorrows today, his “birthday”. He *is* my birthday; anytime stuck with silly adult problem, I watch him shout fighting, fun. Kids melt my problems. “Why?” Go home to them my origin, and my later problems vanish in their shouting living-rhythm that is music they live. No kid, no music; no music, no kid-*fun*. We must live *there*. I just scratched the surface of the children rich mysterious, precisely because they are “nothing.” Being nothing, kids have nothing between them and us; they directly touch us, disarming us. We instinctively care for them, care about them, unaware that in caring for them, we are being cared for by them primordial. All the same, though, we do feel good about them, feeling at home in them. *That* is their nothing-power. I say just

enough to call our attention to children for whom we are privileged to care. Music is also a “nothing,” overwhelming us; kids are our music. The few folks who disagree are below *human* [23].

“Just a minute, pal! What does birthday have to do with what you say?” O, sorry, I have jumped too fast. Let me cover kids’ area still messy, but more familiar. Argument at play is fun-kids shouting that we seldom do. When stuck, I look up to kids, to be unstuck from Section One to begin Section Two. But kids don’t care as they play with their silly game-rule they make, only to change it devil-may-care. All their play with argument rehearses “old, old stories,” story-thinking lilting rhythmic, as music supple, primordial. Argument at play is kid-musical, sinuously alive to begin to begin.

Western logic is eternally set in the idea-firmament, yet dialogue, moving logic, is constantly engaged by Plato and all later thinkers. No one noted its incoherence; none theorized about “moving logic.” The West stuck in its set logic, unable to resolve *its* logic-vs-dialogic dilemma, cannot handle *actual* dilemmas [24].

While logic cannot handle, play-logic sing-dances things alive, and the “problem” of Section One melts into Section Two. Far from rhetorical flourish, China’s thinking mode—logic—is alive. *Mo Rhetoric’s* 墨辯 thinking-system is reversible. “Yin-Yang intermecine-inter-nascent” is “If P implies Q, then Q implies P”—logically invalid, yet actually proper. Name Scholars 名家 logicize back and forth. Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu also, as all literary history and historical literature freely go in and out of “logical canons,” telling of “illogical” contingencies. Name School, Lao Tzu, and Chuang Tzu are too well-known to cite [25]. “Chinese logic” is the saddest chapter in history. I call it “story thinking” and “body thinking” [26]. Kids are the panacea because they are “nothing”; they can afford to begin to begin again. “Nothing” begins “arguments beginning arranging-things 齊物論” Chuang Tzu says. “Well begun, half done.” Kids begin; if *this* is bad, they begin again differently, and again another way, until “well begun.” Constant begin-again plays arguing, again. Kid-nothing is free to play things this way and that, with *things’* logic of play, shouting dawn, story-thinking swinging non-sequiturs, in which the logic of things appears as the Way things go, the Tao.

2) Playfully arguing, playing forms itself rhythmic; today is the tomorrow arguing-playing *musical*. Music all-powerful is kids playing *any* argument—play is music—to excellence. Frederick the Great jokingly—playfully—gave J. S. Bach a silly string of random notes, out of which Bach composed a magnificent “Musical Offering.” Doesn’t this event mean *any* “arbitrary” sounds in nature are musical to be composed? Nature calls music in me.

Beethoven (Pastoral symphony), Hovhaness (Symphony of Whales), Vaughan Williams (Sea Symphony, Sinfonia antartica), Delius (many rolling fields and hills), Strauss (Alpine Symphony), Respighi (Pines of Rome, Fountains of Rome), etc., respond to Mother Nature’s beckoning. Chuang Tzu (2/49-51) has the beginning that begins to yet to begin, and yet to begin to begin, to link to beginning to *be*, delightfully ad infinitum. Chung Tzu is kid powerful [27]. Our lifeworld sings, awaiting us to “play” music that is arguing alive.” Frederick Delius’s parents frowned on him fooling around with sounds, as we say we “*play* music”; they wanted him to settle as a serious merchant. They were wrong. Music is not random but freely organized as “argument” that “plays” life of things “alive” [28].

