INTRODUCTION: FIVE TRENDS IN CONFUCIAN STUDIES

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For over a decade, Confucian studies have gone through several evolutions and developments. From 2010 to today, this area has delivered a number of the fine scholars. This special issue of JET will examine the works of those Confucian scholars who have advanced significantly in the last few years in certain genres, and also share our thoughts on where certain tendencies are heading in the near future. For this purpose, we will analyze and compare five current trends in Confucian studies: global-contextualism, Asian-modernism, Asian-Americanism, multi-comparativism, and classical-textualism. We will offer an overview of these five trends revealing how each of them comprise a significant movement in Confucian studies. In addressing each, we will provide certain theoretical critiques and the responses to those critiques. The main thrust of this issue is to examine the similarities and differences among (between) those scholarly inquiries as well as to justify those research programs which are debatable, controversial and even confusing.

I. Confucian Studies Based on Global-Contextualism

Generally, contextualism means that any system of claims, values, and activities cannot be understood outside of the real cultural context in which they occur. For many scholars, to understand the philosophical background of contextualism is very helpful in exploring the real meanings of these crucial concepts in Confucianism. A modern practice of classical Confucianism requires a contextualist interpretation of the world. As virtue, consequent or normative ethics, Confucianism should be contextualized, globalized, and developed as the modern way of thinking emphasizing rationality and practice over traditional considerations. For this reason, there has been a dramatic shift toward a more contextualist methodology. Some of these methodologies attempt to reinterpret Confucian thought through the contextualism of globalized sinology. For instance, David Wong stakes out a position between “the new contextualist and postmodernist approaches to Confucianism, and the universalist approach that can find insight or injustice in Confucianism.” (Shun and Wong 2004, 32) L. Comas-Diaz maintains: “While Taoism and Confucianism have included strong humanistic elements within their codes of ethical behavior….Accordingly, contextualism, holism, and liberation are multicultural humanistic constructs.” (Comas-Diaz 2014, 387) J. L. Garfield and W. Edelglass argue: “This feature is evidenced not only in such early influential schools of thought as Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, and Legalism, but also in Chinese Buddhism… This understanding

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of the world as dynamic is directly connected to a third characteristic of Chinese philosophy: contextualism.” (Garfield and Edelglass 2011, 11)

Confucianism in Context: Classic Philosophy and Contemporary Issues, East Asia and Beyond (2011) edited by W. Chang provides a comprehensive view of the tradition and its contemporary relevance for Western readers. The editor’s sincere hope is “we have successful exhibited the evolving Confucian narrative as it takes shape, modulates, endures, and thrives, through time and across cultures.” (Chang 2011, 6) Discussing the development of Confucianism in China, Chang reveals the deep impact of Korean and Japanese cultures on Confucian thinking. In addition to discussing Confucianism’s unique responses to traditional philosophical problems, this book provide a dialogic way of thought, discusses that Confucianism is a valuable philosophical resource for a multicultural, globalizing world, and shows how Confucian philosophy can contribute to contemporary issues such as democracy, human rights, feminism, and ecology. Virtue Ethics and Confucianism (2013) edited by S. Angle and M. Slote presents the fruits of an extended dialogue among American and Chinese philosophers concerning the relations between virtue ethics and the Confucian tradition. Based on recent advances in English-language scholarship on and translation of Confucian philosophy, the twenty essays in this book demonstrate that cross-tradition stimulus, challenge, and learning are now eminently possible.1

Rorty, Pragmatism, and Confucianism (2010) edited By Y. Huang offers a fascinating dialogue between Confucianism, historically the dominant tradition in Chinese thought and society, and the contemporary philosophy of Richard Rorty. In this book, twelve authors such as Roger Ames, Chung-ying Cheng, and so on engage Rorty’s thought is a hermeneutic dialogue with Confucianism, using Confucianism to interpret and reconstruct Rorty while exploring such topics as human nature, moral psychology, moral relativism, moral progress, democracy, tradition, moral metaphysics, and religiosity. Rorty himself provides a detailed reply to each author. He points out: “Roger Ames and I agree on a great deal. We both think that, as Ames says, ‘the human being is a social achievement’……I agree with him that the question is not so much ‘what is Confucianism?’ but, as he puts it, ‘How has Confucianism functioned historically within the specific conditions of an evolving Chinese culture in order to make the most of its circumstances?’” (Huang 2010, 298) According to Sellmann, Confucian ethics can be compared with Aristotelian and feminist virtue ethics and is best understood as a contextualistic virtue ethics based on self-cultivation; “The philosophies of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, the Chinese philosopher Confucius, and existentialist thinkers, as well as modern situation ethics are examples of ethical contextualism. Confucian ethics can be summarized as the art of contextualizing the practice of virtue.” (Sellmann 2009, 467)

Recently, more and more scholars attempt to base Confucian studies on “global-contextualism”. Some research programs track the rise of Asia and studies the region from an interconnected global-contextualist perspective, exploring global and local issues such as social change, economic development, ethnic and cultural identity, and


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multilingualism. One of the most important issues is “Can Confucianism be an age of universalist, cosmopolitanist and global context?” According to Y. Elkana, we should get used to the fact that all knowledge must be seen in context: not only when looking at its origin, but even when trying to establish its validity and even when looking for its possible application for solving burning problems. A concise way of putting the requirement for an epistemological need for rethinking our world in a metaphorical formulation is from local universalism to global contextualism. “…global contextualism is the idea that, whatever the academic discipline, every single universal or seemingly context-independent theory or idea rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment should be rethought and reconsidered in every political or geographical context, different from the world as it used to be in the Age of Enlightenment in Europe, and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, also in America.” (Elkana 2012, 612) In G. Delanty’s examination of the many challenging issues facing cosmopolitan thought today, a major consideration is the problem of conceptual and cultural translation, since it is often the case that cosmopolitanism is highly relevant to Indian and Chinese thought, even though the term itself is not used in their sources or interpretations. Three problems are addressed, namely Universalist versus contextualist positions, Eurocentrism, and the problem of conceptual and cultural translations between western and non-western thought. The central argument is that cosmopolitanism thought needs to expand beyond its western genealogy to include other world traditions. However, the solution is not simply to identify alternative cultural traditions to western ones which might be the carriers of different kinds of cosmopolitan values, but of identifying in these different cultural traditions resources for cosmopolitics. “In this way critical cosmopolitanism seeks to find an alternative both to strong contextualist as well as strong Universalist positions.” (Delanty 2014, 8-2) In Kimberly Hutchings’ analysis, “one of the effects of globalization is an increase in number of the situations in which apparently incommensurable ethical values clash in contexts that reproduce, at the local level, global diversities of both culture and power.” (Hutchings 2010, 198) S. Chuang examines a non-economic outcome of globalization and Confucianization in the Western workplace with evidence from the United States and/or the West. For him, while most recent studies in this area have been focused on the economic impact of globalization in organizations, this research discloses the cultural penetration of Confucian philosophy from the East to the West. 

For Chenyang Li, shared articulations of moral values across societies in the global age are like common currencies in globalized economy. No currency is pre-determined to be a world currency; no single articulation of moral values is pre-determined to be globally shared. The ultimate goal of the international human rights discourse is to promote certain moral values through persuasion; it should not be merely forcing people to change their behavior, but rather convincing people to

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accept certain moral values that they have not explicitly embraced or to embrace certain moral values as more important than they have previously held. This, he maintains, is the nature of the international human rights discourse. “In Confucian language, ‘humanity’ is a social and moral, not biological, concept. In other words, Confucianism may be a humanism but not a ‘speciesism’…This tradition itself does not possess the value of all Homo sapiens being equipped with equal human rights. If human rights advocates want to sell this value into the Chinese culture, they need to persuade the Chinese people to accept it.” (Li 2013, 89-90) According to The Renaissance of Confucianism in Contemporary China edited by R. Fan, “new generation” of Confucian scholars is coming of age. China is reawakening to the power and importance of its own culture. This collection of essays provides a unique view of the emerging Confucian vision for China and the world in the 21st century. This new generation of Chinese scholars takes the authentic roots of Confucian thought seriously, and offers the first critical exploration in English of the emerging Confucian, non-liberal, non-social-democratic, moral and political vision for China’s future. This book allows the English reader access to a moral and cultural vision which seeks to direct China’s political power, social governance, and moral life, and provides the first access in English to major debates in China concerning a Confucian reconceptualization of governance, a critical Confucian assessment of feminism, Confucianism functioning again as a religion, and the possibility of a moral vision that can fill the cultural vacuum created by the collapse of Marxism.

H. Wen brings together American pragmatism and Chinese philosophy in a way that generates new interpretations of Chinese philosophy and a fresh perspective on issues in process philosophy. Through an analysis of key terms, the author argues that Chinese philosophical terminology is not simply a retrospective language which through a process of stipulation promises us knowledge of an existing world, but is also an open, prospective vocabulary that through productive associations allows philosophers to realize a desired world. Relying on this productive power of Chinese terminology, Wen introduces a new term “Confucian pragmatism”, and convincingly shows that although there is much which distinguishes American pragmatism from Confucian philosophy, there is enough conceptual overlap to make Confucian pragmatism a viable and exciting field of study. As he claims: “American philosophers use the contextualism and creatio in situ of processual cosmology to counter what Dewey has called ‘the philosophical fallacy ’…American pragmatism, and more particularly, Deweyan experience and individuality, are open to dialogue with Confucianism.” (Wen 2009, 52-53) The Globalization of Confucius and Confucianism edited by K. Muhlhan and N. Looy (2012) ranges from the perception of Confucianism in Europe at the time of the Enlightenment to Neo-Confucian debates and approaches. Those articles focus on the resurgence of Confucianism in order to examine the role played by Confucian ideas in the present and the past, as well as the potential future form of a new Confucian culture. Accordingly, the popularity of Confucianism is on the rise, not only in China but also internationally. Confucian values are praised as the (universal) way, especially in the face of current political, social, and economic crises. The Confucian legacy has now endured for over 2,500 years, and its philosopher’s ideas have gained recognition as an Eastern
alternative to Western concepts. This return to China's very own tradition and ideals can be seen as symbolizing China's new self-assurance. S. Kim explores a mode of democracy which is culturally relevant and socially practicable within the contemporary pluralistic context of historically Confucian East Asian societies, by critically engaging the two most dominant theories of Confucian democracy: Confucian communitarianism and meritocratic elitism. He constructs a mode of public reason that is morally palatable to East Asians still saturated in Confucian customs by re-appropriating Confucian familialism, and uses this perspective to theorize on Confucian democratic welfarism and political meritocracy. He then applies the theory of Confucian democracy to South Korea, arguably the most Confucianized society in East Asia, and examines the theory's practicality in Korea's increasingly individualized, pluralized, and multicultural society by looking at cases of freedom of expression, freedom of association, insult law, and immigration policy. Kim says: “But it is this radical contextualism that facilitates docility that makes people want to be led by, and thus to be more deferential toward, either personal or impersonal authorities. It is, however, distinct from submission that is more overtly political.” (Kim 2014, 54) In 2012, the Paris-Nishan Forum “Confucianism and New Humanism in a Globalized World” stresses the importance of the borderless dialogue to invent a new humanism tailored to the requirements of a globalized world, which should not be about the circulation of goods, but should also give rise to an exchange of ideas and a cross-fertilization of cultures. “At a time when aspirations to human dignity, civic participation and sustainable development were growing stronger while the world was faced with economic and environmental crises, a new humanism should draw lessons from Confucius and Asian philosophies to build a harmony amongst the diversity of peoples as well as between them and nature. The new humanism must contribute to harmonious relations between all regions in a world where all societies are connected. It is a basis on which to rethink the scope of public policy and the role of international organizations.”

II. Confucian Studies Based on Asian-Modernism

Some scholars disclose in meticulous detail the relevance of Confucianism to the contemporary world. It is popular to divide Confucianism into traditionalist and modernist forms. “New Confucianism” (different from Neo-Confucianism) can be regarded as modernist Confucianism, which incorporates modern interpretations and practices for nowadays needs. There have been significant discussions of the intercourse and interaction between Confucian developmentalism and Western models. Some scholars return to modernist forms in order to reveal a history of

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Confucian development, and promote an updated Confucianism by following the socio-economic changes. In B. Elman’s regard, beginning with the twentieth-first century, Chinese intellectual history and the history of Confucian philosophy have irrevocably replaced classical studies as the dominant research programs for graduate education in Chinese thought. Through the influence of Hu Shi, Qian Mu, Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan, Wing-tsit Chan (Chen Rongjie), Liu Shuxian, Li Zehou, and Wei-ming Tu, “Confucian philosophy remains the dominant concern among Chinese and Western scholars of Chinese intellectual history despite the recent inroads made in Daoist and Buddhist studies in China.” (Elman 2010, 371) The contemporary socio-economic transformation of “Post-Confucian” societies such as mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and Singapore, has caused crises in cultural identity. As Wang, Cheng and Liu point out: “The Post-Confucian systems have developed within the framework of the comprehensive East Asian nation-state that originated under the Qin and Han dynasties in China. In this tradition there is none of the anti-government political culture typical of the US, for the Post-Confucian world, politics and government are in command, not the market.” (Wang, Cheng, Liu, 2013, 22) S. Marginson discloses “While there are important differences between them, these systems, termed here ‘Post-Confucian’, share (1) a common heritage, in the comprehensive role of the Sinic state (as distinct from the limited liberal state of the English-speaking world) and Confucian educational traditions in the family and examination system; (2) an accelerated response to Western modernization.” (Marginson 2013, 9) K. Cho re-interprets that Confucianism within the context of twenty-first-century East Asia requires further investigation into the discourse of “Otherness”, and argues that human rights discourse in East Asia must proceed with a reflective understanding of Western modernity, mainstream Confucian culture, and the tumultuous history of East Asia and that it requires either East Asia’s “negation of the negation” of its own culture, or a new understanding of it. (Cho 2014, 92) S. Melvin says: “China spent the greater part of the last century struggling to become a modern nation. But after so many years spent looking outward and forward, some Chinese are once again looking inward and back — way back, to the golden age of philosophers like Confucius…”

Tu Weiming maintains that East Asian modernity under the influence of Confucian traditions suggests an alternative model to Western modernism: 1) Government leadership in a market economy is not only necessary but is also desirable. 2) Although law is essential as the minimum requirement for social stability, "organic solidarity" can only result from the implementation of humane rites of interaction. 3) Family as the basic unit of society is the locus from which the core values are transmitted. 4) Civil society flourishes not because it is an autonomous arena above the family and beyond the state. 5) Education ought to be the civil religion of society. The primary purpose of education is character-building. 6) Since self-cultivation is the root for the regulation of family, governance of state, and peace

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under Heaven, the quality of life of a particular society depends on the level of self-cultivation of its members. Tu stresses that in the age of reason, when the Enlightenment movement began to shape the Western mindset, leading thinkers such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, took China as an important referent country and Confucianism as a significant referent culture. “With an eye on the future, it is likely that the spirit of East Asian modernity imbued with Confucian characteristics will serve as a reference for public intellectuals in North America and Western Europe as well as for intellectuals elsewhere in the world.” (Tu 2010, 9)

H. Roetz discusses central assumptions of Tu’s program of overcoming the “enlightenment mentality” and throws a critical light on his conceptions of religious or spiritual Confucianism, of a Confucian modernity, and of the “multiple modernities” theory in general. It defends a unitary rather than multiple concept of modernity in terms of the realization of a morally controlled “principle of free subjectivity” and tries to show how Confucianism, understood as a secular ethics, could contribute to this goal. (Roetz, 2008, 367)

Y. Kim and J. Kim think that Confucianism is the guiding creed for a quarter of mankind, yet hardly anyone has explained it in plain terms. Written for the global audience, the two authors distill the core ideas of the major Confucian classics and shows how their timeless wisdom can be applied to the modern world. They also introduce pragmatic suggestions emanating from Confucius and his followers for ensuring good governance, building a humane economy and educating moral leaders. For them, the book’s core message of inner morality, first expounded by Confucius millennia ago, will resonate on both sides of the Pacific, and its sweeping survey of the hot topics today will breathe new life to Confucian teachings while providing much-needed answers to our urgent social problems. J. Chan points out that since the very beginning, Confucianism has been troubled by a serious gap between its political ideals and the reality of societal circumstances. Accordingly, contemporary Confucians must develop a viable method of governance that can retain the spirit of the Confucian ideal while tackling problems arising from non-ideal modern situations. The author argues that the best way to meet this challenge is to adopt liberal democratic institutions that are shaped by the Confucian conception of the good rather than the liberal conception of the right. He examines and reconstructs both Confucian political thought and liberal democratic institutions, blending them to form a new Confucian political philosophy. The author decouples liberal democratic institutions from their popular liberal philosophical foundations in fundamental moral rights, such as popular sovereignty, political equality, and individual sovereignty. Chan grounds them on Confucian principles and redefines their roles and functions, thus mixing Confucianism with liberal democratic

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institutions in a way that strengthens both. Then he explores the implications of this new yet traditional political philosophy for fundamental issues in modern politics, including authority, democracy, human rights, civil liberties, and social justice. The author concludes: “Taken as a whole, Confucian political perfectionism makes a radical departure from European and American liberal democratic theory, although it makes use of certain liberal democratic institutions to cope with nonideal problems.” (Chan 2013, 22). Significantly, the author critically reconfigures the Confucian political philosophy of the classical period for the contemporary era.

Daniel Bell makes the case that as P. R. China retreats from communism, it is embracing a new Confucianism that offers a compelling alternative to Western liberalism. The author thinks that the moral vacuum of China is being filled by Christian sects, Falungong, and extreme forms of nationalism, “…the government considers that such alternatives threaten the hard-won peace and stability that underpins the country’s development, so it has encouraged the revival of China’s most venerable political tradition: Confucianism. Like most ideologies, however, Confucianism can be a double-edged sword.” (Bell 2010, 8) Bell provides an insider's account of Chinese culture and, along the way, debunks a variety of stereotypes, and presents the startling argument that Confucian social hierarchy can actually contribute to economic equality in China, and covers such diverse social topics as sex, sports, and the treatment of domestic workers. He considers the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, wondering whether Chinese over competitiveness might be tempered by Confucian civility. By examining the challenges that arise as China adapts ancient values to contemporary society, Bell enriches the dialogue of possibilities available to this rapidly evolving nation. 9 J. Solé-Farràs explores how Confucian thought, as the ideological underpinning of traditional, imperial China, is being developed and refined into a New Confucianism relevant for the twenty-first century. He traces the development of Confucian thought, examines significant new texts, and shows how New Confucianism relates to various spheres of life, how it informs views on key philosophical issues, and how it affects personal conduct. Starting by exploring the philosophical and ideological principles of New Confucianism, Solé-Farràs goes on to explain how New Confucianism is a collective process of continuous creation and recreation, an incessant and evolving discourse. He reveals: “The main trend in the academic discourse on Confucianism in the 1990s was the increase in New Confucianist studies in the PRC and the growing influence of its academics....” (Solé-Farràs 2013, 32) He argues that New Confucianism, unlike its earlier manifestation, is more accommodating of a plurality of ideologies in the world; and that understanding Confucianism and how it is developing is essential for understanding contemporary China. As the author points out: To sum up, the description of the general intellectual framework of post-Maoist China that we have

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set out before has set out the essential features of a new situation arising from the economic and political change in the PRC. This new situation is categorized by intense activity and wide-ranging curiosity in the areas of philosophy and ideology that have renewed and especially diversified the intellectual discourse of the Maoist phase. “With regards to our research, moreover, we would like to highlight the fact that in all the classifications that attempt to describe the Chinese intellectual scene as a whole, traditional Chinese philosophy and the Confucianist discourse have appeared playing a more or less leading role.” (Ibid, 17) P. J. Ivanhoe argues that the Analects is as relevant and important today as it has proven to be over the course of its more than 2000 year history, not only for the people who live in East Asian societies but for all human beings. As he says: “It is not a historical account of Kongzi’s philosophy; it is how I see the relevance of some of his teachings for philosophical and social problems in the contemporary world, how I think a modern Confucian might see her or his own traditions.” (Ivanhoe 2013, xiv) In his regard, this text has inspired so many talented people for so long, across a range of complex, creative, rich, and fascinating cultures offers a strong prima facie reason for thinking that the insights the Analects contains are not bound by either the particular time or cultural context in which the text took shape. In 2013, Confucianism: A Modern Interpretation written by C. Y. Chang was republished for today’s needs. This book is still guideable and significant to the modernization of Confucianism, and illustrates the six elements of Confucius’ teachings: Philosophy of Life, Ethics, Philosophy of Education, Philosophy of Creation, Political Philosophy, Philosophy of Providence and Philosophy of Peace. The author explains the value and significance of Confucius’ teachings and also focuses on the modernization of the teachings, and ascertains that “to understand Confucius is to understand China, the Chinese people, Chinese history and Chinese culture”. This book will be of interest to anyone who is interested in Confucius’ teachings and its modern interpretations.

