

SYNOPSIS

This dissertation seeks to compare between Al-Ghazzali and Mencius on the concept of a perfect man. It is on the ground of comparing one of the most profound and original philosophical thoughts in Islam and Chinese Civilization respectively on the concept of perfect man that the pair is chosen. Both have left behind extensive literature expounding on man as their subject of study and both suggested that man have a perfectible nature. The dissertation traces the lives of Al-Ghazzali and Mencius in their respective historical background. The readers will be informed of the social and political climax as well as the atmosphere of original thoughts in the respective era when Al-Ghazzali and Mencius lived in order to appreciate the thoughts and writings of the philosophers in the respective context. The chapter on the Nature of Man reveals that Al-Ghazzali perceives man as having both good and evil natures acquired by birth. Mencius believes that the natural state of human nature is undefiled and with goodness. Despite the differences, both tried to propose a same concern that man has a moral responsibility in seeking perfection of the self. The terminology employed by Al-Ghazzali and Mencius respectively, the "*Qalb*" and the "*Xin*", are introduced to discuss on the way in which human mind, or literally human "*heart*", functions. The moral man as expressed in the respective 4 Cardinal Virtues by the philosophers is also brought to the attention of the reader. The chapter on the Concept of a Perfect Man presents all the related terminology, ideas and teachings in Al-Ghazzali's and Mencius' writings. There are generally two spectrum of the perfect personality, i.e. one that conceive the characteristics of divinity; and the other that is simply achievable by ordinary men. The concept of union between man and the ultimate transcendence, namely God in Al-Ghazzali's accounts and *Tian* in that of Mencius' are looked into while their practical advice listed. Lastly, the dissertation voices a concern for the humanity to the seemingly indifferent society today. The discussion of Al-Ghazzali and Mencius altogether opens the readers' eyes to the beauty and clarity of human soul and mind when one seeks and attains perfection. There are, of course, rooms to debate on Al-Ghazzali's mysticism and whether Mencius' *Xinxue* are of the discipline of practical ethics or mere metaphysics. The writer will not pretend to understand all but hope to present the comparison here as one of the preliminary effort in civilization dialogue between Islam and Confucianism