Sighing at time, time-logic retrospective-prospective self-reflects musical. Story-thinking time-logicizes to “random” events, wedging into logical incompatibles joining un-joinables, turning dull routines into sensible happenings rhythmic, singing world-history. Story-thinking history-logicizes. Rhythmic actuality found-founded by story-thinking composes music, chanted by primal-kids sincerely performed. Music forwards organic rhythm logical, arguing on throbbing alive, fun. Actuality story-tells, story-thought musical; all-actual [29], China’s aesthetics thinks “Chinese wisdom.” Wu’s Chinese thinking dips in music, taking China’s life-thinking as “musical reasoning” [30].

#### **B. Harvests Further in Concrete Thinking Intercultural:**

Argument-at-play thinks in situ as concrete thinking. But the concrete is thought about, not “thinking”; “concrete thinking” is “not-thinking thinking,” logically contradictory; to thaw it, we enter logical thinking, to go beyond it into concrete thinking, in six steps, as follows.

1) Kant notes how reason’s addition “ $7 + 5 = 12$ ” needs extra-reason, actually gathering 7 and 5 into 12; 12 is not implied in 7 or 5 yet the addition *is* logical. Addition is reasonable “*synthetic a priori*”, [31] then. For Whitehead the mathematician, the logic of  $1 + 1 = 2$  cannot calculate explosives plus a spark producing more than 2, as common sense easily sees [32]. When, how, and where it is reasonable to apply  $1 + 1 = 2$  is beyond-logic, as easily done by common *sense*; calculated inside (Kant), applied outside (Whitehead), our reason is “concrete thinking”.

Kant's entire categorial scheme is meant to *apply* as  $1 + 1 = 2$  to actuality, so *it* is synthetic a priori, beyond analytical logic; Kant's philosophy is all-concrete thinking, then. *This* conclusion is synthetic a priori. Far from contradictory, logicians Kant and mathematician Whitehead demonstrate that all thinking is "concrete thinking," as China's history 史 in story-literature 文. is, actuality-powerful. Initiator of organic chemistry, Kekule, could not find benzene formula; adult-tired, he dozed off, and he dreamed benzene elements kid-dancing joining hands into a formula [33].

2) China is now all-dipped in "Communism" with three tiers, never to be confused—communism as ethos, ism, and polity. Communism began with Marx's "1884 Manuscript" passionately alive in proletariat's communalism, later enshrined in Leninist turnaround to statecraft *over* people, and rigidified in party politics in Castro, Mao, and others. Communism has gone from people-centrism to government-centrism.

The people-spring must thaw, freely—playfully—infusing communist populist ethos into rigid party polity. Luckily, China has its indigenous populist-principle threading *State Sayings* 國語 and *Tso Commentaries* 左傳, as people-rooted ethos 民本思潮 toward "all under heaven for all 天下為公." This populist ethos *basic* to Marxism and Western democracy must pervade China to protest Western zero-sum game, into the win-win play of "ring around a populist rosy," playing with argument into cosmic intercultural.

3) The cosmic "all under heaven for all" is inter-human inter-species *global* joyful; mowing the grass loudly dialogues with nature. A deer once wandered into my neighbor Clark's house. He proudly proclaimed, "That deer slept in *my* yard!" "It did not, here," I timidly admitted. He grinned, "He ate my crabapples," as he brought a pail of water; the deer drank it. Mumbling, "He'll grow yet," he picked fruit from branches too high for deer, leaving some for birds.

We are all excited; I dreamed of that deer that night. "Our deer" is Nature's outright gift of joy to us all. Life is now so full, with joys inter-species in eco-family, hushed; we want to disturb no deer. Days later, the deer left; we now feed many birds so different. We miss that deer; Clark mumbles, "He may come back." I nodded.