R. Ames argues that the long-postponed impact of Confucian values on different aspects of the world’s philosophical and cultural traditions is now on the horizon, and that a creative fusion of Confucianism with other narratives will follow behind the rise of China as a contemporary economic and political force. “As Confucian values spread to become a global cultural factor in our own time, it will not only be the other traditions it encounters that will be altered, challenged, and enriched. Indeed, Confucianism itself will continue to be transformed in the process.” (Ames 2011, 4) S. Angle explains that Neo-Confucianism is the sophisticated revival of Confucian theorizing, responding to challenges from Buddhism and Daoism, which began around 1000 C.E. and came to dominate the Chinese intellectual scene for centuries thereafter. He represents supreme human virtue: a flawless, empathetic responsiveness to every situation in which one finds oneself. For him, according to Neo-Confucians, we should all strive to become sages, whether or not we ultimately achieve it. Taking neo-Confucianism seriously means to explore the ways that its theories of psychology, ethics, education, and politics engage with the views of contemporary philosophers. Angle’s research is both an exposition of Neo-Confucian philosophy and a sustained dialogue with many leading Western thinkers--and
especially with those philosophers leading the current renewal of interest in virtue ethics. As he claims: “My central argument has been that taking Neo-Confucianism seriously as contemporary philosophy involves taking sagehood seriously.” (Angle 2012, 224) Confucian Philosophy: Innovations and Transformations (2012) is edited by Chung-ying Cheng and J. Tiwald, and contributed by 11 well-known Confucian scholars. For those authors, Chinese tradition Confucianism has been always both a philosophy of moral self-cultivation for the human individual and an ideological guide for political institutional policy and governmental action. After the May 4th Movement of 1919, Confucianism lost much of its moral appeal and political authority and entered a kind of limbo, bearing blame for the backwardness and weakening of China. This book claims that now that China has asserted its political rights among world nations, it seems natural to ask whether Confucianism as a philosophy has a modern or even postmodern role to play for building modern China and for enlightening the world. This question is even more meaningful in light of the fact that there is a genuine need felt in China for a return to its Confucian heritage and vision for purposes of sustaining societal harmonization and reconstructing cultural identity in the modern world. New Horizons in Eastern Humanism: Buddhism, Confucianism and the Quest for Global Peace (2011) edited by Tu Weiming and D. Ikeda, shows that China now attracts global attention in direct proportion to its increasing economic and geopolitical power. But for millennia, the philosophy which has shaped the soul of China is not modern Communism, or even new forms of capitalism, but rather Confucianism. And one of the most striking phenomena relating to China’s ascendency on the world stage is a burgeoning interest, throughout Asia and beyond, in the humanistic culture and values that underlie Chinese politics and finance; particularly the thought of Confucius passed on in the Analects. In this stimulating conversation, two leading thinkers from the Confucian and Buddhist traditions discuss the timely relevance of a rejuvenated Confucian ethics to some of the most urgent issues in the modern world: Sino/Japanese/US relations; the transformation of society through education and dialogue; and the role of world religions in promoting human flourishing. Exploring correspondences between the Confucian and Buddhist world-views, the interlocutors commit themselves to a view of spirituality and religion that, without blurring cultural difference, is focused above all on the “universal heart”: on harmony between people and nature that leads to peace and to a hopeful future for all humanity. Recently, many scholars have tried to investigate regional social development through the perspective of Confucianism. S. Lew elucidates the positive effect of cultural inheritance that has been most blamed in earlier studies as hampering economic growth and democratization in Korean society: Confucianism, affective networks, and state intervention.\(^{10}\)

Asian Americans have quite recently emerged as an increasingly important force in American politics. Asian American voices have been prominent in policy debates over such matters as education, race relations, and immigration reform. Before the 21st century, only very little scholarly attention had been devoted to understanding the engagement of Asian Americans with American politics. At the beginning of this century, some scholars attempted to discuss such topics as the historical relationship of Asians to American politics, the position of Asian Americans in America’s legal and racial landscape, recent Asian American voting behavior and political opinion, politics and the evolving demographics of the Asian American population, current national controversies involving Asian Americans, conclusions drawn from regional and local case studies, and the future of Asian Americans in American politics.\textsuperscript{11} Some Chinese American scholars have asked this question: whether Asian immigrants should promote their Asian-Americanism or American-Asianism? For them, this Asian-American movement and people are starting to forget the traditional Asian culture. 11 years ago, A. Ong demonstrated how theorizing about Asian Americanism had been surpassed by the new demographics of globalization. “Asian Americanism as an idea has been mainly the product of Chinese American or Japanese American Academics and activists seeking to forge a racial community that has historically been wronged, but they have great difficulty in reproducing that model in a context of extreme flux and diversity among Asian American populations in the country. “ (Ong 2003, 256) D. Schildkraut explores public opinion about the implications of American identity, and evaluates the claim that all Americans should prioritize their American identity instead of an ethnic or national origin identity. For him, national identity can enhance participation, trust, and obligation; but it can also lead to threat and resentment, and, among members of minority groups, it can lead to alienation from political institutions and co-nationals. He analyzes “the factors that influence whether a person identifies primarily as American, a member of a panethnic group, such as Latino or Asian, or a member of one’s national original group, such as Dominican or Korean.” (Schildkraut 2010, 18) L. Mar states that Confucianism is an ever-changing philosophical system that reacts and reformulates to socio-political conditions. Her research on Confucianism reminds us that even contemporary definitions such as "Chinese" or "American" are not fixed, but rather protean and in flux.\textsuperscript{12} Y. Ling manages the ideals of Chinese society, and also provides further insight on American culture that was originally imperceptible, and discusses Chinese and American individual culture, their cross-cultural interactions, their impacts on the modern world, and the changes the two have been experiencing. Ling compiled a book that has combined traditional Confucianism and Americanism. Being a


\textsuperscript{12} See L. Mar. 2012. “Feminism, Family, and Confucianism in Asian America.”
http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/feminism-family-and-confucianism-asian-america.

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multicultural person—an American citizen with a Chinese heritage, he conveys the essence of Chinese culture, and provides an analyzed account of a cultural fusion as the significant outcome of globalization.13

_Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy_ edited by V. Shen presents both an historical and a systematic examination of the philosophy of classical Confucianism. Taking into account newly unearthed materials and the most recent scholarship, it features contributions by experts in the field, ranging from senior scholars to outstanding early career scholars. In the first part, those authors present the historical development of classical Confucianism, detailing its development amidst a fading ancient political theology and a rising wave of creative humanism. They examine the development of the philosophical ideas of Confucius as well as his disciples and his grandson Zisi, the Zisi-Mencius School, Mencius, and Xunzi, and analyze and critically assesses the philosophy in the Confucian Classics and other major works of these philosophers. The second part systematically examines such philosophical issues as feeling and emotion, the aesthetic appreciation of music, wisdom in poetry, moral psychology, virtue ethics, political thoughts, the relation with the Ultimate Reality, and the concept of harmony in Confucianism. S. Crane discusses the ideas and arguments of the ancient Chinese philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism to some of the most intractable social issues of modern American life: 1) Introduces the precepts of ancient Chinese philosophers to issues they could not have anticipated; 2) Relates Daoist and Confucian ideas to problems across the arc of modern human life, from birth to death; 3) Provides general readers with a fascinating introduction to Chinese philosophy, and its continued relevance; and 4) Offers a fresh perspective on highly controversial American debates, including abortion, stem cell research, and assisted suicide. For him, “…what ‘Confucianism’ means in this contemporary situation will not be the same as what it meant in pre-Qin china. There will be a core of indispensable ideas but the interpretation of those ideas must wary, as historical circumstance varies. This has always been the case with Confucianism and Daoism: philosophical meaning have changed over the course of Chinese history. The rub comes when we make a somewhat bigger move, from ancient China to modern America.” (Crane 2013, 9)

From the meaning of Confucius to the role of Chinese Americans in shaping how we read the Constitution to why he hates the hyphen in “Chinese-American,” E. Liu pieces together a sense of the Chinese American identity in these auspicious years for both countries, and considers the still-recent history that made anyone Chinese in America seem foreign and disloyal until proven otherwise. He breaks down his vast subject into bite-sized chunks, along the way providing insights into universal matters: identity, nationalism, family, and more.14 E Slingerland argues that strong

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versions of the situationist critique of virtue ethics are empirically and conceptually unfounded, as well as that, even if one accepts that the predictive power of character may be limited, this is not a fatal problem for early Confucian virtue ethics. In his regard, early Confucianism has explicit strategies for strengthening and expanding character traits over time, as well as for managing a variety of situational forces. He suggests that Confucian virtue ethics represents a more empirically responsible model of ethics than those currently dominant in Western philosophy. He finally concludes “At the very least, we can say that, as we learn more about how the human mind works, ethical traditions such as early Confucianism help us to fill in enormous blind spots—the importance of the body, emotions, cultural training, the unconscious, and the social environment—that have hindered modern Western ethical thinking for the past several hundred years. They are thus of more than merely antiquarian interest, and they can potentially help us in developing an ethic that will meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.” (Slingerland 2011, 419) Interestingly, Reacting to the Past is a series of historical role-playing games that explore important ideas by re-creating the contexts which shaped them, and improves speaking, writing, and leadership skills, promotes engagement with classic texts and history, and builds learning communities. In those games, students are assigned roles, informed by classic texts, set in particular moments of intellectual and social ferment. D. K. Gardner and M. C. Carnes make this type of game, and bring to life the suppleness and power of Confucian thought.15

IV. Confucian Studies Based on New-Comparativism

More and more scholars have tried to construct an effective paradigm for a critical comparativism and multi-comparativism in the field of Confucian studies through Western philosophical hermeneutics. Some of them have provided applicable approaches to study Confucianism through new or contemporary comparativism. We may reveal the development and main tendencies of new types of comparativism. G. C. Spavak maintains: “When we rethink comparativism, we think of translation as an active rather than a prosthetic practice. I have often said that translation is the most

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15The game is set in the Hanlin Academy in Ming dynasty China. Most students are members of the Grand Secretariat of the Hanlin Academy, the body of top-ranking graduates of the civil service examination who serve as advisers to the Emperor Wanli. Some Grand Secretaries are Confucian “purists,” who hold that tradition obliges the emperor to name his first-born son as successor; others, in support of the most senior of the Grand Secretaries, maintain that it is within the emperor’s right to choose his successor; and still others, as they decide this matter among many issues confronting the empire, continue to scrutinize the teachings of Confucianism for guidance. The game unfolds amidst the secrecy and intrigue within the walls of the Forbidden City, as scholars struggle to apply Confucian precepts to a dynasty in peril. (See Gardner, Daniel K. and Carnes, Mark C. 2014. Confucianism and the Succession Crisis of the Wanli Emperor, W. W. Norton & Company.)
intimate act of reading. Thus translation comes to inhabit the new politics of comparativism as reading itself, in the broadest possible sense. “(Spavak 2009, 613)

C. G. Dempsey establishes his study’s foundation by reviewing the history and critique of the comparative method, also reciting rebuttals posed by proponents of a new comparativism. Responding to J. Z. Smith’s criticisms of past comparative studies and his prescription for an approach that furthers the field and its study, Dempsey outlines how he uses comparison to investigate and hone categories and assumptions central to the discipline. He frames the sacred as an enlivening category for comparing multilayered religious contexts, one that connotes transcendent meaning and power yet is not limited to the metaphysical or hegemonic. For him, “as an intricately woven reference structure, the sacred can be especially useful when casting the wide net of comparison; moreover, comparative explorations provide multifaceted scenarios from which to deepen understandings of the sacred in its complexity.” (Dempsey 2011, 3-20)

R. A. Segal finds that there are currently four positions on the comparative method in the study of myth. At one extreme lies the postmodern position, which spurns comparison altogether. The assumptions here are that the comparative method seeks only similarities, that similarities deny differences, that similarities take the items compared out of context, that similarity means identity, that similarities are invariably superficial, and that similarities are ineluctably invidious. The second position, less radical and much older, allows for comparisons, but on only a regional or local rather than worldwide scale. The comparisons permitted are called ‘controlled’ comparisons. This kind of comparativism regularly takes place among, for example, Indo-Europeans. A third, more recent position allows anew for universal comparisons, but only when differences as well as similarities are sought. This position, which dubs itself the “new comparativism,” assumes that older comparativism – though not, as with the first two positions, comparison per se – seeks only similarities, that similarities exclusively are invariably superficial, and that similarities exclusively are unavoidably invidious. The fourth and final position is that of ‘old comparativism,’ or what used to be called simply “The Comparative Method.” Here comparisons are universal, and the quest can be for sheer similarities. “I have defended the comparative method against the assumptions made by controlled comparativists and by new comparativists: that the only proper similarities are regional rather than universal (controlled comparativism) and that differences are more important than similarities (new comparativism).” (Segal 2010, 315)

Relatively speaking, the “new comparativism” is more reasonable and acceptable. T. Bierschenk and J. O. de Sardan classify comparative methods into three types: 1) “traditional comparativism” which was concerned with closed systems (cultures and societies); 2) “contemporary comparativism which is quick at establishing direct if fragile connections between anecdotal local observations and theories of the global; and 3) comparativism which spreads progressively outwards from a solid empirical base: “ (a) an intensive, multi-site comparativism pursued in the field...(b) a comparativism based on regional and thematic affinities, comparing similar institutions in historically related local and national context...(c) a wider level of comparison involving similar processes in very different historical or spatial context……” (Bierschenk and Sardan 2014, 21-22)
According to E. Asprem, a typology of different comparative methods is constructed along two axes: a homological-analogical axis distinguishes between comparisons based on shared genealogy (homology) versus purely structural or functional comparisons (analogy), while a synchronic-diachronic axis picks out a temporal dimension. For him, historical research programs have typically endorsed homological comparison, while analogical comparison has remained suspect; and this limitation is shown to be entirely arbitrary from a methodological point of view. He argues that considering historicist research in terms of homological comparison may also shed new light on some long-standing conceptual problems, “this typology provides a way to express the ‘check-list approach’…The correct use of this heuristic is as tertium comparationis for comparison between phenomena that share a common genealogy (i.e., that are grounded in homological comparison). By contrast, the common misuse results from employing the characteristics as necessary and sufficient criteria for use in analogical comparison, thus insinuating some cross-cultural and ahistorical type instead of a historically grounded ‘form of thought’.” (Asprem 2014, 25-26)

E. Cline indicates that comparative studies in different disciplines often face unique challenges in responding to question of why comparative work is worthwhile; and these differences are sometimes rooted in the distinctive goals and tendencies that are a part. “Despite these differences, there remain some common challenges that comparativists in fields such as philosophy and religious studies face.” (Cline 2013, 48). Cline continuously claims that although there are some differences between different virtue ethical accounts of Confucianism on which features are central to virtue ethics and that the best way to interpret Confucian ethics is as a form of virtue ethics. Van Norden also argues that the virtue ethical accounts of Confucian and Western thinkers is a good topic of comparison, because studying Confucian virtue ethics can teach us about new conceptions of the virtues and different ways of living a worthwhile life, and also because Western virtue ethics illuminates many aspects of Confucianism that might go unnoticed otherwise.” (Ibid, 50-51)

J. L. Richey asserts “Because Plato is as foreign to them as Confucius, the comparativist philosopher does not have to take pains to carefully defamiliarize the Western texts before comparing them to the Asian ones because the Western exhibits are not familiar in the first place…." (Richey 2008, 191)

A. Sun thinks: “This is a question that China has been able to answer, for the asking comes not from perplexed early comparative religions, but from Robert Bellah, a comparativist whose sharp insights about the United States are rooted in his understanding of other cultures...” (Sun 2013, 183)

S. Angle compares and analyzes contemporary Confucianism using these dimensions: (1) Confucian Capitalism; (2) Scholarly Confucianism; (3) Marxist Confucianism; (4) Confucian Soft Power; (5) Tourist Confucianism; (6) Revivalist Confucianism; (7) Family Values Confucianism; (8) Feel-Good Confucianism; and (9) Global Philosophy and Confucianism. (Angle 2010, 24)

In his new book *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* (2014), Chenyang Li, one of *JET* old contributors, provides multifaceted comparisons from which to deepen understandings of the issue of “Harmony” in its complexity. In “Foreword” of Li’s
book, Roger Ames gives the following evaluative comment: “Although the expression ‘harmony’ (和) as one of the central terms of art carries enormous philosophical weight in the Confucian tradition, in the Western literature on Chinese philosophy it has frequently been elided with a meaning of harmony not its own. ……Chengyang Li has brought more than a decade of his painstaking research on Confucian harmony into monograph form to address this problem and this sense and this history of harmony into focus for us.” In his book review published in this JET special issue, Zhaolu Lu points out: For those who are intrigued by Confucian conception of harmony, especially for those who would like to learn about harmony of the Confucian style in contrast to that of the Western style, reading Li’s interpretations of Confucian canonic texts may be a thought-provoking maneuver that gives rise to controversial issues for future research projects. J. Kaipayil explores that the philosophical problem which comparative philosophy apparently faces is two-fold. Comparative philosophy, at least in its classical model, is based on the assumption that different philosophical traditions are complementary to each other and hence a genuine philosophizing should synthesize the perspectives of Eastern and Western philosophies. This goes against the very nature of philosophy. Philosophy, as an enterprise of critical reflection, cannot part with pluralism. If philosophy parts with its radical pluralism, philosophy itself will be done away with. The second philosophical problem comparative philosophy confronts is the collapse of East-West divide in contemporary philosophy. Indian, Chinese and Western philosophical traditions have developed for centuries more or less in isolation from and independently of each other. This is not the situation any more. The old cultural divide in philosophy has almost collapsed in today’s more interdependent and globalized world. “The procedural and philosophical problems comparative philosophy faces today call for a revamp of entire comparative enterprise. The future development of comparative philosophy will depend largely on how we address some of the key problems this discipline faces today. But one thing is certain, that global philosophy cannot afford to lose comparative philosophy altogether. Comparative philosophy should be on the scene in some form as a constant reminder to philosophers of their need for dialogical openness to culturally diverse philosophical traditions and thought-patterns.” (Kaipayil 2010, 297-298) Just 2014, several new books on Confucian studies through the perspectives of “new comparativism” have been published such as Light From The East: Or Studies In Japanese Confucianism; Gender and Welfare States in East Asia: Confucianism or Gender Equality?: Emerson and Neo-Confucianism: Crossing Paths over the Pacific; Religion In China: Universism A Key To The Study Of Taoism and Confucianism; Confucianism in Relation to Christianity, a Paper - Primary Source Edition; Confucianism and Taoism; Confucianism and Taoism: Non Christian Religious Systems 1900; Witchcraft and the Rise of the First Confucian Empire; and so on.

V. Confucian Studies Based on Classical-Textualism

Some scholars lean to “classical textualism”. “Classical textualism” demands rigid adherence to the Confucian text, and stresses that Confucianism can be understood only by interpreting the original words of the Confucian classics. Conservative scholars advocate an historical understanding of words, and the liberal ones prefer a
More and more scholars attempt to adopt the "classical textualism" or integral, complete and comprehensive textualism to overcome the fragmented textualism they believe is distorting original Confucian teachings. According to F. Cross, the classical textualist approach to statutory interpretation takes the words of the text and attempts to discern their "plain meaning," though textualists will use certain supplementary tools discussed below. "Textualism seeks a reasonable and objective measure of the meaning of statutory language and makes no attempts to discern any underlying intent of the adopting legislature. In philosophy, this distinction has been expressed as intentional versus extensional meaning, with the former referring to the meaning of the speaker and the latter referring to the meaning of the words themselves." (Cross 2012, 25) D. Williams says: “Only the deep textualism of Orientalism at its most rigorous reality can begin to cope with the scale of the task, and even here a leaven of experience of Asian life is required to achieve the depth of intellectual mastery demanded. So, preeminently, Asia must be our method because it is to Asian reality that we must submit intellectually if we are to appreciate what was Confucian about Confucian Japan” (Williams 2014, 82-83). Many philosophical examinations of the relation between language and “originality” of the Confucian thoughts have focused on the interpretation of written texts. So called textualism can be distinguished from the modern to the classical. For a better understanding we may classify “textualism” into the following: 1) “constructionist method” versus “originalist method”; 2) “modern meaning” versus “historical meaning”; 3) “liberal understanding” versus “conservative understanding”; 4) “subjective judgment” versus “objective judgment”; 5) “general interpretation” versus “special interpretation”; and 6) “romantic imagination” versus “realistic imagination.”