The fun is in feeding deer different from birds. To feed is to kid-play; play feeds. New play dawns; a kid watching soon joins in. We kids at dawn relish jumping into our feed-games, playing learning from deer and birds on feeding them; learning is intercultural playing. We learn from so many kids of deer and birds feeding them *their* ways, to co-play life. Adults call play-together "inter-handling thinking-frames" awesomely *fun*, things changing playing new thinking, new cultures in new species-frames, playing inter-feeding

4) Argument playing concretely thinks story-thought. To logic, concrete thinking is contradictory, and yet on it logic depends. Kant's  $7 + 5 = 12$  as synthetic a priori shows his philosophy dependent on concrete thinking; Whitehead's  $1 + 1 = 2$  cannot apply to actuality without common sense, which is concrete thinking. All such concrete thinking is logical yet beyond formal logic to parse.

5) Logic thinks staid either-or; concrete thinking moves between either-or, playing arguing alive fun, story-thinking. Sartre, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, pragmatists, and deconstructionists instinctively try to logic-*move* yet they remain not alive fun, for they are not *playing*. They are Western Moses on Mount Nebo looking far at Caanan-China, at play.

To my *Butterfly* my pal, Dr. Bill Springer comments (abridged) [34], "Your claim pleads play based on critical awareness of our being cut off from definitive truth. But I cannot help wondering whether that is either arbitrary (why not mad debauchery) or slyly reintroducing esoteric 'knowledge.' Your work is very readable, with free jest and joy that must be Chuang Tzu. Maybe the content is irrelevant; the style and feel of the *saying* of it makes it pointless to argue about *what* is said. It is a delight to read, though I think it will stick in the craw of analytically sensitive philosophers".

Bill is *hit* by how "alive" playing with argument is, yet, incredulous, must explain it away with "debauchery" and "secret." "Debauchery" is play not-arguing; "secret" is argument not-playful. He cannot get "fun" of argument playing he feels, stuck in static logic of either play or argument.

6) Logic supplies clear organic coherence to story-thinking that in turn supplies moving joy to logic. Both gather, as this essay, to elucidate argument playing alive, arguing as logic, arguing alive as story-thinking.

## 6. Conclusion: Alive, Fun Invincible, Fun Imperative

Aren't all stories above factual as meta-facts, natural alive? Aren't all stories the young spring deer to invite us irresistibly in? Nature poet Frost chants its "Pasture" [35]

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;



I'll only stop to rake the leaves away  
 (And wait to watch the water clear, I may);  
 I shan't be gone long.—You come too.  
 I'm going out to fetch the little calf  
 That's standing by the mother. It's so young  
 It totters when she licks it with her tongue.  
 I shan't be gone long.—You come too.

The spring is the pasture out with leaves and the little calf tottering as it is licked by mother. Who can resist *being* such spring? Let us join in, to be natural alive playful, as these stories have played the spring natural alive, as playing *is* natural alive, spring tender. All this presented here provokes intercultural; no Western *thinking* has ebullience flooding all over, as poet Frost peeps unwittingly at China. But perhaps the West is arguing to play argument in *their* ways. Condescendingly, criticizing “play” plays itself.

Gertrude Stein quipped, “A rose is a rose, is a rose” to play with tautology the principle of logic to play-enliven analytics staid dead. Derrida twists Stein into deconstructive Dadaism, as grouchy Harold Bloom pours out torrential words on various matters minus science minus China. Play is contagious and intercultural. This essay performs intercultural with China; I hope it is much funnier and more globally significant than idle word-mongering.

Playing with the West, as this essay has done, makes explicit China's argument playing story-thinking literary historical; this essay argues Western way, to play Chinese argument. Western logic helps tighten, explicitly systematizing argument-at-play alive. Ideas smell a culture, raising eyebrows into intercultural debates cutting our logic-teeth, shaking our foundation toward logic alive. Hear children shouting arguing!

The “child heart 赤子之心, 童心” is said by adults appreciating the primordial child; “argument at play” is said by outsider appreciating such play alive. The name “argument at play” and its elucidation here tell of intercultural between China performing arguing playfully and Western clarity expressing it.

This essay shows that argument playing, alive, and fun is fun-indispensable to living, toward powerful living. Argument playing *indispensably* shows living not irrational or straitjacketed in logic, to live human full. Playing with argument is our categorical imperative to being humans. Besides, argument playing is powerfully *applicable*, flexuously fitting to heal mental dilemmas, bodily ennui. Albert Camus almost played with argument, but no *fun* [36]. “Alive” and “failure” are two basic life-problems that are thus resolved by argument playful; Tommy's shouting protest against nap he needs, and adult Kekule's headache finding a benzene formula are fun-resolved by arguing-at-play story-dancing.