VI. Contributions of Four JET Writers and Five Trends of Confucian Studies

This Special issue of the Journal of East-West Thought (JET) is on “Confucianism, Globalization and the Spirit of Our Time”. In this issue, Dr. Robert Cummings Neville contributes his critical article “Confucianism and Toleration” through a global examination. In his analysis, in contexts of political philosophy, Confucianism is frequently identified as a culture with a long evolving history in China, with branches in other countries such as Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia that were amalgamated with other local cultures, and now with a broader diaspora. In the diaspora, Confucianism usually is associated with local enclaves of East Asian people situated in other countries like “China towns.” All these parts of Confucian culture have been historically evolving and have differed from one another by how they have adapted to the larger cultural contexts. But they have continuity with one another by lineages of interpretation of core texts among the intellectuals and habits of social and ritual formation, such as an emphasis on family and filial piety. In these contexts of political philosophy, it frequently seems beside the point for non-East Asians to claim to be Confucians unless they “go native” in some East Asian culture. According to his arguments, “Confucianism for a pluralistic, meritocratic, highly mobile, urban culture such as obtains in Boston as well as much of the rest of the world cannot advocate the
same social policies it would for a relatively homogeneous agrarian culture. This is a
time for vigorous creativity in inventing rituals for making the components of a
pluralistic world cohere and flourish.” Dr. Neville's theory of religion and philosophy
is a great challenge to dominant trends of comparative philosophy and religion. In his
book *Ultimates: Philosophical Theology* (2014), he thinks that his project should
“serve the theological interests of Buddhists, Christians, Confucians, Daoists, Hindus,
Jews, and Muslims just as much as the work of their own confessional theologians
and with an openness to comparison and correction that provides a broad and
somewhat tested context.” (Neville, 2014a, xvii) In his another book *Existence:
Philosophical Theology*, Dr. Neville thinks “Confucianism is known for its emphasis
on social ritual, and that will be significant in Philosophical Theology Two and Three.
But the emphasis on sincerity goes back to Confucius. In one way or another most
Confucians would agree with Wang Yangming on the unity of thought and action. Tu
Weiming explicitly connects Confucian inwardness to the Western existentialist
problematic.” (Neville, 2014b, 2-3) J. Solé-Farràs describes that when Robert Neville
reflects on his vital Confucianist experience in the external context of East Asia, he
“says that the objective of his Confucianism is not to respond to Western influences,
but to live philosophically in the Western context, or rather in the context of a hybrid
world of different cultural legacies. His Confucianism allows him to think about his
culture and other world cultures philosophically, although he understands the
perspectives of Confucianism within the cultural context of East Asian.” (Solé-Farràs
2013, 39) Dr. J. H. Berthrong claims that the Western scholars provide a similarly
wide range of approaches to introducing Confucianism to a Euro-American audience.
“Some, such as Robert Neville’s work on Boston Confucianism (2000; 2008) are a
combination of a discussion of comparative issues in Confucian philosophy and
religious thought embedded in Neville’s own creative speculative philosophy (see Dr.
Berthrong's article in this Special issue).

At the 2009 APA Eastern Division meeting in New York City, Dr. Neville
delivered a talk calling for innovative approaches to advance the philosophical
engagement of Chinese philosophy, with the emphasis on “addressing contemporary
first-order problems.” Many Chinese scholars have been inspired by his talk and
brought the idea to organize special sessions on these new projects. More and more
papers are particularly focused on Chinese cosmology or Chinese metaphysics. One
of the aims is to define the interface between science and metaphysics. Those
scholars’ hope is to spark more interest in Chinese metaphysics and advance Chinese
metaphysics as more relevant to the scientific worldview of our times. In his *JET*
inaugural issue article “Research Projects for Comparative Study and Appreciation of
Ultimate Realities through the Sciences and Humanities,” Neville declares: “In the
Confucian and Daoist based traditions, the framing assumptions about the ubiquity of
value in experience have made it difficult to relate the traditional cosmologies in
which value plays such a large role to scientific work, resulting in a general failure to
rethink East Asian traditions in scientific terms and the equal failure to represent
science in the cultural comfort zones of East Asia.” (Neville, 2011, 132)
In this issue, Dr. John H. Berthrong contributes a powerful article “Globalizing Confucianism: The Rudao (儒道).” According to him, along with the influence of the second generation of New Confucians, the continuing globalization of Confucianism also depends on the work of a group of Chinese and Western scholars such as Wm. Theodore de Bary, the late Wing-tsit Chan, Du [Tu] Weiming, Liu Shuxian, A. S. Cua, Cheng Chung-yi, the late Julia Ching, John Makeham, Rodney Taylor, Umberto Breciani, Stephen Angle, Robert C. Neville, Henry Rosemont, the late David Hall, and Roger Ames, just to mention some of the more prolific scholars writing in English. The work of these scholars ranges from discussions of Confucian-Christian dialogue, the nature of Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy, the history of the development of New Confucianism, to individual reconstructions and elaborations of Confucianism and a global philosophy in the 21st Century. After evaluating Neville’s creative work, Dr. Berthrong points out the work of Stephen Angle (2009) and Roger Ames (2011) by presenting and supporting a comprehensive view of Confucianism which both describes and commends the tradition. In terms that Lee Yearley has suggested, Neville, Angle and Ames trace and elaborate the history of Confucianism within the matrix of defending their own philosophical interpretations of the tradition. In doing so they are very much globalizing the Confucian Way, albeit now from a Western perspective. The focus of this account of the globalization of Confucianism has dealt primarily with the vicissitudes of its philosophical revival over three or four generations from the 1920s forward. The simple reason is that it was indeed a group of philosophers who played the primary initial role in the Confucian revival in the 20th Century. We can suspect that if the revival continues and bears fruit in Chinese and East Asian life, it will be possible that other domains of social and political life will be touched by New Confucian theory and praxis. As noted above, this is indeed beginning to happen. Some New Confucians are moving beyond the speculative philosophical roots of the revival. “We now find more and more studies that touch upon the social sciences and Confucian impact and influences on more than just speculative philosophy. Confucians, as we have seen above, are thinking about art, the economy and politics as well as more purely philosophical issues” (see this JET special issue). Dr. Berthrong asks this question: “What will be the transformations, the transitions, the transmissions of the Rudao (儒道 in China)?” He answers “No one now knows because the question of the future of Confucianism boils with a new intensity. Will there be something like Boston Confucianism? What could the dialogue across the Pacific possibly become? Nonetheless, the dialogue will, if it happens, be part of the ongoing process of globalization.” In 1994, Dr. Berthrong discussed Confucianism and globalization through “…the renewed Confucian-Christian dialogue.” (Berthrong, 1994, 2) Four years later, he examined the philosophies and theologies of three East-West thinkers: Chu Hsi, Alfred Whitehead, and Robert C. Neville. Berthrong presents an evocative and successful comparison of creativity as a global and cross-cultural theme. He also introduces Neo-Confucianism as a sophisticated dialogue partner with modern Western speculative philosophy and theology and maintains this discourse provokes a “continuing conversation by means of the conductive process….it is still important that we begin the effort to create
effective ways to sustain comparative philosophy and theology in the one world we all now share.” (Berthrong, 1998, xii) In 2004 his article “Boston Confucianism: The Third Wave of Global Confucianism,” continues the inquiry into this issue.  

Recently, Dr. Berthrong explores the philosophical and theological transformations in China and the West, attempts to bring Chinese Daoist and Confucian thought into dialogue with Western process, pragmatic, and naturalist philosophy and theology, and endeavors “to compare, contrast, and appreciate our different philosophies and religions if we have any hope of living in a peaceful world.” (Berthrong, 2009, 6)

In this JET Special Issue, Dr. Henry Rosemont Jr. presents an analytical article “Confucian Role Ethics: A Model for 21st Century Harmony?” For him, globalization activities are arguably responsible for many of the problems currently destabilizing the world, and their potential for improving the lot of mankind will remain unrealized. If all challenges to individuals making individual choices in their own self-interest in capitalist societies can be made to appear as subtle endorsements for the gulags, killing fields and labor re-education camps, then obviously we must give three cheers for individualism and capitalism, drowning out all dissent. But if the status quo is grossly unjust, and to the extent the status quo is justified by appeals to individualistic and competitive conceptions of economics, government, democracy, human rights, and morality, to at least that extent do we need to consider other views of what it is to be a human being; “One candidate for such a view, suitably modified for the contemporary world, is that of the classical Confucians, whose texts provide significant conceptual resources for forging new pathways to national and international social justice, and democratic global concord.” After a thoughtful examination, Dr. Rosemont concludes that an idealistic vision perhaps, but the realities of the world today are sufficiently ugly that a strong sense of idealism seems to be rationally and morally obligatory, and “the Confucian vision, especially as it leads us spiritually outward from the family to encompass the whole human race past, present and future, has strong resonances – another musical term – with significant strains of Western thought as well, and hence need not be considered altogether a foreign import. ” Readers of the Analects of Confucius tend to approach the text asking what Confucius believed; what were the views that comprise the ‘ism’ appended to his name in English? Significantly, in 2012, in his A Reader’s Companion to the Confucian Analects, Dr. Rosemont suggests a different approach: instead of teaching doctrines he basically taught his students approaches to find meaning and purpose in their lives, and how best to serve their society. Because his students were not alike, his instruction could not be uniform; hence the large number of diverse readings that have been given to what he said. By providing brief essays, finding lists, background and comparative materials and historical context, his ‘companion’ is not intended as another interpretation of the ancient text, but rather as an aid for contemporary students to develop their own interpretive reading of it. His

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hope was to aid them in the search for meaning, purpose and service in their own lives - as seventy-three generations of Chinese have previously done. According to Dr. Rosemont, there is certainly a Confucian “revival” of sorts going on in mainland China today, much of it without any government support. “Most universities, for example, now have schools of Confucian Studies, independent Confucian primary and secondary schools are growing in number throughout the country, while the government has provided funding for the establishment of Confucius Institutes around the world…..” This not to say, however, that the Confucian persuasion should be seen as a universalizing religion or philosophy to which everyone should adhere, for a central element of the general Confucian ‘way’ is that there are many particular human ways, and each of us must tread that way which best suit our histories, genealogies, talents and personalities, a theme to which we will return in the pages to follow.” (Rosemont 2012, 3) For a better understanding of Chinese culture, Rosemont, as the editor, has brought together D. N. Keightley’s seminal essays on the origins of Chinese society into one volume, titled These Bones Shall Rise Again: Selected Writings on Early China. In this book, readers of Rosemont’s introduction will find not only many essential texts but also the best kind of thought-provoking scholarship.

In this JET special issue, Dr. Xunwu Chen gives us a new perspective to relate Confucianism with the spirit of our time. According to him, taking as the starting point that ours is a timely spirit centered on seven epoch-making ideas—global justice, cosmopolitanism, human rights, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, and cultural toleration, this paper explores the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time. Doing so, it first demonstrates that the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time is one between the particular and there universal, not one between two particulars or two universals. Second, it then rejects the concept of “pluralistic universality (多元普遍性 duo yuan pu bian xing)” as logically self-contradictory, theoretically misconceptioned, and practically misleading. Third, using China’s renovation of her cultural values with an emphasis on the 24-word values as the guide, it demonstrates that we can, and should, renovate Confucian values to live up to the spirit of our time; a system of values lives if and only if it continues to inspire; a system of values can continue to inspire if and only if it is constantly renovated in line with the spirit of time. Dr. Chen thinks that the discussion in the preceding section leads us to the distinction between globalization and universalization, between globalizing Confucian values and universalizing Confucians values. A failure to draw such a distinction between them is the source of some parental problems in the discourse of the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time today. Such a distinction is conceptually necessary to define the horizon and normatively important to enhance the vision. For him, “Most importantly, we should reject any claims that Confucian values are the alternative to those timely universal human values of our time. Such claims, as indicated above, presuppose one erroneous concept: Confucian ethics is geared to turn persons into merely thing-like functions in society, forgetting the most fundamental of Confucianism: human persons are the foundation for
everything. Therefore, we should see that only when we continue to renovate Confucian values in line with the spirit of our time, we can make Confucian values a vital force of our time. Some conceptual clarifications are needed here."

We have examined the five trends in Confucian studies, and also justified the contributions of four writers in this JET special issue. In each movement we have in effect discussed certain types of challenges against “orthodox prejudice”, and also compared and contrasted them through a philosophical perspective. Obviously, there are many other important and significant issues or areas about Confucian metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, methodology, and social-political ideas which have not even been touched upon so far. Actually, it is relatable, inter-actable and transformable among (between) those five trends or movements, and some of them opposite to each other such as global-contextualism’s refutation of classical-textualism. The significance of those trends is two-fold: it argues for a new stage in the development of contemporary Confucian studies, and it extends the Confucius thought to Western scholars and people.

References

INTRODUCTION: FIVE TRENDS IN CONFUCIAN STUDIES


CONFUCIANISM AND TOLERATION

Robert Cummings Neville*  

I. What is Confucianism?

In contexts of political philosophy, Confucianism is frequently identified as a culture with a long evolving history in China, with branches in other countries such as Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia that were amalgamated with other local cultures, and now with a broader diaspora. In the diaspora, Confucianism usually is associated with local enclaves of East Asian people situated in other countries like “China towns.” All these parts of Confucian culture have been historically evolving and have differed from one another by how they have adapted to the larger cultural contexts. But they have continuity with one another by lineages of interpretation of core texts among the intellectuals and habits of social and ritual formation, such as an emphasis on family and filial piety. In these contexts of political philosophy, it frequently seems beside the point for non-East Asians to claim to be Confucians unless they “go native” in some East Asian culture.¹

Viewed this way, toleration in Confucianism becomes an historical question. Some cultures named Confucian have been very tolerant of other religious philosophies, of diverse ethnic groups, of differing social practices concerning food, sexuality, and lifestyle issues, and other so-called Confucian cultures have been intolerant in regards such as these.² Some Confucian cultures have been tolerant of many variations within what counts as the Confucian culture, others have been more monolithic. Some Confucian cultures have emphasized co-existence with non-Confucian cultures, or at least with some of them, and others have been hostile or anxious to keep a cultural distance. The study of the history of toleration among the many branches of Confucian culture in this sense can be highly instructive, just as the history of toleration among Christian, Buddhist, or Jewish cultures is important to understand.

But this is a fundamentally wrongheaded way to think about Confucianism, especially in relation to large-scale ethical issues such as toleration. First of all, it is

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²As the author of Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000), I obviously believe that Confucians do not have to be culturally East Asian any more that Platonists have to be culturally Greek. That volume sorts through the issues of what needs to be carried over from one culture to another when a critical philosophy spreads.

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an historical mistake. Confucius and his disciples of the first several generations led a
reform movement within a culture that they opposed, the chaotic and violent times of
the “Spring and Autumn” and the “Warring States” periods. Most of the Confucian
thinkers we remember were on the outs with their governments, or at least had testy
relationships, as in the case of Wang Yangming. When Confucians such as Wang
Chong were well received by the government, they still were vigorously engaged in
trying to effect cultural change, for instance the suppression of superstition.

Second, to identify Confucianism with a culture is to ignore, distort, or suppress
the dialectical relation that it and most other religious or philosophical worldviews
have with the cultures of the societies within which they live. Religious philosophies,
not excepting Confucianism, take their bearings from what they consider to be
ultimately important and this generates a distinction between the situation and what is
ideal relative to that situation.3 As the Confucians would say, you need to keep in
mind what is “all under Heaven.”4 The situations of Confucius’s time and our time
are very different, as are the situations in East Asia relative to those in the West. A
religious “worldview” has to bring some integration to the various domains in the
situations of the people who hold them. Because there are so many different
situations for Confucianism, there a many variants on Confucian worldviews. But
each of those worldviews includes what Peter Berger calls a “sacred canopy” giving
some expression or other to what Confucianism takes to be ultimately significant, the
boundary conditions for the world.5 Classical Confucianism expressed these in terms
of notions such as Heaven, Earth, and the Human, whereas Neo-Confucianism
elaborated these in terms of Principle, Material Force, and sagehood, topics to be
revisited below. Although the Confucian family of worldviews involves significant
variation because of the differences in the domains for which they provide
orientation, they are all Confucian in that the domain of the Confucian sacred canopy
has some bearing on at least some of the other domains.6 In that respect, the affected

3To say that religious philosophies, or religions and their theologies, “take their bearing from
what they consider to be ultimately important” is not an innocent observation. It is a surface
expression of an extremely complex theory of religion and metaphysics of ultimacy articulated
at length in my Ultimates: Philosophical Theology Volume One (Albany, NY: State University
University of New York Press, 2014), and Religion: Philosophical Theology Volume Three
of ultimacy and the analytical tools of a theory of worldviews. Religion explores the relation
between a situation and living according to a religious worldview.

4See John H. Berthrong’s All Under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian
phrase in a cross-cultural context.

5See Peter L. Berger, The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion

6By “domain” is meant some concrete area of life, such as one’s family, job, historical location,
health, or communications system, that involves particular orientations; the domains of one’s
life need to be related to one another by a worldview, and where they are not so related, they
domains in any Confucian worldview have a normative or ideal character that very frequently is in a critical relation to the situation where the worldview obtains.

Third, the mention of worldviews reflects an elaborate theory of religion that among other things articulates the dialectical relation between the religion and the actual situations of culture and personality within which religions are practiced. 7 Among the variables relating religious worldviews and specific situations are six continua. 8 One is the relating of the various domains of the situation to be addressed in the worldview on a continuum from very sacred, as in a sacred canopy, to very mundane, such as preferred breakfast diet. A second is a continuum in the symbols in the sacred canopy from very transcendent to personally intimate. A third is a continuum in the interpretations of the symbols from folk-religion notions to the very sophisticated ideas of philosophers. A fourth is a continuum between a sacred worldview that is highly individuated to a person and the degrees to which this worldview is shared with others; this continuum is integral to issues about religious communities. A fifth is a continuum between worldviews that are very comprehensive in orienting the many domains of a situation to one another and worldviews that connect only a few domains and leave the rest relatively meaningless with respect to one another. A sixth is a continuum of intensity, from very great to barely significant, with which an individual is committed to or inhabits a religious worldview.

To understand Confucianism, then, requires understanding how some Confucians have an operative worldview that interprets nearly all the domains of life as affected by key notions in the Confucian sacred canopy, and others limit those to, say, just family life, being no different at the office or factory from Buddhists, Christians, or militantly secular people. It is “Confucian” all along that continuum. Similarly, some Confucians symbolize what is ultimate in highly transcendent terms whereas others neglect the transcendent in favor of terms that more directly bear upon life in the various domains. Some Confucians operate with very sophisticated notions of Principle, Material Force, and the ideals of humaneness and sagehood, whereas others operate with folk-religion versions of these, often borrowed from Buddhism, Daoism, and shamanism. Some Confucians orient themselves to others as sharing a common Confucian worldview whereas others find few fellows in this regard. Some Confucians take their Confucianism to apply to a great many aspects of life, others to are relatively meaningless to one another. People in different situations have different domains, and hence need different worldviews. One domain of life for most people has to do with symbols engaging ultimacy, a sacred canopy. Classical Confucian texts articulate a Confucian sacred canopy that might be common to all the variant Confucian worldview that otherwise are very different because of variations in the domains that the worldviews need to integrate. See my Ultimates, chapter 4.

7See the three volumes of my Philosophical Theology cited in note 3. The whole trilogy fills in the details that turn the relevant categories into a theory of religion supported by evidence from many religions.

8These are spelled out at length in Ultimates, chapter 4.

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only a few domains. Some Confucians are very seriously devoted to being good Confucians whereas others give it lip service to please their parents.\footnote{Tu Weiming goes so far as to say that Confucianism involves an existential decision to become a sage which he likens to Kierkegaard’s notion of existential decision as a leap of faith. See his \textit{Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought} (Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui, 1998), p. 89. Not all self-proclaimed Confucians are this serious! See Stephen C. Angle’s \textit{Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy} (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009) for a careful analysis of the progressive depths of cultivated Confucian sagehood.}

Given variables such as these, it is possible to see how in one and the same social situation, even in the same family, some Confucians can advocate radical revolution against the status quo whereas others just go with the flow and call it Confucianism. Needless to say, Confucianism is itself highly controversial within such internally diverse situations, and the Confucian tradition is replete with “prophetic” Confucians telling others they should be different.

To label a given historical culture as “Confucian” is convenient shorthand for historians but also a dangerous abstraction, ignoring, distorting or suppressing what makes Confucianism interesting as a religion. Sometimes vaguely salient generalizations can be made about societies by religious labels. Samuel Huntington made some good points by contrasting “civilizations,” defined each by a dominant religion.\footnote{Samuel P. Huntington, \textit{The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order} (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).} David Hall and Roger Ames have stimulated important discussions of comparative cultures by contrasting Confucian with Western thinking.\footnote{This most extraordinary collaboration is found mainly in their four volumes of philosophy of culture: \textit{Thinking Through Confucius} (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), \textit{Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture} (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), \textit{Thinking Through the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture} (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), and \textit{Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China} (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1999).} But looked at closely, the living religions are far more variable. Moreover, no religious worldview such as Confucianism at any time is pure from its founders; each is a syncretic amalgam of antecedents, often with different religious labels. Too often in the present situation, Confucianism is identified with a particular historical culture only in order to blame some presently perceived ill upon it, such as the suppression of women and sexual minorities, bigotry regarding other races, or unwillingness to embrace social change.

How then should we approach the question of toleration relative to Confucianism? Any number of ways might produce interesting results. The considerations of this section, however, suggest that we look at the present social situation, relative to issues of toleration, and ask what the sacred canopy of Confucianism might contribute to viable worldviews for those issues. What follows is not an historical analysis of Confucianism and toleration but a normative
philosophical analysis of some of the things Confucianism can and should contribute in the current situation.