This essay “shows and tells” with children arguing playing, and I hope *its* telling also argues playing in kid-fun alive. I do hope, my dear reader, you have enjoyed this essay as I playfully essay it. Having fun is alive, for no one sickly has fun; we must turn fully healthy to have fun. The palindrome-like tautology—fun-playing living, living fun-playing, in *such* self-referential coherence, is life's categorical imperative unavoidable anytime.

“But what is fun?” Wow! At this concluding stage, an all-critical query is raised on this primary word, quite indefinable. Luckily, some English word hint at the answer. “Happy” objectively evaluates that it is a favorite of Western thinking. “Joy” is more into emotion, understandable and heartfelt. “Fun” is soiled and earthed, personal and kid-healthy, and whole-some and gutsy-authentic. “Pleasure” is less than fun, for pleasure can be sickly, as pleasure of torture, while “fun” is internal to kids' playing, never torturous.

We say, not “happy killing”, “joy of killing”, but “pain is no fun”, though not “pain is not happy, not joy”. “Serious” and “play”, not other words, go before “fun”. Thus, I settle in “alive is fun”, not “alive is happy, joy, pleasure”. Play is healthy musical-fun; playing arguing is alive-fun. Now, considering all this on “fun” is fun, outside long-faced logic, isn't it?

I hope you have caught all this fun-coherence bubbling vivacious telling-showing “alive”, by again arguing playfully, in triune activity of arguing, playing, and fun-living, all alive urging us to be alive, fun. Nothing more can be said; I have said too much as it is. It must be lived arguing at play alive, in all fun with kids at dawn.

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## Appendix I: Mom vs. Zen

On Karl Böhm's 85th birthday, Herbert von Karajan said, "You have experienced knowledge, skill, determination and achievement in a personal union. When Zen masters of archery practice their art they don't say "I am shooting" but "it is shooting". Their actions have been so natural that there is actually no need to do anything to it; I should really say to you: "It is playing". One of the most profound sayings in Chinese philosophy is symbolic of this: Doing consists in NOT doing. Please don't get me wrong; everything has to be done first. But then you let it go and let it fulfill itself naturally. This is true mastery. It takes a very long time to reach this point".

Now, Mom easily puts protesting Tommy to sleep; she did not "take a very long time to reach this point"! Karajan in Zen is so near so far! "How far is he?" *Trying* to get what is no-trying gets farther away. Zen musicians' struggling goal is life's natural *start*, kid-return home-to-itself.

"We cannot conduct or play violin innately". "No-do" is not "not-do", not "do", dear friend. Zen "does"; you think no-do is "not-do". We train techniques in music, not to music, as Zen does; we practice caring in Mom, as Mom, not toward her, as Zen would. We have innate ability to appreciate music; techniques come *after* it, returning home to it. We cannot say so to the person born deaf. We have innate ability to care for kids; Mom guides us to come home to caring. We cannot say so to the person bestial. Coming home *begins* at the root, to no-do.

## Appendix II: On Theoretical "Cash Value" of This Essay

"Confucianism" pompously presents ethical platitudes in doctrinaire analytics, sloganizing anachronistic conventions, touting decomposed tradition in fashionable jargon, disputation. It is nauseating and insulting to Confucius soulful, our awesome forefather rejoicing with awesome youth. Confucius is conveyed by playful Chuang Tzu sensitive; they both play with argument-reasoning, alive, fun.

"What is its base?" It is Mother Nature beginning to begin yet beginning, self-empty to midwife all, playful, fun. This essay adumbrates style as sensible, playing alive; thinking has no thought but just stimulates thinking, as the Great One in shadow echoing; here life-horizon is astir dawning, music as nature empty full, ever smiling. Simon Sechter taught Schubert and Bruckner who relied on him to grow great; teacher is the meta-great unknown who is so great [37].