II. Toleration, Ingroups, and Outgroups

One way to focus the problems of toleration in the twenty-first century is to see them as issues of ingroups relative to outgroups. Relative to the boundaries of groups, the issues of toleration are double-barreled. Some have to do with the toleration of the outgroups, or some of their traits, or members, or competitive existence. Others have to do with toleration of deviations within the ingroup. The notion of groups with boundaries and internal structures is itself very flexible. Biological and cultural evolutionists call attention to the ways small tribal groups organize themselves so as to be more competitive in the struggle with other groups for survival and flourishing. But groups are defined in many different ways, sometimes overlapping, such as kinship groups, tribal groups, language groups, religious groups, geographical niche groups, social class groups, economic and professional groups, etc. In our common intellectual life it is customary to think of issues of toleration in terms of tolerating members and behaviors of outgroups different from our own ingroup, and in terms of tolerating members of our own ingroup who deviate in some ways from the ingroup’s norms. This “us versus them” is a common default framework for thinking about issues of toleration.

Confucian philosophy suggests a different default framework. We can call it a framework of “concentric circles of conditions for flourishing,” although this metaphor suggests too much mathematical regularity. The center of gravity for much Confucian social thinking is the idealized family. Individuals learn to achieve personal identity in terms of relating to family members in somewhat ritualized but biologically based roles. Every family depends on a larger social unit, however, within which it flourishes or not. In classical Confucian thinking society was agrarian and the family was conceived to be nested in a village, which was nested in a larger economic region, which was nested in a further hierarchy of levels of organization up to the emperor. And then the empire itself had relations with foreign powers and geophysical circumstances that were conditions for the flourishing of the empire. We should be careful not to think of the family as the most basic atomic unit of human life in Confucian thinking, although that has been said. Although individuals are formed in families, their own knowledge, voluntary inclinations, and ritualized behaviors themselves need to flourish. Without those individual traits, family life is not possible; but a dysfunctional family can prevent the flourishing of an individual’s inner capacities. One of the classic texts for this motif of Confucian thought is from the Great Learning:


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When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world. From the Son of Heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of the personal life as the root or foundation.\textsuperscript{13}

This passage leaves out many social steps between the family and the emperor. Also, this particular ordering of knowledge, will, and mind has been hotly debated, especially by the tradition following Wang Yangming that disputes the quoted ordering, which comes from Zhuxi.\textsuperscript{14} Nowadays, the nests of conditions for social flourishing are much more complicated than the agrarian model and Confucians would have to analyze the levels of causal connection in order to distinguish the circles of dependency in modern social terms. Nevertheless, the principle of ordering of conditions for flourishing is fairly clear.

Relative to toleration, the principle is that anything in the wider environment can be tolerated so long as the narrower environment can flourish. For instance, anything can be tolerated in a local neighborhood so long as the families within it can flourish. But the neighborhood depends on a broader social order that keeps the peace and distributes wealth. Any such broader social order can flourish if the yet broader conditions for high civilization are present, and those conditions can be tolerated if they promote the flourishing of the social order. High civilizations interact and depend on an order of global politics, tolerating whatever is in the global political order so long as the high civilizations flourish.

The principle of toleration works from broader to narrower as well. Anything can be tolerated in the high civilizations so long as it does not prevent or corrupt a global political order. Anything can be tolerated in a broad social order so long as it does not prevent or corrupt the high civilization of which it should be a part. Anything can be tolerated in a neighborhood so long as it does not prevent or corrupt the broader social order. Anything can be tolerated by way of family life that does not prevent or corrupt the neighborhood of families. Anything can be tolerated by way of individual knowledge, inclination and other aspects of personal life that does not prevent or corrupt the functioning of the relevant family.

The phrase “anything can be tolerated” emphasizes the potential for great personal and cultural pluralism in Confucian ideal thinking. For instance, families can tolerate a neighborhood that itself tolerates families of different cultural or racial composition, if that neighborhood allows the families to flourish. But if a family is prevented from flourishing by a neighborhood overly determined by cultures hostile to the family, the family should not tolerate that neighborhood. Similarly, if a


\textsuperscript{14}See Wing-tsit Chan’s editorial comments in his introduction to \textit{The Great Learning, op cit.}, pp. 84-85.
neighborhood that otherwise would tolerate families of different cultures is prevented from doing so by some overly exclusive and prejudiced families, those prejudiced families should not be tolerated in the neighborhood.

To be sure, Confucianism sometimes has been a dominant philosophy in societies that have had “us versus them” issues of toleration, societies with feuding families, ethnic bigotry, and the like. To revert to the ingroup-outgroup identification is easy, especially for societies under pressure. The contribution of Confucianism, however, is to remind people that there are more complex ties that bind than would appear when the ingroup-outgroup distinction is given great weight.

This Confucian default model of concentric circles of conditions for flourishing reflects the more general Confucian point that there is value at every level of existence. This default model rejects the model that value is all selfish for oneself or one’s ingroup and that other individuals or other groups are valued only instrumentally with regard to one’s self or ingroup. In terms of human social life this means valuing the simultaneous flourishing of interconnected levels of personal and social existence. Each level has both internal and external conditions for flourishing. Understanding the complex interactions of these levels of conditions is one of the goals of sagacity. Operating with the concentric circles default model makes it hard to simplify issues of tolerance to ingroup versus outgroup traits because on some level, no group is an outgroup to another but all groups contribute to or inhibit the flourishing of their collective interaction. To put the point another way, no individual is individuated only within a singular ingroup. True individual identity involves individuation through all the levels of conditions for flourishing. The significance of this can be seen from many angles, some of which are explored in what follows.

III. Toleration and Narrative

Another common way of understanding issues of toleration in the twenty-first century is through narratives. Most narratives are stories of conflict, of overcoming obstacles (usually other people), of warfare, feuding, displacement, religious opposition, apostasy, betrayal, competition, domination and submission. In light of these narratives, people make judgments about what should and should not be tolerated. Many people try to make sense of their lives by reducing them to narratives. But narratives simplify a vast set of conditions to just those elements that are significant for the story line.15 The people and factors that don’t play a role in the narrative line are ignored, dismissed, distorted and made not to count. The vast layering of conditions upon conditions, from personal knowledge and rectification of the will through issues of family, neighborhood, society, the Son of Heaven, and peace in the world, is obscured through the force of a narrative that imposes a simple meaning on the world. Those simple meanings, usually involving conflict, often

15For a detailed development of this critique of narrative see my, Ultimates, chapter 8, and Existence, chapter 9.
prevent clear vision of what should be tolerated and what not, building deep commitments to bigoted approaches to other people and cultures.

Confucianism subordinates narrative to a kind of cosmological vision of the world. The Chinese had their chroniclers, of course, and kept historical records. But they did not get their orientation to life from a grand narrative, such as a creation story with a fall and redemption, or a legend of a promised land, or stories of the gods that give meaning to life. The ancient East Asians believed in lots of gods and supernatural beings in their folk cultures, and sometimes those gods had to be appeased or bought off. But people thought of the gods as just different kinds of beings that inhabit the world. The Confucians were generally very much against supernaturalism.

The Confucian cosmology emphasized constant change with the motive power of Material Force being shaped by the structures of harmony in Principle; or, more ancienly the Earthly changes as shaped by Heaven. Conceptions of yang and yin articulated how changes take place and the patterns of the hexagrams of the Yijing mark out types of changes. But by and large these structures of change are not narrative structures. Rather they are structures of the constant interactions of all the manifold things Under Heaven, all interacting in a constant great rush. The Confucian cosmology would not tolerate the dismissal of massive amounts and kinds of changes that would be necessary to take narrative structure to be very important. Social conditions are under constant change, for the Confucians, but more guided by the changes of seasons than any divine narrative. Dynasties rise and fall, and there is always a story in their arising and ceasing, but more like a natural process of emergence, flourishing, and decay than like a singularly unique story defining a people. Orientation for personal identity, for Confucians, was not to find a place in a cosmic or historical drama but to have a place among All Under Heaven. One’s sense of place is more determined by directions relative to other people and things than by a place in a story. Social class orientation is determined by relations with other social classes and the interactions among them. Confucian geography has five directions: north, east, south, west, and here. “Here” is a place defined by the concentric circles of conditions relating any “here” to the Ten Thousand Things” in their related sets of causal connections.

Some people claim that Confucians do not have much of a cosmology or metaphysics and rather concentrate mostly on ethics. That claim is false: Confucian ethics takes its orientation from conceptions of institutionalized or ritualized life which in turn are elements within cosmic nature. The Doctrine of the Mean bases human nature directly on Heaven, not on merely anthropological notions. But the claim is right that Confucians do not base their ethics on any kind of divine intentionality or will. The closest thing to that in Confucian thought is reference to the Mandate of Heaven; but this has to do with finding what is appropriate for one to do, not with finding what some cosmic mind wants one to do.

With regard to issues of toleration, then, Confucians would direct attention away from the grudges and enmities that have their base in some real or imagined narrative of cosmic purpose, national identity, tribal or clan conflict, or personal destiny. Rather, all the elements that others might pluck from narratives to say that some

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behavior or some person or group of persons ought not be tolerated should be reconsidered as embedded in the vast array of circles of conditions for flourishing. Confucians would remind us that nothing takes its meaning or worth from any one story, or even from a number of stories, but from the infinite density of patterns of yin and yang changes. The structure of that density of patterns is never overall a narrative, because that narrative necessarily excludes all the other narrative perspectives. Rather it is more like the array of overlapping circles of conditions for flourishing, from the inner heart through family, neighborhood, society, civilization, and the struggles of world order up to Heaven itself.

IV. Toleration and Personal Respect

Central to any Confucian approach to issues of tolerance is respect for individuals. The main Confucian word for this respect is humaneness, ren. Very much of the whole Confucian cosmology is packed into this complex notion, of which only a few strands can be extracted here. The first thing to note is that every person is regarded as unique, only secondarily as a member of a class. Thus, equality under the law is something that makes Confucians uncomfortable, even when it is seen as necessary as a hedge against inappropriate nepotism. Emphasizing a kind of innate human capacity to empathize with another person as who that person is, the Confucian sensibility serves this regard for uniqueness. Selfishness, which diminishes this innate capacity so emphasized by Mencius, amounts to reducing others to roles determined by one’s own selfish interests.

The second thing to note about respect, however, is that others are attended to as playing ritualized roles relative to oneself. One learns to respect others in terms of family relations, then neighborhood relations, then the institutionalized relations of a larger society, and so on. Although every person is unique, each other person also has a ritualized relation to oneself that determines in part just how one can indicate respect, as a son respects a mother, a neighbor respects a neighbor, an official respects a higher official. When strangers are encountered, Confucians elaborate rituals of establishing ritual relations. To have no ritual relations with strangers is exceedingly problematic. Bad rituals that prevent ritual relations that respect the uniqueness of others, rituals of racial or sexual bigotry, for instances, are the object of Confucian ire.16

The third thing to note about respect is that, like oneself, any other person is at the center of a vast nest of rituals defining his or her place. Everyone lives in a matrix of networks of rituals relating to others in terms of family, friends, socializing, economic matters, and so forth. Only one or a few of those rituals define a relation of this other to oneself. But the other needs to be regarded as at the center of his or her own matrix of ritual networks. If the other is not your father, perhaps he is someone


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else’s father and is in part defined by the paternal roles. This is the Confucian way of handling the point many Western thinkers make by talking about the other as a subject with his or her own perspective on the world. Respect means taking that perspective into account as defining part of the other’s uniqueness.

The fourth thing to note is that, like oneself, any other person has to learn to play the roles of his or her ritual matrix. The ritual roles are like dance steps that formally define a channel of behavior relative to others. But how one plays the roles is like how one individuates the dance steps. The rituals that structure social relations are not the forms of the dance steps alone but the actual playing of them. An individual is a player of the ritual roles, not merely the possessor of them. A child can learn to speak dutifully to parents by the age of five. But it takes decades to individuate the filial roles so that it is just oneself, uniquely oneself, who is behaving like a proper child toward one’s particular parents in just one’s own way. All our roles, however strictly formal, have to be learned and individuated, and many roles are very difficult indeed. From a Confucian point of view, many of the difficulties and struggles in life have to do with finding or inventing roles that relate us meaningfully and justly to other people, and then learning to individuate our playing of the roles so as to be sincere and mature. To respect another person, then, is to be able to address that person as someone struggling to individuate the matrix of ritual networks that constitute his or her unique position. To respect that struggle sometimes requires giving the other the privacy of not having to be fully present in the situation. When and how that privacy is possible depends on the concentric circles of ritualized conditions for the flourishing of the other, of oneself, and of the institutions involved in ritual relations with both.

To respect another person is not necessarily to approve of or like the other person, who might be one’s enemy, a villain, and a disaster for all those around. Social life often means opposition to others, opposition while maintaining the possibility for respect for the other as a player struggling to individuate his or her own ritual network.

A deep and important element of toleration, from a Confucian perspective, is to respect others as individuators of the roles in their ritual matrix. This is part of treating them as human beings. If they play some roles that are bad, their playing of those roles perhaps should not be tolerated. Ritual roles that prevent or impede the flourishing of the circles of flourishing should be changed or not allowed. Even when this is so, however, the Confucian approval of intolerance in that instance needs to be consistent with respect for the other as a unique individual struggling to play the roles well.

Confucian ritual theory provides an alternative to the Western way of thinking about Others in an exclusive subject-object distinction. An important part of ritual theory, often neglected in texts describing rituals, is the importance of learning to play the rituals in a way that individuates the self. See my “Individual and Rituals” in Moral Cultivation and Confucian Character: Engaging Joel J. Kupperman (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2014), pp. 151-68.
In the end, concerns for toleration cannot escape the issues of ethical judgment. Here the Confucian perspective focuses on the metaphysics of Principle, *li*. The slogan, “Principle is One, Its Manifestations Are Many,” has been the subject of much controversy in the tradition and here is one practical interpretation of it. Principle in itself is whatever makes a multiplicity of things harmonize together. Given a specific multiplicity, it is the pattern of their harmony. Not all multiplicities can be harmonized, however; for some, there is no pattern according to which they can be together. Harmony itself is valuable.\(^{18}\) A harmonized multiplicity has the value of getting these things together in the place where they are relative to other things, with this pattern rather than some other. That a thing has value in itself because of its harmonizing of its components a certain way in a certain place does not mean that it is valuable relative to other things. Flourishing germs make a sick patient. A well-organized mob can destroy a neighborhood. A skillful politician can ruin a state.

So the deepest aspirations for Confucian sagacity are the learned abilities to discern how things cohere, how coherence is impeded, how the coherence of one thing is required for the coherence of another, how the coherence of things in conflict with one another might be modified by a background coherence that resolves the conflict. Coherence as such is “one” but the things that cohere are “many.” Confucianism has little to appreciate in Aristotelian substance philosophies according to which “things” are what they are by virtue of possessing properties. Substance philosophies exaggerate the sense that things have identities in themselves, and thus facilitate “us versus them” thinking, according to Confucianism. Rather things are structured processes of harmonious behavior that are possible only against the background of other processes of harmonious behavior, which in turn rest in yet other background elements, from the graceful bow in greeting to a friend to the slowly shifting rotation of the heavens. Nothing has its properties except in layers of layers of other coherent contexts. Substance thinking tends to neglect the background requirements, just as narrative thinking tends to neglect what does not count in the story. To encounter another person, then, should not be to treat the person as an individual alone, but as an individual with an inherited DNA, with a history of health and illness, with affectional habits derived from a particular family, with an educational background of a certain sort coming from neighborhood institutions, with an economic status determined by roles in the economic system, with an historical political background, made possible by certain conditions of geography and climate, which in turn are made possible by atmospheric conditions filtering the sun’s rays,

\(^{18}\)The interpretation of Principle as harmony or coherence has been beautifully elaborated by Stephen Angle in his *Sagehood*. The metaphysical thesis that things are harmonies of multiplicities and that harmonies are valuable in themselves is common to Plato and Abhinavagupta as well as to Confucians. I have given extensive defenses of it in my *Ultimates, Existence, and Religion*, as well as elsewhere.

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and so forth. A Confucian mother in Boston buys bananas to put on her children’s cereal and sagely reflects how that simple act supposes the existence of the store that stocks bananas, the distribution system by which goods are delivered to the store, the agricultural system in tropical countries where the bananas are grown, the economic system that funds banana production and takes profits for owners who might be quite distant from the growers, the transportation of the bananas by plane from the tropics to Boston, the dependence of non-local food distribution on vast amounts of airplane fuel, the interest this creates in controlling countries with oil production, the implications of a tropical diet in Boston for war and peace, and the effects of global warming on continued food production. Well, she probably does not reflect on all that at once while trying to get the children fed before school. But she does know that this breakfast does not stand by itself and that it is through all those levels of conditioning. Our contemporary understanding of what levels of systems to look for is quite different from what a granddaughter of Confucius might look for. Contemporary science has revealed a vastly more complicated personal, social, and natural world than imagined centuries ago. Who would have thought that the choice to use an aerosol rather than a stick deodorant should be affected by considerations of modification of the ozone layer?

It should be emphasized again that each of these levels of systems of coherence has its own manner of flourishing. There are good and bad diets for growing children, stores that make a reasonable profit selling healthy food and those that make more money from unhealthy food, distribution systems that stock the stores efficiently or not, bananas that are ripe and wholesome, and bananas that are blighted, economic systems that reward the people well and those that are exploitive, international carriers that are well run and those that are dangerous, oil production systems that work well and those that do not, a political situation that coordinates all this, economic practices regarding food and transportation that support the larger natural environment and those that are detrimental, and so on. Rarely can all these be made to flourish together, and incoherences abound. The ordinary situation is that all of these systems are compromised somewhat and we make do with relatively uncoordinated attempts to keep each of the systems going. Wars over oil in the Middle East are not caused entirely by Boston mothers feeding their children bananas. But luxurious expectations of Bostonians about cuisine, a cuisine that is healthy, do have an effect on economic resources and world politics.

A Confucian sensibility regarding life is to see its many levels of reality as implicated in patterns of coherence and incoherence. No action affects only one thing. When something prized fails to flourish, the cause may not be in its own coherence but in the incoherence of conditions behind it. Not all things can be made coherent. Some conflicts cannot be resolved except through violence with serious winners and losers. But Confucians analyze the world in terms of why conflicts arise and what might be done to resolve them.

With regard to toleration, a Confucian would say that any person, any behavior, any culture or social organization has a prima facie right to flourish out of the principle of respect or humaneness. The only question of toleration is what the costs are of those flourishings to other things, where the “costs” are to be understood in
terms of the nesting of conditions within concentric circles or lines of causal implications. The answers to those questions determine whether and how the prima facie right to flourish should justifiably be compromised.

VI. Some Confucian Morals of Toleration

The first Confucian moral is that bigotry in all forms should be rejected. Bigotry is negative thinking and behavior toward persons in a group because of a trait that obtains for all in the group when that trait is falsely believed to be bad. Racism is an obvious example. There is nothing wrong with being a particular race per se. Bigotry against sexual minorities such as lesbians, gays, transgender, and bisexual people is another example. Unless the traits that identify these traits can be shown to be bad per se, there is no ground for any bigotry against them and all should be tolerated, other things being equal. The Confucian insistence on respect of others is the first bulwark against bigotry. Because most forms of bigotry also define the objects of bigotry to be an outgroup to the bigot’s ingroup, Confucianism’s transformation of ingroup/outgroup distinctions into concentric circles of different kinds of relationship is another hedge against bigotry, although sometimes people in the oppressed group loath themselves and thus are bigoted against themselves.

A second Confucian moral is that all judgments that something or someone ought not be tolerated are context dependent. The importance of flourishing stands on its own as Confucians grasp the togetherness of things according to patterns of Principle; but the flourishing of one thing might cause damage to another, and judgments have to be made as to how to make these things coherent if possible. The kind of flourishing that consists in pursuing one’s own interest freely might not be tolerable in times of war when everyone needs to work in concert. On the other hand, war is generally a bad thing precisely because it calls for inhibiting free expressions of interests. Wars, warlike behavior, tempting abundance of armaments and the like should not be tolerated, according to Confucian thinking, unless war is absolutely necessary.

A third Confucian moral regarding toleration is that there should be no fixed rules for what should be tolerated and what not, because what promotes or inhibits relevant flourishing is so context dependent and the context is constantly changing. Rather, constant learning is required for the sageliness to understand the shifting measures of coherence that determine what should and should not be tolerated.

A fourth Confucian moral, contrary to the thought of many scholars who read Confucianism as a version of virtue-ethics, is that sage judgment is neither following rules nor acting out of pre-determined cultivated inclinations. Sage judgment rather requires becoming learned about and attuned with the shifting conditions that bear upon what should and should not be tolerated. Even the Confucians who emphasize the presence of Principle in the inner heart of people say that this is good because it facilitates the recognition of coherence and incoherence in things of the world. Good judgment depends on learning the world more than acting out of character.

A fifth Confucian moral is that we should never allow a complex social ritual, structuring important relations between classes of people determine by itself what
should be tolerated and what not. Most large scale social rituals do advantage some people and disadvantage others. But the Confucian sensibility says that we should constantly be vigilant about whether the rituals at hand are justified in the multiple layers of concentric circles of conditions for flourishing. Confucians know that rituals are absolutely essential for giving meaning to behavior: rituals are semiotic systems. Nevertheless, not all rituals are good, just as not all social systems that are meaningful are good. Central to Confucianism’s moral vision is the project of critiquing and repairing inadequate rituals.

Confucianism is sometimes thought to be a socially conservative philosophy because its insistence on attention to and observance of rituals seems to rigidify and give support to bad social structures, such as the suppression of the flourishing of women or sexual minorities. But that criticism makes sense only when we have come to see that the rituals at hand do in fact suppress rather than enhance flourishing. Given what we now understand about ritualized cultures that suppress the flourishing of women or sexual minorities, Confucians in most circumstances should be radical feminists and gay liberationists. When my wife and I first landed in China, she told me immediately that she would not walk eight paces behind me. Right. (I don’t know how Mrs. Confucius walked with her husband.) But should I hold the door for my wife? That has been a good topic of liberationist debate during our long marriage and in the long run she prefers that I hold the door.

A sixth Confucian moral relative to tolerance is that the more variety in a coherent harmony, the better. Homogeneity is dull, variety is better. The Confucian themes of harmony and coherence emphasize this density of differences. But variety requires often special conditions to contain cultural differences and sometimes that higher level of coherence is hard to achieve. Other things being equal, the more diversity of family cultures a neighborhood can sustain, the better. Confucianism for a pluralistic, meritocratic, highly mobile, urban culture such as obtains in Boston as well as much of the rest of the world cannot advocate the same social policies it would for a relatively homogeneous agrarian culture. This is a time for vigorous creativity in inventing rituals for making the components of a pluralistic world cohere and flourish.
GLOBALIZING CONFUCIANISM: THE RUDAO (儒道)

John H. Berthrong*

I. Globalization

Globalization is a complex concept. Moreover, it is a controversial idea, and like all contested and intricate concepts, simply trying to define the term is difficult. Along with the obvious spatial metaphor of encompassing the whole world, literally globalization, we also need to consider the temporal dimensions of the term. For instance, W. C. Smith (1981) begins his study of world/global theology by telling a fascinating story of globalization, a particular process that took more than two thousand years work its way around the world. There was certainly a great deal of interaction among cultures prior to the modern world, though admittedly the speed and intensity of the contact has increased dramatically. One of the interesting questions is: does the increase in the velocity and quantity of transmission of everything collated by the idea of globalization really mean a complete change from the past? Is globalization a completely new event in the history of the world?

Smith (1981, 7-11) begins and ends his story in India. He starts with a story drawn from pre-Aryan India about a fascinating case of what we would now call globalization—perhaps. Smith commences with an account of the religious transformation of the like of Leo Tolstoi. As Tolstoi wrote in his Confessions, he found one story, a Christian hagiography of Saints Barlaam and Josaphat that changed his life. It is a story of a young prince, Josaphat, who goes into the desert and is converted by a Sinai desert monk, Barlaam—a clear reference, as we will see of a Buddhist bodhisattva tale. The version that Tolstoi read probably came to Russia from Mt. Athos in a Greek recension attributed to John of Damascus or from a older Georgian Christian Georgian tradition.

The story of spiritual discernment was just beginning its global journey. The Georgian version depended, in turn, on an Arabic version. The basic story stays the same: a young prince converted to a noble and more ascetic religion by a wandering

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Chapter 9 of Nayan Chanda, Bound Together: How Traders, Preachers, Adventurers, and Warriors Shaped Globalization (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) provides an excellent history of the use of the term globalization. The 'Introduction' of Jurgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson’s short history of globalization (2003, 7-8) also provides a good overview of various uses of the term globalization as well. What is clear here is that globalization is now something confined to the last decade of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century. It is a process, an idea with a long history. I want to thank Dr. David Scott for his valuable bibliographical aid in identifying a range of discussions of and debates about the definition of globalization.
monk. It appears that the Muslims got their versions from Manichees in Central Asia. They, in turn, no doubt got their version from the Buddhists. The Buddhist version of this story is from the second century of the Common Era and is found in the text of the Lalitavistara. We are not finished yet. The Buddhist version probably had Hindu and Jain ancestors as well and may have even been of pre-Aryan origin at the very beginning of Indian civilization.

Now back to Tolstoi and his readers. One of them was the young Indian intellectual studying law in England, M. K. Gandhi. Gandhi wrote that this reading of Tolstoi’s story had a profound impact on his life. And the rest, as we say, is history. But not quite. The story of Gandhi’s life and teaching of non-violent resistance had a great impact on a young American civil rights crusader, Martin Luther King, Jr. When King traveled to India he called his visit a pilgrimage to the home of ahimsa and the philosophy of non-violent protest against the denial of civil rights to any person whatsoever.

One of the key features of sociological theory of modernization and globalization provided by scholars such as Peter Berger was the theory that modernization would mean secularization. This thesis, of course, was predicated on an early and mid-20th Century reading of the cultural trajectories of the North Atlantic world. However, as has become clear in the last half of the 20th Century and on the beginning of the 21st Century, modernization, even globalization, does not necessarily imply secularization. Actually just the opposite seems to be more the case. Berger now argues that although the classical modernity-causes-secularization thesis does indeed fit what has happened in parts of Northern and Central Europe, it does not make sense of the robust revival, renewal and flourishing of religions around the world in the 21st Century. What we have is many different modernities and many forms of globalization.

Berger goes on to make another important point. Whereas the various forms of modernity we find around the world today may not include rampant secularization, all the multiple modernities manifest increasingly sharper awareness of cultural diversity. So modernity = awareness of diversity is a distinctive feature of the modern world. This might seem somewhat paradoxical when we think about those scholars who argue that globalization means the export of one particular cultural form. What globalization, in this alternative reading, actually means as not so much uniformity per se but a special kind of uniformity, namely the realization of the diversities of modernities.

Before we pursue the question of the globalization of Confucianism, we should dwell for a moment in the examination of some characteristic current definitions of globalization as a transcultural phenomenon. In terms of concise and influential contemporary definitions, Roland Robertson (1992, 8) writes, "Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole." Anthony Gibbens (1990, 64) also stressed the fact that globalization compresses distances that in the past would have made communication improbable if not impossible. He writes of globalization as the "intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice

Globalization has been variously conceived as action at a distance (whereby the actions of social agents in one locale can come to have significant consequences for 'distant others'); time-space compression (referring to the way in which instantaneous electronic communication erodes the constraints of distance and time on social organization and interaction); accelerating interdependence (understood as the intensification of enmeshment among national economies and societies such that events in one country impact directly on others); a shrinking world (the erosion of borders and geographical barriers to socio-economic activity); and, among other concepts, global integration, the reordering of interregional power relations, consciousness of the global condition and the intensification of interregional interconnectedness. What distinguishes these definitions is the differential emphasis given to the material, spatio-temporal and cognitive aspects of globalization.

Along with the spatial and temporal elements of the process of globalization, Held and McGrew add material and cognitive aspects. Hanicles (2008, 15) offers a summary of some of the key elements of the conversation.

* Increasing global interconnectedness, so that events and developments in one part of the world are affected by, have to take account of, and also influence, in turn, other parts of the world. It also refers to an increasing sense of a single global whole.
  * As experienced from below, the dominant form of globalization means a historical transformation: in the economy, of livelihoods and modes of existence; in politics, a loss in the degree of control exercised locally--for some, however little to begin with--such that the locus of power gradually shifts in varying proportions above and below the territorial state; and in culture, a devaluation of a collectivity's achievements and perceptions of them. This structure, in turn, may engender either accommodation or resistance…

Reflections on the concept of globalization has grown to such complexity that, as with Mooney and Evans (2007, 101; 240; 241), we now even have short glossaries to help us sort out current usage when discussing globalization as well as definitions of the genealogies of globalization.

II. Genealogies (of Globalization)

Genealogies of globalization refers to a particular post-structuralist, post-Foucauldian (that is, after the influence of Foucault's work) way of GENEALOGIES (OF GLOBALIZATION) answering "how" and "when" questions about globalization. Genealogies of globalization are accounts of globalization that do not seek its origins in a particular set of circumstances, or distant antecedents. Rather genealogies of globalization seek to give an account of globalization at the level of forms of knowledge and practice. As Larner and Walters put it "at what point does the globalization emerge as a way of knowing and acting on and in the world?" (2004a).
Genealogies of globalization focus on questions about: how did it become possible to think in terms of the global? What techniques were required? How are these ideas and techniques transferred in and between organizations? Embodied in what forms of expertise? Answering these questions requires different kinds of studies than would be required for a "point of origin" account of globalization. For instance examining how technical advances in statistical mapping allowed particular kinds of indicators to be developed that made it possible to think of a space beyond the nation-state (O Tuathail and Dalby 1998). This recognizes that globalization does not exist as a phenomenon or entity waiting to be charted, analyzed, understood and then reacted to. Seeing globalization in a genealogical light recognizes that globalization does not exist "in a strong sense until governments, international agencies, corporate actors, scholars and activists began to name globalization, and develop ways to measure its extents and effects" (Larner and Walters 2004a). Genealogies of globalization would implicate scholars and key theorists in the "territorialization" of globalization, as their works, including this collection, help constitute what globalization is rather than just reflect the "effects" of globalization. They continue with the following general definition of globalization as a form of universalism.

III. Universal Civilization

The idea of a universal civilization is closely tied to the argument that globalization homogenizes. There appear to be more voices against the prospect of a realization of a universal civilization than predicting it. The once conservative John Gray argues that free market trade is the latest attempt to create a universal civilization. He writes, "The inexorable growth of a world market does not advance a universal civilization. It makes the interpenetration of cultures an irreversible global condition" (1998: 193). Presumably this leads to the "clash of civilizations" discussed by Huntington.

In addition, Mooney and Evans link the notion of globalization to certain religious concepts. This is useful also if we were to add philosophy to religion: both can become forms of universalism in the process of globalization. Here too they point out that the tendency of this kind of process is towards a certain homogenization. But here Confucians would wonder if we can really have harmony without uniformity in terms of the modern impact of globalization. Does the increasing exchange of ideas necessarily mean a single religious or philosophical system will become the hegemonic norm for globalization?²

²Along with these mostly secular definitions of globalization, there also has been and continues to be an extended Christian theological discussion of globalization as a religious phenomenon. While, as we will note later, there is a massive debate on whether or not one can even call Confucianism a religion in any meaningful sense, in the current discussion of globalization it is hard to escape the feeling that there is almost a religious dimension to the advocates of globalization. Perhaps the debate is not carried out using the language of historic Christian notion of mission, nonetheless globalization certainly is about the transmission of values of worth to all human beings, including religious as well as secular ideas and ideologies.

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The very notion of globalization as a mono-directional process causes pause in the minds of some scholars. Does the term globalization itself imply a strong form of cultural hegemony for the transmission of the cultures of the North Atlantic world to the rest of the world? Is this just another case of the West and the Rest?

In both the introduction and concluding chapter of Mou Bo’s edited *History of Chinese Philosophy* (2009), Mou argues for a different term to describe the process of the globalization of Chinese philosophy. He prefers to call this process the emergence of World Philosophy. Or as the title of the concluding chapter (pp. 571-72) puts it, “Constructive Engagement of Chinese and Western Philosophy: A Contemporary Trend toward World Philosophy.” Mou is arguing for the process of philosophical exchange to be a dialogue that focuses on the complementary nature of the conversation. The emergence of World Philosophy denotes how previously isolated streams of philosophy are now mutually entangled in the modern world. It also argues that this is a fruitful entanglement that will enrich both Chinese and Western philosophy. While the focus is on Chinese philosophy, Mou’s thesis is that there is nothing parochial anymore about this kind of exchange. As other scholars have argued, this is really a dipolar process of globalization and localization. It is not about tradition, ethnicity, or even a research focus: it is simply that features of traditional Chinese philosophy have come to fascinate a contemporary scholar.

However useful these contemporary definitions of globalization may be, we need to go back even one further step. As all the definitions suggest, globalization is a process of action, often at a distance, that compresses space and time and gives a sense of immediacy lacking from previous eras. It is a network of interconnected peoples, corporations, governments and even cultures. But such set of processes and interactions depends, in the first place, on something interacts. In this case it would be people interested in the globalization of Confucianism. So this prior question

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1 For instance, see Deng (2011) for a collection of essays on this topic from a number of interdisciplinary perspectives. Along with globalization the authors also call for reflection on the localization of the process and outcomes of globalization. See also Wang (2004) for a set of essays that focuses specifically on the globalization of philosophy. Mou’s (2009) edited history of Chinese philosophy also touches on globalization, often with very thoughtful critical reflections.

2 Of course in the introductory essays to this fine resource guide various scholars make the strong case for the very notion of Chinese philosophy—which is not always a notion recognized by many Western philosophers. For instance we can quote Anthony Flew’s (1971, 36) dismissal of non-Western philosophy in his *An Introduction To Western Philosophy*: “Philosophy, as the word is understood here, is concerned first, last, and at all times with argument. (It is, incidentally, because most of what is labeled *Eastern Philosophy* is not so concerned – rather than for any reasons of European parochialism—that this book draws no materials from any sources east of Suez. Such works of the classical Chinese Sages as the *Analects* of Confucius are in their own kind great. But that does not make them in the present sense philosophy).” One can only hope that this kind of judgment does not remain normative for Western philosophers in the future.
demands an answer to the question of what is Confucianism? And how could it be globalized?

IV. Encountering Confucianism

There is much debate about how to define Confucianism as there is about the nature and scope of contemporary globalization. In the first place, Confucius and Confucianism are Western neologisms that find their origin with the early Jesuit missionary-scholar encounter with East Asian religio-philosophical traditions beginning in the 16th Century. The Jesuits decided, in distinction from Daoist and Buddhists, there was a major group of scholars called ru 儒 in Chinese. But by the time the Jesuits arrived in China, ru had commonly come to mean scholar, but a particular kind of scholar and certainly one to be distinguished from lao 老 (Daoist or the follower of Laozi and the extended tradition that followed the Laodaoqijing) or fo 佛 (Followers of the Buddha and the tradition that depended on the Buddha’s dharma). The ru, as the Jesuits reasoned, were those scholars who followed the teachings of Kongzi, and hence used one of Kongzi’s titles, kongfuzi, for the designation of the tradition as Confucianism. The problem of course is that Confucian and Confucianism have no precise counterparts in Chinese or East Asian usage. However, for practical purposes it is fair to say that Confucians did use the term ru as a designation of their tradition and honored Kongzi with its name.

Of course, Kongzi would probably have been greatly surprised by this designation, as he never wearied of explaining that he was a transmitter and not an innovator. What he meant by this is that his teachings were based, as accurately as he could make them, on the classical lore of pre-dynastic sages, including especially the rulers of the Zhou dynasty. Among the Zhou paragons, the Duke of Zhou particularly impressed Kongzi. However, as if often the case, there is often no more transformative force in a tradition than the person passionate to restore the tradition to its pristine origins. For instance the great Protestant Reformers such as Luther and Calvin believe that they were engaged in a process of returning the church of their day to its roots in the New Testament without the layers of accretion from the development of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet the Protestant Reformers and Kongzi actually began a dramatic and creative transformation of their cultures.

Kongzi had analyzed the problems of his day in the Zhou Dynasty and had a plan for how to transform the current situation back into some reflecting the glory of the founding of the dynasty centuries before. This plan was to teach his disciples, and hopefully then the powerful feudal lords, about the proper virtues and socioethical praxis necessary for a flourishing society and state by returning to and relying on the records of the Zhou paragons. Of course in doing so Kongzi really initiated a unique interpretation of the Chinese past that later became identified with his name.

There seems little doubt that Confucianism, as a teaching about a way of life, the Dao 道, is a philosophical tradition. In some respects the general recognition of Confucianism as a philosophical tradition is itself a product of the ongoing process of globalization as an intercultural transmission of ideas from one culture to another.
The day is rapidly ending when every philosophical tradition is judged by criteria completely derived from current Western philosophical discourse and history. Such a view has become much too parochial (Flew 1971 above), even though the question of how to define philosophy becomes more complicated when we factor in the intellectual and cultural histories of the Islamic world, the traditions inspired by Indian thought, and the contributions of East Asian scholars for thousands of years. What is clear is that philosophy as a form of second order self-reflective thought arising in the Axial Age is something that can be found across Eurasia and beyond. While there is no common definition of what defines the philosophical enterprise it is an exciting time to think about what philosophy will come to mean when Al Arabi, Nagarjuna and Xunzi are all taken into account as paradigmatic world philosophers.

The founding philosophical sensibilities can vary greatly along many different tangents. Take for instance the discussion of the good or the foundations of ethical conduct. Socrates is famous for pushing his interlocutors not just to give him examples of good people or actions but also to provide a suitable definition of what the per se good. Socrates would have been very cross with Kongzi because the Chinese scholar refused to provide one propositional definition of his highest vision of the good, ren 仁 goodness, humanity, co-humanity et al. From Kongzi’s point of view there is probably no one definition that would cover the range of conduct and appropriate role of defined action and intentions that could encompass what he wanted to teach about ren as a cardinal virtue.

Nor do you have to consider Kongzi naïve in his appeal to examples and metaphors to define ren. For instance, the work of scholars such as Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1999), among many others, has demonstrated that we not only live by but also reason by metaphors. So a philosophy that stays close to its root metaphors illustrated by narrative example might simply be making a strong case that all thinking, including ultimately propositional or assertive philosophy is based not on other strict propositions but on metaphors. Of course metaphors, definitions and propositions can be cheerfully mixed if this is the taste of the philosopher. In Chinese philosophy the great Zhuangzi is a perfect example of such a mixture—albeit with a wicked sense of humor about the whole exercise.

Here Justus Buchler’s tripartite division of the art of query, his most generic term for what would encompass philosophy along with other forms of spoken, acted and written discourse. Buchler (1974: 97-98) argues that we really display the richness of philosophical discourse if we think of it expressing three dimensions of query and inquiry.

(1) When we can be said to predicate, state, or affirm, by the use of words or any other means; when the underlying direction is to achieve or support belief; when it is relevant to cite evidence in behalf of our product, we produce in the mode of assertive judgment, we judge assertively. [Here the domain is often science]

(2) We can be said to do or to act; when the underlying direction is toward effecting a result; when “bringing about” is the central trait attributable to our product, we produce in the mode of active judgment, we judge actively. [This is often the domain of moral action or assessment]
(3) When we contrive or make, in so far as the contrivance rather than its role in action is what dominates and is of underlying concern; when the process is shaping and the product as shaped is central, we produce in the mode of exhibitive judgment; we judge exhibitively. [here the focus would often be art]

The point here is that Kongzi could argue that we cannot define ethics until and unless we make sure of material from all three modes of inquiry. When seeking a definition for ethical conduct, and indeed Kongzi does offer some definitions from time to time, it may be the case that we need to consider an action rather than a definition.

Moreover, if we are discussing an action then narrative or an example may be the superior and more illustrative way to express this mode of inquiry. So rather than being perversely anti-intellectual, Kongzi’s penchant for giving examples of ethical action might well better serve, or at least serve very well, the discussion of ethics. Of course, all three modes obtain in the richness of daily life for Buchler and a truly excellent modern and/or global ethical discourse should find a way to integrate all of these three modes of judgment in framing its ethical theory and praxis. While these three modes of query and judgment, according to Buchler, are not always transferred from one into the other, they can be translated by each other. They can be related and no one is more fundamental than any other. For example, “To assume that stating [assertive mode] is also judicative is to assume that it is the sole means by which man discriminates and appropriates traits of his world (Buchler 1974: 100).” But often in ethical and artistic actions the active and exhibitive modes predominate. Hence if ethical discourse is discriminated, then Kongzi’s and the Confucian desire to illustrate ethical conduct via an active mode, a story of ethical conduct, makes a great deal of sense.

Furthermore Buchler has a definition of the things and events of the world that is helpful here. “The expression ‘natural complex’ …applies to whatever is, and therefore to whatever can be dealt with; to what is produced by men as to what is not” (Buchler 1974: 100). These natural complexes can be specified by any of the three modes of judgment—assertive, active or exhibitive. Moreover, Buchler also holds that there is an ontological parity of all natural complexes. There is no really real or something more fundamental prior to natural complexes. Buchler makes a distinction between ontological priority and parity, preferring parity as the better understanding of natural complexes. This comports well with the Confucian cosmology of qi and its field and focus resulting in the myriad things and events of the cosmos.

In terms of its ethical constructs, Confucianism’s most distinctive common approach is often likened to Western Virtue ethics, though some contemporary scholars have suggested that this it be modified to be a role ethics (Rosemont and Ames 2009) or conduct ethics (Mou 2009b) as a more nuanced description of Confucian ethical discourse. Both role and conduct ethics are clearly virtue ethics but with specifications appropriate to the sensibilities of the Confucian tradition. An even more complicated issue is whether or not Confucianism can also be considered a religious tradition, as would be the case for both Daoism and Buddhism. However, the question about the religious nature of Confucianism need not detain us at this point. It is enough to note that no one really ought to question the philosophical nature

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Of the Confucian Way. It is this philosophical element that stands at the heart of what is globalized as it transmitted from its East Asian home to the wider world.

Of course, the Confucian Way as a philosophical teaching is transmitted as more than a series of traditional texts. As Tu Weiming has argued, Confucianism is something like a part of traditional East Asian cultural DNA. While modern people, who would never define themselves as Confucian or know about the origins of many of their values, do continue the sensibility of the Confucian Way through inculcating admiration for education, hard work and respect for family and the elderly. While other East Asian traditions also teach about these sorts of life principles, goals, and values, these virtues certainly were and are part of the Confucian Way.

Nonetheless, in traditional East Asia, the best way to define a Confucian was if the person ordered his or her life according to the accepted Confucian canon. This probably an overly academic way to define the tradition but it does have some merits. For instance, there is this interesting definition of ‘Confucian’ found in the K'ung ts'ung Tzu: The K'ung Family Masters' Anthology (Ariel 1989: 135), Prince P'ing-yüan said: "From where is the term 'Confucian' derived?" Tzu-kao [312-262 BCE] answered: " It is derived from the idea of the combination of the various exquisite virtues, and the conjoining of the six arts, such that whether in action or repose [the Confucian] never loses the core of the Way."

Here the combination of the exquisite virtues and the six arts points to the need for both formal learning and the cultivation of the mind-heart.

For instance, in many Confucian schools it was indeed the quality of a person’s xin 心 mind-heart that helped define the critical ability to participate in the Confucian Way. So someone who was not a scholar, in fact someone who was completely illiterate but who might have heard conversations about Confucian virtues in her or his family and actually took this instruction to heart and practice, let us say family reverence/filial piety xiao 孝 or true faithfulness xin 信 to a friend, was a better Confucian than a scholar who knew the classics and their commentaries by heart but who was completely immoral.

Nonetheless, as with all the great Axial Age philosophies and religions, a basic, even informed, command of the classical canon functioned as the deep keel and rudder of the tradition. Confucians were firm about this. The third of the great classical Confucians, Xunzi 荀子, pointed out that everyone needed texts and a teacher. Perhaps those without wealth and learning could do without the texts but not without the teacher. And of course, what marks a person a teacher in the Confucian Way is a twofold achievement. The first is a command of the grand textual tradition that grew around the Five Classics and expanded into the commentaries on the classics as well as commentaries on the works of great Confucian scholars over the long centuries. The second, dependent on the first according to Confucian scholars, was a living appropriation of the ethical, historical, and social teachings of the classics. A person needed to get the tradition for oneself in service to others. In the famous formulation of Wang Yangming of the Ming Dynasty, knowledge and action must be one. If you cannot be a real minister or father or friend, then you do not really know the teachings of the Confucian sages. One virtue, of course, stands behind all of
Confucian learning, namely family reverence (filial piety) *xiao* 孝. From the Confucian viewpoint, it is within the family that we begin our embodiment to the Confucian Way and it is in the family that we are always rooted in personal growth and social endeavors.

In terms of the legacy of the specific themes from Kongzi we can identify a number of such items. Of course it has always been obvious that one can only devise such a list with caution and humility. Arthur Waley once remarked that the mark of a work we consider a classic is its ability to inspire new interpretations down the centuries. It is always such a rich work that no matter how diverse the interpretations might become, they always do share a linkage, a stronger connection and an even strong inspiration from the original text.

Moreover, there is always a cosmos of *qi* 氣. Of course the definition of *qi* is one of the most complex of all Chinese philosophical terms. It has been called the ether, matter-energy, configurational force, vital force, vital energy and a host of other terms. However there is very little doubt that *qi* most cogently discussed as a philosophical term, in the Neo-Confucian period but relying on classical roots, is the matrix of everything in the cosmos. To be is to be *qi*, or perhaps better put, to be part of *qi*. It is interesting to note that among the Neo-Confucians it was never a highly contested term. It seems to be the case that it was such a fundamental part of the Neo-Confucian conceptual scheme that everyone assumed they knew what they meant by it. This makes it very hard to translate into English because it implies, among others, the twin traits of both material substance and energetic activity. Zhu Xi, the most famous of the Song Neo-Confucian philosophers, would always talk about it in terms of wushi 物事 as both things and events. The early Jesuit scholar-missionaries found it to be simply a contradictory concept, one that violated the law of non-contradiction in the sense that something could be both an energetic process or action and a very concrete thing at the same time. This dipolar aspect of *qi* does not seem so outlandish in the day of quantum physics and string theory, however. We can summarize some of these traits in the following fashion.

1) This cosmos of *qi* is a world of constant change and transformation. The classical statement of this view is drawn from the Great Appendix of the *Yijing* The Book of Changes. The key phrase is that the cosmos is governed by *shengsheng buxi* 生生不息 constant generation or ceaseless creativity. Calling it creativity\(^5\) might be pushing the case, but it is certainly and without a doubt the ceaseless generation of the things and events of the world. What this constant generation, change and transformation produces, within the field-focus of *qi*, the things and events of the cosmos’ *wushi* 物事. The notion of a thing, some concrete object is fairly clear, but what was meant by an event is slightly more opaque. A good example of an event would be a successful ethical act. It is complex and because the situations and roles of each and every person are always themselves changing, each ethically successful act, while it may express a fairly settled general type, such an act of filial reverence or

\(^5\)For a discussion of various forms of Chinese themes of creativity or transformation, see Berthrong (2008).

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2) This constant change and transformation of the qi cosmos is, as Roger Ames (2011) writes, a creatio in situ (in contrast with creatio ex nihilo for instance). It is not just one thing after another however, which would be paisheng 派生. It is rather a true case of huasheng 化生 or true transformation. While there are elements that are passed down from generation to generation of things and events, each new thing or event is an exemplar of the process of ceaseless transformation (themes two and three are conjoined in this view of the cosmos).

3) This is also a cosmos represented by “field” and “focus” (Ames 2011) in terms of the relationships of its parts/whole. There are various ways to define how parts are related to a whole, and vice versa. In the Confucian case it is best to think of this relationship of a general field to a specific focus. The field is the one cosmic configurational vital energy of qi. There is nothing beyond, below, above, before or after the field of qi. If there is a holistic vision of cosmic qi, what about the emergence or generation, birth, of distinct things and events? The particular things and events are the focal points that come together out of the field of qi. To be a thing or event is to have a particular focus or location as it were within the field of qi. For instance, this is the theme that causes, to follow Zhu Xi, to talk about how each human being has an allotment of qi as is a specific focus, that is to say, a particular configuration of qi as a local event/focus within the constantly transformative field of qi.

4) The most common way to talk about the two most common forces within qi are the binary interaction of yin and yang 阴阳. One is tempted to treat yin-yang now as part of the English language. While many English speakers will only have a vague idea of the historical origin and philosophical development of these fundamental binary forces, they do seem to grasp that they denote two ways of looking at the constitution of anything or event in the cosmos. There are a myriad of ways to describe yin and yang: light and dark, soft and solid, responsive and energetic, female and male—and so forth.

5) Another popular way to discuss the interrelationship of the things and events of the cosmos is encapsulated in the common saying, tian[di]ren heyi 天地人合— the unity of heaven (the supernal), earth and humanity. Earth is in brackets because the most common version is just tianren heyi, although the notion of earth is often included. The third of the great classical Confucians, Xunzi, for instance did emphasize that there was a unity or interaction of heaven, earth and humanity. Xunzi also stresses that these are distinct elements of the cosmic field of qi, but they were all interrelated in complex manners. From Xunzi’s viewpoint each one of three domains of heaven, earth, and humanity needed each other to complete the great pattern dali 大理 of the cosmos. Different thinkers would express this in different ways, and it was such a common theme in Chinese philosophy that Daoists and Buddhists shared this theme with Confucians. What the theme expresses most forcefully is that the cosmos is relational in nature and every thing or event is in some fashion related holistically to every other thing or event. Of course from the Confucian view, this

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power of the relationship can and often should vary. For instance, the deference due various roles and family and social relationships varies from role to role, human relationship to human relationship.

V. The Sociology of Knowledge

Most contemporary scholars employing the concept of globalization, as we have seen in our short review of a number of current definitions, assume we are talking about current events. Of course there is a point here. The main argument is that in terms of globalization theory quantity and immediacy matter. It matters that we can travel in about 13 hours from Beijing or Shanghai to Boston. The sheer quantity of raw materials, goods, people, ideas and even diseases makes for not only an increase in quantity, let us say of trade over the volume along the Silk Road, but a qualitative transformation of the transmission of people, products and culture that is the modern globalization process.

If we follow W. C. Smith’s charming story about the transmission of the ideas from ancient India to modern Boston and then back to India, while it did take more than twenty-five hundred years for Martin Luther King, Jr., to get on the plane from the United States to India, it was still a fascinating example of intercultural exchange. In fact one could make something of a counter-claim that what is really at stake here is intercultural exchange—and it is the exchange that matters no matter how long it takes. Another example is the transmission of Buddhism from India and Central Asia into China beginning in the Han Dynasty. This constant flow of information, books, merchants and monks was a large enterprise and one that had a profound impact on Chinese civilization. But was it globalization?

The Buddhist conquest of China, in the famous phrase and extensive historical account of Erik Zücher, was indeed an impressive example of globalization if we accept that the Buddhist impact on China was one of the supreme examples of religious mission as globalization in the pre-modern world. Much the same could be said for the later rapid expansion of Islam and then Christianity. These three great Eurasian missionary religions could be counted as early and highly successful examples of globalization. A new culture, often both intellectual, spiritual and material, flowed from one culture to a new culture, to be received and the transformed by the new host culture. It was certainly a reciprocal process. For instance, Chinese monks journeyed to India to take part in the lively debates in great Indian monasteries, and in turn Japanese pilgrims travelled to Tang China to learn more about the Buddha’s dharma. There is even a fascinating moment (Moffett II) when the Tang scholar-monks asked a Nestorian Christian colleague to help the Japanese better understand the complexities of translating the original Indian and Central Asian languages into Chinese, and then into Japanese. If we are willing to expand the temporal dimension of globalization, I think the Buddhist, Islamic and Christian examples do count.

Moving into even a wider geographical sweep, Donald F. Lach (1965--) and his collaborators in multiple volumes have chronicled the role of Asia in the making of Europe. It is an epic story and much richer than most people would surmise. There
has been a great deal more information and material objects flowing from Asia into Europe going back to Hellenistic and Roman times. We all know of the famous list of Chinese inventions such as paper, the compass, gunpowder and printing that helped transform Western Europe centuries ago. As Lach has explained, it was an extended time of first contacts and exchanges, of discovery and centuries of wonder. Here again though the time it took for ideas, people and products to move from Asia to Europe and back was often counted in decades and not hours. The actual information that was known and recorded in European sources was a mixture of solid fact on occasion often mixed with fabulous misunderstandings and myths. Of course all of this changed after the Portuguese sailed into the Indian and then Pacific Oceans. Portuguese and Spanish, and then a host of other European explorers, missionaries, merchants and military adventures, soon followed this lead. Each group brought back tales of wonder. For instance, Europeans came to highly value Chinese porcelain and spent decades trying to figure out how to produce their own versions of these Chinese exports.

As Lach tells this complicated story of commerce and military adventure we could well call this an era of globalization though at first the flow of goods and ideas was more from Asia to Europe than the other way around. Save for gold and silver a country like China expressed little interest in any European goods. In terms of ideas the Chinese and Japanese were intrigued by the scientific knowledge and technological skills brought by the Jesuit scholar missionaries. As Europeans learned more about China from extensive Jesuit reports some Western scholars were intrigued by what they were being told. Famous scholars such a Leibniz (Lach 1957) took Chinese ideas very seriously. In the 17th and 18th Centuries the reports about Confucian social ethics proved valuable ammunition for radical European philosophers who wanted to argue that the Chinese case proved that you could have a highly organized and sophisticated ethical culture that was not dependent on the revealed Christian religion and churches. It was somewhat ironic that the Jesuits, in their eagerness to report on the China mission, provided fodder for the Enlightenment critique of the old regime in Europe.

According to Randal Collins (1998) the ideas that have circulated back and forth from Asia to Europe and vice versa has a long developmental history. Moreover Collins has developed a sophisticated sociological interpretation of how philosophical schools arise, flourish, and in time, develop in their home cultures and then also sometimes migrate around the world. Of course, Collins is primarily interested in the internal origins of particular scholarly communities, but because these scholarly collectives are very corporate in nature, they have an ability that allows them to move within cultures and outwards to new and diverse homes far from their places of origin.

What is especially impressive about Collins’ opus is that he does not just focus on Europe but includes extensive sections to Indian, Chinese, Japanese and Islamic traditions. It is model for what a globalized history of world philosophy can and ought to be. Collins Romanized Chinese using the Wade-Giles system but I will change this is the now more universally accepted Pin-yin Romanization system.

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All we need think of is the spread of Buddhism and later Islam from their places of origin to the farther reaches of the Eurasian world.

Collins explains his vision of global philosophy in this fashion. “My strategy has been to focus on intellectual networks: the social links among those thinkers whose ideas have been passed along in later generations (1998: xvii).” What is so useful about Collins’ project is that these ideas are not only shared from generation to generation but also have a spatial transmission and hence provide the background of contemporary philosophical global or world philosophy. He describes his theory as “… arguing that if one can understand the principles that determine intellectual networks, one has a causal explanation of idea and their changes. In a very strong sense, networks are the actors on the intellectual stage (Ibid.).” This view challenges us to think about the growth and transmission of philosophical systems from a different perspective. While some scholars might be a bit nervous about the reification of philosophical networks as compared to the concrete achievements of individual thinkers, I believe Collins has a point, and one that is especially relevant to Chinese philosophy in general and Confucianism in particular. As Kongzi reminded us in Analects 4.25, virtue always has neighbors; hence we could likewise stress the corporate nature of the Confucian Way. Confucianism has almost always been articulated as a project of likeminded scholars who share a common tradition, a friendship within the global republic of letters. So Collins’ view of the importance of scholarly networks helps to better understand, for instance, why the Confucian tradition places such emphasis on commentarial discourse to engage its philosophical core issues. Confucians most certainly have a strong sense of networking, so much so that Kongzi also wrote that he transmitted but did not innovate and was faithful to the old, Analects 7.1—述而不作，信而好古.

VI. Case Study: Zhu Xi’s 道學

As a case of how we might present the work of a major Confucian thinker in terms of the current process of globalization as world philosophy, we will examine the thought of Zhu Xi (1130-1200). Although a remarkably creative new endeavor, the contemporary New Confucian has its roots in the world of the Neo-Confucians. It is the Neo-Confucian and now New Confucian intellectual world that is part of the current process of globalization.

There is a large consensus that Zhu Xi, or Master Zhu 朱子 as he has been known for eight centuries, may be the most influential Confucian thinker of the last millennium and perhaps one of two or three most important Confucian thinkers for all time. Likewise, as with almost all great thinkers, he is exalted by some and sharply criticized by others. The very form, content and structure of his vast scholarly achievement has delighted or worried generations of scholars from his time till today. In terms of comparative global/world philosophy his role in the Confucian Way has been compared, and justly so, with the role of Thomas Aquinas in the Christian faith. Both men were immensely learned and both had an astounding list of publications on the entire range of what counted for scholarship and even practical matters in their

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respective cultures. Master Zhu wrote essays, commentaries, poetry, philosophical anthologies, ritual texts, government memoranda and a huge collection of dialogues and letters to his friends and students.

Zhu Xi was also as systematic thinker as he was expansive in the range of topics he addressed and the literary forms he wrote. In many ways it is the systematic philosophical vision that makes him such a fascinating figure. He had a powerful worldview that ordered his entire life project. Even this commitment to the creation of a systematic presentation of what he considered to be the Confucian Way as articulated by his revered Northern Song masters posed a problem to later students of the Confucian Way. In the first place he wrote so much more than most of his colleagues. If many Confucians were somewhat reticent about writing and publishing their works, Zhu Xi went in another direction entirely. The modern Shanghai edition of his collected works runs to twenty-seven large volumes. His scholarly output was massive. There are a number of reasons for this output. Perhaps the simplest explanation is that he passed the highest imperial examination at the remarkable age of eighteen. The average age of someone to pass this highest examination was well into the 30s. This gave Zhu extra decades as a scholar to produce a philosophical masterpiece. Moreover, while committed (in theory) to government service, Zhu managed for the most part to take up posts that allowed him to spend most of his time on scholarly pursuits. The second reason can only be attributed to his burning desire to expound and explain the work of the Song revival of Confucian scholarship that has become known as Neo-Confucianism in the West and as Songxue 宋學 in Chinese.

But even within the wide ambit of the Song revival of Confucian thought Zhu Xi played a specialized role. He had a very particular take on what were the defining philosophical elements of a Song representation of the authentic teachings of the Confucian Way. In order to do this he argued that he was simply following the best insights of his favorite Northern Song Master. He would have argued that in doing this he was following the hallowed Confucian method of transmitting the wisdom of his teachers and hence being faithful to what he called the daotong 道統 or Transmission of the Way. Of course Zhu turned out to be just as creative in his role of a transmitter as Kongzi long before. For instance, if Kongzi focused his attention on the cardinal virtue of ren 仁, Zhu was equally famous (or infamous for his critics) for selecting the notion of li 理, which he drew primarily form the work of younger of the Cheng brothers, Cheng Yi. Li, like so many Chinese philosophical terms, has a long history within the developing Confucian Way and defies a simple translation into English. We will examine the nature and role of li in much greater detail below. However, the most common English translations of li are pattern, order, texture or principle—all governed by the notion of coherence as a key hermeneutical element in trying to understand Zhu’s philosophical intent and systematic vision. So for instance, we now find notions such as coherent pattern or coherent principle as translations attempting to capture the structure, content and sensibility of Zhu’s philosophy.
VII. The Four Architectonic Domains/Traits

The four key domains catalog and order the intricate architectonic integral web schematizing the four major fields and foci of Zhu Xi’s (1130-1200) complex axiological cosmology in terms of his philosophical lexicography. The terms and concepts outlined below are obviously not exhaustive of Zhu’s massive corpus but they partially encompass the cosmological vision of the Southern Song master—although, for instance, Zhu’s political concerns only register tangentially even if they would have mattered greatly to the Song master. Therefore, when Zhu Xi described any of the events 事 or things 物 of the world, he would have recourse to these and other terms either singularly, or more commonly, as clusters of concepts, some vague and some complex, that allowed him to explain, describe, and even commend the vast variety of things, events, dispositions, characters, actions, inner and outer social and mental states, roles of personal and social activity, and modes of cultivation that any person must seek out in order to become a worthy student of dao学 the Teaching of the Way.

The concept of field/focus draws on the work begun by David Hall and Roger Ames. We will review some extensive quotes from Hall and Ames (2001: 10-11) to illustrate the meaning of field and focus.

7

The Chinese world is a phenomenal world of continuity, becoming, and transitoriness. In such a world, there is not final discreetness….Thus, things are not objects, but foci within a continuous field of changing processes and events. A deobjectified, defactualized discourse is the language of processes, and to speak and hear that language is to experience the flow of things.

A processive language precludes the assumption that objects serve as references of linguistic expressions. The precise referential language of denotation and description is to be replaced by a language of “deference” in which meanings both allude to and defer to one another in a shifting field of significances.…

…On the other hand, the language of deference does not employ proper names simply as indicators of particular individuals or members of classes, but invokes hints, suggestions, or allusions to indicate foci in a field of meanings. “Confucius” is a corporate self, and as such, his name is a particular context calls forth a range of associations—persons, historical events, ideas—out of which the meaning of this invocation emerges for this particular audience.

Often the notion of field can be described as the field of formless, dynamic qi out of which all the things and events of the world find their place as a foci within the field.

Hall and Ames continue,

The language of focus and field that we shall be employing in our interpretation of the Zhongyong is readily contrasted with the substance language dominant in the West. The latter is expressive of a world characterized by “wholes” and “parts”—a world patterned by discreteness.

7It was a great loss to the study of Chinese philosophy when Professor David Hall died shortly before the publication of this translation and commentary on the Zhongyong.

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and permanence in which change is primarily the rearrangement of that which is unchanging. The language of focus and field expresses a world always in a state of flux, a world in which items cannot be fixed as finally this or that, but must be seen as always transitory states passing into other, correlative, states. There is no final whole we call “Cosmos” or “world.” The world is an interactive field. It is wanwu—”the ten thousand things. (loc. cit.)

I believe that we can appreciate the insight about the field-focus hypothesis without agreeing with the rest of the Hall and Ames interpretation of either the Zhongyong. It is just these kinds of reflective hypotheses that are part of the globalization of Confucian philosophy. Of course, each specific Confucian tradition and scholar will have their own interpretation of what the field and its foci constitute. For instance, for Zhu Xi the notion best used to describe the field would be qi as the dynamic matrix within which the things and events of the world emerge as determinate natural complexes, to use Buchler’s terminology. The beauty of Buchler’s formulation is that it does not simply reduce the foci to be things, or even events. A natural complex is indeed a foci of the field, but it expresses a sense of philosophical parity of the things and events and not a priority as would be the case if we were talking about parts and wholes.

In framing this modern transposition of Zhu xi’s rich philosophical achievement, I have tried as best I can to mirror the Southern Song philosophical vocabulary of Zhu Xi’s literary Chinese as my model for these four architectonic domains. As we shall see, each domain has a number of intricately connected traits that help express its role in Zhu’s vision of the cosmos. But we can also transpose Zhu’s terminology into English as well. Therefore I suggest the following English transpositions for Zhu’s lexicon:

1. States/Conditions/Formats ⇒ Forms, patterns, formatting, texture or coherent principles that “format” the things and events of the cosmos （理）; the coherent principles/patterns suoyiran 所以然 for the natural dispositions and sedimentation of all things and events. The fundamental matrix of the Dao.
2. Functions/Processes ⇒ The dynamics of any given situation; most cogently the functions and processes, field and focus of qi 氣—the protean power of cosmological auto telic generativity shengsheng buxi 生生不息.
3. Civilizing Cultural Achievements ⇒ the trait of unification of the formal and dynamic dimensions constituting the emergence of an event or thing （和 & 文） encoding the cosmic, social and personal balance needed to achieve harmony.
4. Axiological Values & Virtues ⇒ the values that are achieved, shared, and embodied through the selection of appropriate yi 義 cultural norms or coherent principles or patterns 理 expressed as de 德 refined 文 virtues and appropriate conduct via civility 禮.

VIII. Zhu Xi’s Four Paradigmatic Domains

In terms of Zhu’s Chinese text I correlate the four architectonic domains with the set of Zhu’s Chinese terminology. For instance, yong as the expression of the dynamic functions and processes of the Ten Thousand things is quite clear. So also, with a bit more explanation, so should the domain of benti 理 should also be clear. In thinking of domains I am stressing the fact that for Zhu there are four primary areas of philosophical concern and each domain is populated, as we will see below, with a variety of terms that help give the domain interpretive substance. In many ways this is what we should expect from a rich historical tradition such as Zhu inherited. Each of
these domains is richly sedimented with a variety of terms; and each term can therefore highlight a specific trait of the domain depending on the specific point that he is trying to emphasize in an essay, dialogue, anthology or commentary. Translating from Chinese to English the following equivalences obtain:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese Term</th>
<th>English Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benti 本體</td>
<td>Patterns, Coherent Principles &amp; States, Conditions &amp; Texture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yong 用</td>
<td>Dynamic Functions or Processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Wen] 和/文</td>
<td>Harmonizing Cultural Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De 德</td>
<td>Axiological Values &amp; Virtues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The domain of *benti* is represented by the trait of patterns, coherent principles and states, textures, formats and conditions. We will now illustrate this domain with the following examples drawn from Zhu’s analysis of the coming into determinate focus of the ten thousand things. We begin with *Tian* 天 heaven, *tiandao* 天道 or the Supernal Dao; *di* 地 earth; *ren* 人 the person as the paradigmatic states that constitute the grand cosmological triad of *daoxue* discourse and reflection derived from Zhu’s reading of the classical Confucian texts. *Tian*, *di* and *ren* as heaven, earth and human beings form the main narrative cosmological triad for *daoxue*—and the inclusion of *di* 地 as earth always reminds Ru/Confucian thinkers that human beings are part of the organic matrix of all objects and events in a unified cosmos. One famous maxim defining the relational nature of the cosmos is *tianrenheyi* 天人合一, the unity of supernal heaven and humanity or *tiandirenheyi* 天地人合一 or the unity of heaven, earth and humanity. The *benti* 本體 acts as the fundamentally profound source of the patterning of the Dao as the field for the focus of the things and events of the cosmos.

In terms of what Zhu borrowed as the most famous feature of *daoxue* from Cheng Yi, *li* 理 functions as the state, condition, pattern, constructive pattern, order, coherent principle, or rationale *suoyiran* 所以然 of the cosmos. *Li* is, for instance, a concept found in the classical Ru/Confucian Xunzi as the great pattern 大理 of the world and a critical concept, even defining element, in Song and post-Song philosophical discourse. The supremely excellent *li* is identified as *tajii* 太極 the Supreme Polarity (Ultimate) of the yin-yang 陰陽 vital energies of *qi* within the primal *dao* 道. Zhu often makes use of another Northern Song maxim, *liyi fenshu* 理一分殊 or the teaching that coherent principle or pattern is one as an ordering format or unified trait while its manifestations are many or diverse. Often this state of *liyi fensu* is deemed to be characteristic of the holistic, organic, pluralistic and yet realistic sensibility of Ru/Neo-Confucian thought and cosmology in Song and post-Song periods. While there is a unity of moral order to the cosmos, there is also a diversity of outcomes based on the dynamics of vital energy, the interaction of yin-yang, and the constant circulation of the five phases *wuxing* 五行.

In order to express the dynamic nature of the domain of pattern, order, coherent principle as a supreme condition, Zhu used the notion of *Taiji* 太極 the Supreme
Polarity (Supreme Ultimate\textsuperscript{8}) as the highest formal and unified trait of the \textit{li} of the cosmos and for each particular thing or event as its specific \textit{ming}. All of these complementary states or formal traits are often discussed in terms of \textit{benti} or the origin-root or source of all the objects and events or for human beings as the \textit{benxin} manifesting the fundamental mind-heart of the person. Of course, the most famous of ultimate state traits is \textit{Dao} as the perfect good or ground of being \textit{shi} and/or emptiness \textit{xu} of all that is, will be or can be. It is designated as the totality of the cosmos manifesting \textit{shengsheng buxi} generation without cessation, the processive and relational domain of Zhu’s vision of the field and focus of the Confucian way. Moreover it also usually implies a moral ‘more’ to the myriad things and events of the cosmos. For Ru/Confucians it functions as the axiological focus of \textit{Dao} as creativity itself for all things and events as \textit{tiandao} the Supernal Dao.

Zhu Xi has another set of traits that exemplify the dynamic \textit{yong} functions of the configuring foci within the Supernal Dao as field for the foci. The most universal trait is \textit{Qi} generative energy, vital action, configuring vitality or force functioning as the dynamic matrix from which all object or events emerge and into which they all return when their focal careers have been completed. Rather for the Buddhists, nothing lasts forever for Zhu Xi. \textit{Qi} is the unceasing creative, generative field or matrix of the myriad things and events of the cosmos. It is manifested for the emerging human person as \textit{zhi} functioning as the ‘basic stuff’ of the \textit{shen} body. \textit{Yin} and \textit{Yang} operate in a cooperative dialectic as the negative and positive forces or poles of generative energy and the dual and balanced modalities of the Supreme Polarity \textit{taiji}. \textit{Yin} and \textit{Yang} are the complementary dynamic vital forces and primal generative traits of the differentiating forces of the cosmos. The sedimented meanings include \textit{yang} as the sunny side of a mountain with \textit{yin} as the shadow side; \textit{yang} as male, \textit{yin} as female; \textit{yang} as active and firm, \textit{yin} as passive, yielding, responsive; \textit{yang} as expansive, \textit{yin} as reactive or recessive; \textit{yang} as penetrating, \textit{yin} as encompassing, etc. \textit{Yin} and \textit{Yang} are analogous and related to active and quiescent \textit{dongjing} states of the related/correlative polarity of \textit{taiji}.

In terms of human life, \textit{xin} functions as the mind-heart at the living center of the human person. The mind-heart needs to be cultivated by proper ritual civility \textit{li} with complete integrity \textit{jing} in order to realize true virtue \textit{de}; this demand for moral self-cultivation requires an elevated level of informed intention \textit{zhi} or committed conformation to the \textit{daoxin} the mind-heart of the Dao or the \textit{benxin} root mind-heart of the Dao and of its manifestations. This moral goal of the achieved conformity to the \textit{daoxin} is contrasted to \textit{renxin} the human (passionate)

\textsuperscript{8}The most common English translation of \textit{taiji} has been Supreme Ultimate, but Joseph Adler has more recently suggested that Supreme Polarity better captures how Zhu Xi understood the term.

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mind-heart prone to error. The student seeks the process zhengxin yangshen 正心養神 to correct the mind-heart in order to cultivate spirit as the human expression of the mind-heart of the Dao.

Zhu Xi believes that Xue 學 study is critical for the proper/appropriate yi 義 cultivation of the mind-heart. The Analects/Lunyu (1.1) begins with Kongxi’s praise for study as the first step on the path of self-cultivation. Without the study of the teachings of the sages and investigation of the things and events wushi 物事 of the cosmos, a person cannot begin to follow or conform to the Dao. Study is a paradigmatic example of role of communication both in the cosmological and pedagogical domains as jiao 交 intersection, meeting, exchange and interaction (ganying 感應), and reciprocity and recompense bao 報. Study can also be liked to jiwei 積僞 accumulation of intelligent action of contrivance wei 偽 in Xunzi. Further, study leads to teaching jiao 教 what one has learned in dialogue with other people and classical the texts of the sages. If virtue loves neighbors, then study and teaching love friends equally dedicated to the examination of way of the sages.

Therefore it is hard to overemphasize the role of jiao 教 teaching, education and learning as a prime process or method by which a person becomes a junzi 君子 or a profound or xian 贤 worthy person; only with further education and self-cultivation might the junzi become a sheng 聰 sage, the highest and most perfect state a person can aspire to achieve. The root method of Ru/Confucian self-cultivation is the process of learning, educating, teaching, self-cultivation, and authentic ethical action. It is the excellence de 德 of living out and embodying the highest ideals of the Confucian Way.

Zhu Xi followed his discussion of (1) the formal states or conditions and (2) processes and functions with reflections on the outcome of the fusion of these two domains. One of the key elements of this fusion of the formal states and the dynamics functions is what Kongzi called zhengming 正名 or correcting, rectifying and matching names in the sense of adjusting in an appropriate way the names of things, events, and social and personal roles so as to express a proper relationship of the personal, social and natural world. Names ming 名 are often discussed in terms of their relationship to the fullness, the veritable inexhaustible plenitude of shi 實. For Confucians such as Zhu Xi the Confucian Way is a realistic pluralism dominated by a sense of creative process and relational contexts. While names cannot completely capture the true plenitude of creative matrix of reality, names can mirror reality for better or worse.

But names do not just name even when they are helping us act in an appropriate fashion. Something more is required and this is jian 諫 remonstrance as the proper duty of a son to a father, minister to ruler, wife to husband, sibling to sibling, and friend to friend. While deference, most concretely xiao 孝 filial piety or familial reverence, is an obligation, even an appropriate role virtue in many situations, a
person must always have the moral courage to remonstrate when it is clear that another person is in grave error such that this error will cause grievous harm to the person and/or the person’s family, colleagues, society and even the cosmos. In the case of the ruler, such harm could cause disaster for the state and all of its citizens. Hence prudent, gracious, and civil remonstrance is a true Ru/Confucian social and personal virtue.

Zhu Xi did not stop with remonstration. If one is to remonstrate in an appropriate fashion, then one needs some methods of self-cultivation and reflection that will allow the person to be effective in such a delicate undertaking as remonstration within one’s family and with the authorities of civil society. The twin methods Zhu suggests are encapsulated in the maxims of daowenxue 道問學 and zundexing 尊德性 as the appropriate forms of the self-cultivation practices of (1) serious study and reflection and (2) honoring the inherent moral tendencies or dispositions xing 性 as key classical rubrics for two diverse yet interconnected ways of nurturing the xin/心 mind-heart and as appropriate approaches to moral epistemology. The first form of self-cultivation stresses patient cognitive reflection and determined study and the second honors the innate, intuitive cultivation of the moral seeds duan 端 of morality. Le 樂 joy and happiness are concomitant results of true self-cultivation for the person. The Ru/Confucian path is one of delight and not sorrow or ascetic self-denial or anxiety. The metaphors and examples of this creative process are often drawn from cooking and music. In both good cooking and music there is a respect for the uniqueness of ingredients along with the harmony of the perfectly crafted dish; in music the instruments have their own voices but are combined in a symphony of sound and rhythm.

Zhu Xi had a method and suggestion for how one begins the process of reflection and cultivation. This is the famous dictum of gewu 格物 as the investigation or rectification of things in order to extend or embody knowledge. Actually Zhu probably would have agreed even with his critics such as Wang Yangming that ultimately one cannot pull apart of the process of learning from the outcome of learning—both express a profound commitment to the moral vision of the Confucian Way. Yet gewu has remained a key [and highly contested] epistemological concept for the examination of the living objects and events of the world and the proper cultivation of the mind-heart. Gewu is critical in order to zhujing qiongli 主敬窮理 reside in reverence to exhaust [comprehend] coherent patterns or order through gongfu 功夫 as a structured effort of the self-cultivation of the person’s mind-heart. These epistemological reflections are closely connected to the theories of jiao 教 teaching and jing 敬 reverence for oneself as a student living in the midst of a pluralistic and realistic field of unceasing transformation and focus on the uniqueness of each new object or event.

But even such a profound meditation on moral epistemology is not yet enough for Zhu Xi. He argues that the most complex aspect of moral insight and action is guan 權 as the weighing of difficult choices, the process of assessing, discerning, and finding the necessary discretion in making problematical and complex decisions for
which there is no clear or precise guidance, admonitions, or precedent from the sages. Linked to the highest form of human knowledge as wise discernment, guan is often held to be provisional in nature even for a sage, much an ordinary scholar. Yet it is a confounding and likely task for any person when confronted with a novel moral decision. Whatever the novel choice to be made, it must be in accord with the spirit of the classical teachings of the sages by weighing all the possible permutations of the situation.

According to Zhu Xi, along with the various methods of personal cultivation there is always the social and historical dimension of the Confucian embodied especially in the classical text and the commentaries of learned scholars that have been added to the conversation over the generation from Master Kong. Zhu called this the daotong 道統 or the Transmission of the Way or Genealogy of the Way. Zhu Xi’s version of who was in and who was out of the proper transmission of the Confucian Way was a highly influential, though highly contested, account of the revival of the Ru/Confucian Way by a fellowship of Northern Song philosophical masters. The story of the generation and transmission of the genealogy of the Way can be and has been constructed and reconstructed in diverse manners over many centuries. At the heart of this transmission of the way is Siwen 斯文 or ‘this culture of ours’ as the expression of refined self-cultivation and the manifestation of coherent principle, pattern, and order outward from the self, family, community, society into the entire cosmos. This cultural goal represents the social outcome of humane flourishing, a world in which the five virtues are manifested in appropriate situations in a timely fashion. The notion of wen 文 is critical in seeking the quality of virtuous endurance and perseverance. For instance, wen includes the fine arts shi 詩 poetry, shi 史 history, hua 畫 painting, and shuhua 書畫 calligraphy, etc. All of these cultural achievements, which represent the fine arts, make for a fully rounded and grounded cultural experience. This culture, of course, is inscribed in the Ru/Confucian jing 經 classics and give le 麗 profound joy to the student of the Confucian Way.

Zhu Xi then explains in great detail the profound axiological virtue embodied in the conduct of a student of the Way. Ren 仁 remains as the paramount virtue of humanness, benevolence, co-humanity and marker for the other prime virtues such as appropriateness or justice/yi 義, ritual action or civility/li 礼, knowledge, wisdom or discernment/zhi 知 or 智, and faithfulness/xin 信. These five constant chang 常 virtues of excellence de 德 provide the moral and axiological sensibility for the Ru/Neo-Confucian enterprise. These virtues are always linked to commensurate roles of relational connected such as filial reverence/piety xiao 孝 as an expression of primordial familial relationships. The primordial correlative virtues and roles are also linked to the method of xiushen 修身 or cultivation of the person which becomes a critical issue for reflection and ethical praxis especially Zhu’s third domain of cultural achievements. The axiological outcomes of Zhu’s philosophy are a set of key elements of the functional process of ren 仁 manifested as the iguan 一貫 or the one
moral thread of zhong 忠 determined moral effort and loyalty and shu 恕 as empathy or concern consciousness youhuanyishi 憂患意識 which indeed leads to ren.

Zhu never believed that this self-cultivation was an easy task. A person committed to the Confucian Way needed Yong 勇 courage, strength, determination to carry out any action bravely, fearlessly and with great determination. Courage/yong, nonetheless, must be constrained by ren humaneness in order that it not become reckless, thoughtless, or misguided bravado. Courage as brave and wise perseverance in the good is one of the key virtues listed in Zhongyong and also commended in the Analects.

Just as for the great Confucian master who came before him, Zhu has a profound respect for li 礼 as ritual action or civility; the social norms, habits, and practices that hold persons and society together and in fact help to constitute the humane moral exemplar. Li closely linked to yi 義 as the appropriate form of equity in moral interchange with the intent to create a civilized form wen 文 of humane flourishing. It is, as Ames (2011) argues, to be defined as “achieving propriety in one’s roles and relations.” Civility is especially critical, as the great classical Ru/Confucian scholar Xunzi taught, for complex social orders, and in fact is the basis for a truly civilized social order with sufficient harmony he 和 to be wen as a beautifully adorned humane society with appropriate reciprocal bao 报 relations.

In terms of the hoped-for outcomes of ethical and intellectual cultivation, one of Zhu’s favorite terms is cheng 诚: sincerity, genuineness, integrity, authenticity and the self-actualization of the moral virtues such that one achieves a morally harmonious life via various forms of xiushen 修身 self-cultivation by means of such the praxis of jing 敬 reverent mindfulness or attentiveness. This praxis of cheng is the ‘how’ of the moral self-cultivation of the five constant virtues. When a person reaches a certain advanced stage of the process of cheng, one important result is zide 自得 or to get authentic self-realization for oneself no matter what the situation as a moral person may be; as a paraphrase of the whole daoist project this means to be able to get the Dao for oneself in service to others. Moral self-cultivation, if it is to be successful, also demands authentic courage yong 勇 in order to realize shendu 慎独 the integration of one’s xin 心 mind-heart into full and authentic morality and social praxis. Jing 敬, always closely linked to cheng, connotes reverence, attentiveness, and the serious and authentic commitment to the transformation of the self through self reflection and cultivation. Jing bespeaks a truly serious esteem for residing in sincere reverenc.

Nor did Zhu neglect the virtue of zhi 知 or 智 [智藏] as the arts and dispositions of learning, discernment and wisdom leading to the outcome of the faithful and revential embodied discernment tizhi 體知; it is likewise the zhicang 智藏 as Wisdom hidden and stored [concealed until manifested] in the Way dao 道 itself as the creative
rationale of 天 tian supreme heaven. It is wise to remember that wisdom always entails a moral sensibility as well as the cultivation of critical intelligence.

In terms of talking about the outcome of all these processes, he 和 as harmony, harmony, he 合 as unity and uniqueness, zhong 中 as centrality, balancing, and renxing 忍性 (nai 耐) as patience function designations of the goals or outcomes of the successful cultivation of all the virtues necessary for humane flourishing as the goal of 德 de excellent virtue. One seeks harmony but not compete uniformity tong 同 or as Kongzi defines it, he er bu tong 和而不同 harmony without uniformity. Moreover, one needs enduring patience 忍性 to achieve these noble ends.

Zhu also had a vision of the highest goal or outcome of the entire process of self-cultivation and the search for discerning wisdom. He call this 至善 zhishan ultimate goodness as the ideal for a person seeking to become a 聖 sheng sage (theoretically possible but in practice very, very difficult to achieve) or perhaps more realistically, a 君子 junzi or as a 賢 xian worthy or noble person who seeks harmony with 天道 tiandao the Supernal Way. The person who achieves such a lofty goal finds 樂 le joy as the quality of true happiness, the reward of virtue for a 儒 Ru/Confucian. As Kongzi, to be able to hear the Dao in the morning one can die content in the evening.

Of course there were various reactions to Zhu’s great synthesis over the next eight centuries. Not all of the reactions were positive to say the least. Some later scholars achieved fame for their rejections of Zhu’s work, as thinkers as diverse as Wang Yangming (1472-1529) and Dai Chen (1723-1777) proved to be. Yet all of these thinkers were tied together in the web of Song and post-Song philosophy (called Neo-Confucianism in the West) that became the gateway to the first major globalization of the Confucian way. It is important for the history of the globalization of the Confucian tradition that we remember that what was and is globalized is really a Neo-Confucian version of the Confucian Way.

However much someone such as Dai Chen disputed the genealogy and content of the Confucian Way with Zhu Xi or Wang Yangming, they were still tied together by the development of Confucianism from the Song dynasty on. It proved to be almost impossible for later Chinese scholars to read the story of Confucianism without using the lenses of Neo-Confucian philosophical speculation. As we shall see, the great modern revivers of the tradition now known as the New Confucians, are heirs both of the classical Warring States masters such as Kongzi, Mengzi, and even Xunzi as well as the Northern Song masters, Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming, and Dai Zhen. As we shall see, the first stage of the globalization of the Confucian Way took the Neo-Confucians as the subject of this process of introducing the Confucian tradition outside its traditional East Asian home.

IX. The First Phase of the Globalization of the Confucian Way

In terms of the first phase of the early modern globalization of the Confucian Way the story really begins in earnest with the arrival of the Jesuit scholar-missionaries in the early 17th Century in late
Of course, there was an earlier phase of such Confucian-Christian exchange between the Church of the East, often called Nestorian, in the Tang dynasty. We have evidence of this early religious globalization because of a famous semi-official stele erected in 781 CE in Ji’an during the Tang dynasty marking the arrival of Bishop Alouben (Alopen) in 635 CE. It is a fascinating story but contributes little to the globalization of the Confucian tradition except as the Jesuits used the famous stele to demonstrate that Christianity had a long history in China and had been accepted as a legitimate religion by the emperors of the Tang dynasty. If the Tang emperors could accept the Church of the East, so the argument went, so too could the late Ming and then Qing emperors allow the propagation of the Christian faith in China. Along with the members of the Church of the East in Tang China, there were also sporadic contacts during the medieval period between China and the West with Marco Polo being the most famous example.

While the term globalization, as we have seen, is used primarily to discuss the current rapid exchange of material objects as well as intellectual artifacts, the story of the reception of the Jesuit accounts of what they learned about Confucianism is indeed the first phase in the globalization of the Confucian way. Moreover, it is a story that has been often told in great detail. Without too much of a doubt this is the first time that Confucianism was introduced in any sophisticated and sustained detail in the European world. Great European philosophers such as Leibniz, Wolff and Hegel joined in the conversation.

It is also only the first phase in the Western globalization of Confucianism. As many European intellectual historians have noticed, the reception of Confucianism began with fascination and ended in rejection. At first many Europeans were indeed spellbound by the Jesuit story of what they found in their conversations with the learned scholars of China. Confucianism often even played a role in internal European philosophical and religious debates. For instance, the growing chorus of critics of the European established churches was quick to point out that China and Confucian scholars demonstrated that you could create a highly civilized and powerful culture without the benefit of Christian revelation. However, philosophers such as Hegel ultimately rejected the notion that China had anything significant to offer early modern Europe. Hegel was of the opinion that Confucian China was all smoke and mirrors in terms of any substantive philosophical achievement. But between the early Jesuits’ appreciation of China and Kant and Hegel’s later rejection, there is still an important story to be told, and especially around the figures of Leibniz and Wolff.

X. Early Modern Globalization of Confucianism

As Leibniz searched for elements of universal signification as the basis of human thought, the early accounts of the Chinese language and philosophy intrigued the great German philosopher. Mungello (1977; 1985) provides a detailed account of how Leibniz interrogated his Jesuit sources of Chinese wisdom. Nor did this kind of trail end with Leibniz, to whom we return below, but continues on with the work of philosophers such as Wolff, Couplet and Bouvet. These Jesuits, Couplet and Bouvet, 

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9 As modern ecumenical scholarship has shown the Syriac Church of the East never used the term Nestorian, which as a label placed on them by other Western and Eastern churches to try to prove that they were a heretical church.

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continued Ricci’s attempt to find an accommodation between Confucianism and Christian theology while Wolff found nuggets of practical ethical wisdom in the writings of the Confucian sages.

It is clear that Leibniz and Wolff, albeit in a dialogue conducted at a great distance, favored the accommodating Jesuit approach. For instance, in terms of what became the Rites Controversy, Leibniz sided with Ricci in believing that for the best educated Confucians the Confucian rites were civil and not religious per se in nature. Therefore Leibniz saw no reason for the Confucians to reject ancestor veneration. This actually makes a great deal of sense given Leibniz’s desire to seek religious and political accommodation wherever possible. Hence it is also not surprising that Leibniz would likewise be inclined to charity in his readings about and estimation of Confucianism. Nor was he always inclined to a completely benign interpretation of all things Chinese or Confucian. As Cook and Rosemont (1994, 1-18) point out, he was less than impressed with the state of Chinese astronomy.

What is truly intriguing is how well Leibniz was able to reason out what, for instance, the Neo-Confucian philosophical position, with a focus on Zhu’s style of daoxue, actually was. Contrary, for instance to another learned Jesuit, Longobardi, who maintained that the classical and Neo-Confucians were materialists and atheists, Leibniz maintained a much more nuanced and sophisticated interpretation of Confucian thought. Many of the Jesuits assumed that the classical Confucians retained at least a vestigial understanding of the divine reality via the Shang and Zhou doctrines of shangdi 上帝 (Lord on High) and tian 天 (Heaven). This was a form of Confucian wisdom about supernal matters that, unfortunately from the Jesuit position, waned over time. In fact, we know that some of the most famous of elite Christian converts made by the Jesuits were impressed with how the Jesuit fathers helped them to reconstruct the theistic import of some the early Confucian classics. While the flow of this early globalization, interestingly enough, was from China to Europe, Chinese Confucians were very much part of the process of the exchange of ideas.

Leibniz wrote (Cook and Rosemont 1994, 72):

I would think that many philosophers from the Orient, no less than the Platonists and Stoics, regarded God as the World-soul or as the universal nature immanent in things; that other spirits also assumed bodies; and that some even considered the soul as a divine particle of the divine aura, which would return to the Ocean of souls with the body’s death.

While this is not the way Confucians would normally deal with such matters, it would not be impossible to find analogies to Leibniz’s formulation in Neo-Confucian writings. Moreover, as we shall see, many of these questions of divine-world relations have become a perennial aspect of contemporary Confucian Christian dialogue.

What is even more fascinating is how well Leibniz actually deduces the Neo-Confucian interpretation of what he calls spiritual substances. We must remember here that Leibniz is working form the materials sent to him by the Jesuits, and they often presumed that the Neo-Confucians were atheistic materialists. Leibniz wrote (Ching and Oxtoby 1992: 87ff; 89) “Initially, one may doubt whether the Chinese
recognize, or have recognized, spiritual substances. But after thinking hard about it, I judge that they did, although perhaps they did not recognize these substances as separate, that is, existing quite apart from matter.” Leibniz then goes on to give an account of how he understands the Neo-Confucian philosophical discussion of the li-
qi 理氣 dyad, no doubt the signature cosmological and axiological theory debate internal to the Neo-Confucian would of discourse. Li is often translate as pattern, order, cosmic principle, and coherent principle or texture and qi (which almost defies translation into even multiple English terms) as vital energy or configurational force in terms of the Neo-Confucian philosophical debates.

What is so absorbing in reading Leibniz is that he intuitively understood the profundity of the Neo-Confucian debate that swirled for centuries (and continues today) around the correct understanding of the li-qi interaction. Aquinas once argued that a philosopher or philosophical theologian had a special obligation in discussing the work of other thinkers. Not only did the scholar need honestly need to describe the work of others even when in disagreement, but that this description must be based on the best possible interpretation of the other position. Aquinas even went so far as to argue that if the critical scholar could think of a better defense of the other position, then the scholar must provide this improved version of the material under debate. This is precisely what strikes a modern reader of Leibniz. Perhaps because of his detachment form the China mission field he as able to more dispassionately analyze the Neo-Confucian worldview. It is probably not an exaggeration to state that no European thinker gave his readers a better or more sophisticated reading of the Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophical world than Leibniz until well into the 20th Century. It took hundreds of years for European scholars to catch up with Leibniz’s brilliant dialogue with the Confucians of Ming-Qing China.

While it is now clear that the general early modern European enthusiasm for Confucianism waned by the end of the 18th Century and the beginning of the 19th Centuries as witness in the negative opinions of great philosophers such as Kant and Hegel, in the early part of the 18th Century Christian Wolff continued the work of Leibniz in two fascinating short essays (Ching and Oxtoby 1992), Discourse on the Practical Philosophy of the Chinese (1721-1726) and On the Philosopher King and Ruling Philosopher. As Wolff explained, these two texts caused him a number of problems in the republic of letters of his day. Defending what Wolff took to be the just appreciation of Confucian philosophy did not sit well with more conservative Protestant and Roman Catholic thinkers.

While Leibniz was especially famous for his interpretation of the philosophy and philosophical theology of the Confucians and Neo-Confucians, Wolff rightly chose to write about the practical and ethical aspects of the Confucian Way. In this regard Wolff demonstrated as much foresight as his older colleague Leibniz (Ching and Oxtoby: 1992). Whatever else Confucianism may be, it is certainly a form of personal and social ethics as well as an extended reflection on statecraft. In Chinese this is summarized by the formula of neisheng waiwang 内聖外王 or the sage within, the king without. This means that an authentic Confucian must cultivate the sagely mind-heart as a person and share this learning with the larger social world. As Wolff noted
XI. The Modern Globalization of Confucianism

We can distinguish two phases of the modern globalization of Confucianism. The first modern phase covers the first sixty or seventy years of the 20th Century. It was a paradoxical and difficult period for the Confucian Way: on the one hand by the 1920s the traditional Confucian order had been swept away from the modernizing zeal of the early Chinese republic. Moreover, a great deal of public discourse was directed against “Confucius and Sons” as a major reason for China’s humiliating lack of self-respect as being demoted to an era of semi-colonialism. Confucianism was a ready target for a great deal of social and intellectual anger, and much of it may have been deserved. But on the other hand, by the 1920s, there was a small group of public intellectuals and scholars who argued that while Confucians may have made many grave mistakes in China’s failed attempt to modernize and compete with the European powers, there was really still something worth saving from traditional China’s long cultural history. One of the things worth saving was, albeit clearly in a very reformed modality, the Confucian Way.

While there was little sense of cohesion or group identity among these defenders of the restoration and reform of the Confucian Way in the 1920-30s, a group of scholars who would later be known as the New Confucians were beginning the task of the hermeneutics of retrieval. As John Makeham (2003a, 2008) has argued, the term New Confucian is a retroactive designation, even though, in hindsight, it does make sense in defining the contemporary revival of Confucianism. By the 21st Century, the New Confucians are seen to have a genealogy, one that now spans three or four generations depending on how the movement as a whole is defined. But not everyone often included in the list of New Confucians is entirely happy with this assigned role. For instance, the highly influential historian and former student of the eminent Qian Mu, Professor Yu Yingshi, resolutely refuses to be linked to the New Confucians, and adamantly rebuffs the claim that Qian was a willing co-founder of New Confucianism. Professor Yu’s point is that he and his teacher were and are historians and not speculative philosophers as are the bulk of the members of the New Confucian Movement. This is a worthy caution from Professor Yu. It demonstrates that the borders of New Confucianism are porous and the boundaries are constantly subject to revision and debate.

If we are seeking a date to attach to the emergence of the New Confucian movement, 1958 is often the preferred date. Of course, as historians of the new movement such as Makeham (2008), Metzger (2005) and Bresciani (2001) point out there was a lot going on prior to 1958. However it is also clear now that it was not until well after 1958 that the New Confucian movement gained the kind of momentum it has sustained since the mid-1980s in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, the Chinese Diaspora and now in the Peoples Republic of China. In late 1957 a group of distinguished Chinese scholars, Carsun Chang (Zhang Junmai), Tang Junyi, Xu
Fuguan and Mou Zongsan, drafted and published on 1 January 1958 an essay about the future of Chinese culture (Chang 1957-62, 2: 455-483), namely “A Manifesto for a Re-Appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture.” The ambitious aim of the four refugee authors was to (1) counteract what they believed to be a biased and truncated Western interpretation of Chinese philosophical and cultural history and (2) to encourage scholars to engage in a revival, revision and reform of Chinese culture. While the authors were ecumenical in their appeal, mentioning the role of Daoism, Buddhism and even Christianity in China’s long history, it was obvious that it was Confucianism that they considered to be the linchpin of Chinese civilization. It was this vastly sedimented Confucian tradition that they sought to rescue from the scrap heap of history. We must remember that when they wrote this manifesto many people, even with deep sorrow, had come to believe that Confucianism, like other traditional forms of life (Levenson 1968), was now dead and could only be preserved in the museum of intellectual history. There was simply no future for the Confucian way in any form whatsoever in modern China. The death of Confucianism, as they say, was reportedly very prematurely.

XII. New and Global Confucianism Case Studies: The Actors

While the date of the 1958 publication of “The Manifesto for a Re-Appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture” makes sense retrospectively, the genealogy of the New Confucian movement goes farther back in time. Moreover, genealogy matters in this case. Not should this come as any surprise to a student of Confucian intellectual history. One of the ways that the tradition has described itself especially since the Song dynasty has been to construct meta-narratives about the Transmission of the Way 道統.

The most famous account of the Transmission of the Way, of course, is the catalog constructed by Zhu Xi. Of course Zhu accepts that there was a line of sages from the early culture heroes through the founders of the various early dynasties, including the founders of the Zhou dynasty. After these remarkable early sages we find the figures of Kongzi and Mengzi as defenders of the Confucian Way. But it is at this point the story takes a turn that not everyone can countenance. Zhu argues that while Confucian Way, “this culture of ours” 斯文, never completely disappears, for the next centuries it becomes somewhat obscured in the sense that figures such as Xunzi, Dong Zongshu, Han Yu and Li Ao did not fully grasp the richness of the inheritance of Kongzi and Mengzi. In fact, Xunzi, faulted for contradicting the Second Sage with his misguided chapter claiming that human nature of odious or perverse, was banished from the mainstream of the Confucian Way. However, the tide turned and with the work of Zhu’s beloved Northern Song masters, the authentic Confucian Way was rediscovered and revived, and even made clearer than it had been for centuries. These masters were Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi. What Zhu then argued is that if a scholar understood the teachings of these masters then such a student could engage a true teaching of the Confucian Way. Of course there were many scholars who were skeptical of the very
notion that something as vast and all encompassing as the Confucian Way could have simply been misplaced since the end of the Warring States period until the Northern Song. And even among Confucians who sympathized with the Confucian revival that occurred during the Northern Song, there could be great debate about just who actually should be counted on to carry forward the transmission of the Way.

This was not just an empty debate among scholars because these genealogical claims would involve the oversight and confirmation of the emperor. It was even ironic that Zhu Xi, the author of the account of the transmission of the way, died in disfavor and his version of the dao tong, which he called dao xue 道學, was condemned not as the orthodox teaching but as a spurious teaching, a wei xue 偽學. There is an added irony in this condemnation of Zhu’s account in that it used the term wei 偽, which of course has been Xunzi’s favored technique for constituting the Confucian Dao. However, the condemnation was short lived and by a few decades after his death Zhu Xi was restored to favor and his account became more and more accepted as the correct way to understand the development of Confucianism from the Northern Song on. It was finally the Mongol Yuan dynasty that officially made Zhu’s dao tong and his dao xue the orthodox imperial teaching; this was an imperial imprimatur that would last till 1905 when the Qing court formally disestablished Zhu’s educational program.

According to the four authors of the 1958 Manifesto there was already a revived transmission of the way to be found among Confucian scholars since the 1920s. Depending on how one reads the history of the rise of New Confucianism the movement has at least three and now probably four generations to its credit. The first generation was a small band of scholars who sought to defend the Confucian tradition from what they saw as the tide of complete Westernization. It is important to remember that these founding fathers of New Confucianism were neither deaf to nor unaware of the problems that had befallen late imperial Confucian thought. They, along with the fierce critics of the shop of Confucius and Sons, realized that it was a tradition in need of a massive overhaul if it were to survive in the modern world.

They were emboldened in their work by a number of events and intellectual movements of their time. The first was the shock of the First World War. It was suddenly clear that not all was well with the seemingly impervious edifice of Western civilization. The left wing of the critics of China’s past moved quickly to embrace Marxism as an antidote to both the ills of China and of the modern world as well. The more conservative liberal wing, represented by scholars such as Hu Shi, urged a more moderate adoption of liberal Western democracy on the American and English model and the manifest benefits of modern science and technology. Here Confucianism would still be relegated to a place in the museum of Chinese intellectual history and would not be expected to contribute to the renewal of China in the 20th Century. Not without good reason many New Confucians agreed with at least part of the liberal agenda, namely the need for the Confucian embrace of democracy and science.

Another feature of the New Confucian defense of Chinese culture and the central role in this long cultural history of Confucianism was an account of the virtues of Eastern philosophy. While recognizing the worth of Western culture and philosophy,
some bold scholars argued that Eastern philosophy had many positive things to recommend it, and in fact that a new global or world civilization would do well to adopt aspects of the Confucian Way. Liang Shuming (1893-1988) wrote an important work, *Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Philosophies* in 1921 that started a heated and long running debate on the positive and negative features of Eastern and Western thought (Bresciani 2001, 14-16). Another young philosopher, Zhang Junmai (1886-1969), joined the fray by engaging in a debate about the relative merits of metaphysics and science. It is not clear that these early scholars thought of themselves as New Confucians, though they are now clearly some of the founders of the various streams of thought that have flowed into the river of New Confucianism. But, as historians of New Confucianism argue, there was already a beginning of the New Confucian movement contemporaneously with the debates engendered by young scholars such as Liang and Zhang.

In ironic reversal, the globalization of Confucianism now returns to China and the cast of scholars in the New Confucian movement. As we shall see later, there is yet another turn of the wheel and a group of Euro-American scholars now joined luminaries such as the Jesuit scholar-missionaries, Leibniz, and Wolff in a renewed globalization process. But none of this would have happened without the profound contribution of the early 20th Century scholars now counted among the New Confucians. In an interesting twist of fate, the New Confucians and Western scholars of the Confucian revival took up the kind of speculative philosophical work pioneered by Leibniz and Wolff.

The notion of New Confucianism has become as contested and interrogated as Zhu Xi’s Southern Song theory of the authentic *daotong* “Transmission of the Way.” There is a striking parallel in the debate about, for instance, who constitutes the membership of the New Confucian movement. Again, just as with Zhu Xi, one version of the story of the development of New Confucianism focuses on philosophical issues, often at the expense, as its critics would argue, of other aspects of the general history and philosophical sensibility of Song and post-Song Confucianism. The case of Qian Mu is a good illustration of the intellectual debates at play in the rise and cataloguing of the membership lists of New Confucianism. First, Qian Mu did not sign the famous 1958 Manifesto. But of course, many other Confucian scholars did not sign it as well. But the point, so aptly and forcefully defended by Qian’s erudite student Yu Yingshi, is that there was a reason why Qian should not be counted among the New Confucians.

This reason, according to Professor Yu, is that Qian Mu is first and foremost a historian and not a philosopher. While some may quibble with Yu’s firm distinction between philosophy and history, the point is one that has become an important

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10 In terms of chronicling the history of the rise of the New Confucian movement, Bresciani (2001) has provided a highly useful general account along with chapters outlining the philosophical contributions of the various members of family of the New Confucians.

11 It is certainly entirely plausible to say that Qian Mu was a great intellectual historian with a keen interest in Confucian philosophy among other things. As with all great intellectual
debating point in the study of Confucian intellectual history. The argument goes back to the Song Neo-Confucian revival. The kernel of the debate is the assertion that Zhu Xi and his fellow daoxy colleagues selected and valorized a vision of Confucian intellectual history that was biased towards the contributions of the Northern and Southern Song intellectuals scene provided by scholars primarily interested in philosophical questions. For instance, in Zhu’s and Lü Zuqian’s (呂祖謙) famous anthology, *Jinsi lu/Reflections on Things at Hand*, included only a select few Northern Song thinkers, namely Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi. Equally great philosophers such as Shao Yong and members of the Hu School are excluded. Also excluded are famous scholars, poets, historians and public intellectuals and political figures such as Sima Guang, Su Shi, Ouyang Shu and Wang Anshi—just to mention a few immensely important Confucians not to make it into the anthology. Although there were complex reasons for Zhu and Lü’s selection matrix, it is clear to modern scholars that the two friends selected Northern Song figures who exclusively belonged to the most philosophically inclined membership of that outstanding generation of Confucians intellectuals.

A common complaint about the emerging account of the genealogy of New Confucianism is that it, like its Song predecessors, privileges philosophers as the leaders of the movement. Therefore scholars such as Professor Yu argue that his teacher Qian Mu should not be included in this highly self-selecting group of modern Confucian philosophers. This is an important point. However, it is still possible to take a more irenic position on New Confucianism. If we take New Confucianism, like its Neo-Confucian forbears, to include a much richer cast of characters than those Zhu Xi singled out for being part of the daotong, then we can include and discuss a wide-ranging group of contemporary scholars. For instance, we can provisionally grant Professor Yu’s assessment that Qian Mu was not a New Confucian if we hold that to be a New Confucian means to support a particular philosophical position and at the same time note that Qian Mu was part and parcel of the larger revival of interest in Confucian studies in the 20th Century. No one has done more to restore and renew the study and appreciation of Zhu Xi’s epic philosophical synthesis that Qian Mu. Moreover, Qian did this in spite of the fact that Zhu Xi’s daoxy was not the favored expression of the authentic Confucian worldview according to the majority of those within the fellowship of New Confucianism. Rather, most New Confucians were partial to other Neo-Confucian luminaries such as Lu Xiangshan, He Wufeng, Liu Zongzhou and Wang Yangming. It is actually refreshing to read Qian Mu’s positive appreciation of Zhu Xi’s philosophy. Therefore we can have multiple accounts of who does or does not count as a New Confucian. For the purposes of this exercise we will stay with those who embrace, at least, the role of philosopher.

...historians, they sometimes cheerfully and learnedly comment on and take part in philosophical debates while never abandoning their role as a historian.

12 Feng Youlan also tended to follow Zhu Xi in the elaboration of his own philosophical writings in the 1930s and 40s.

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What is also noteworthy about the New Confucians is their cosmopolitan stance in terms of global philosophy. Most of them either studied in Europe and North America or studied Western philosophy with great care in China. A good example is Mou Zongsan, often considered the outstanding original speculative philosopher of the second generation of New Confucians. While Mou did not study outside of China, he was a profound student of Western philosophy and was the translator of a significant selection of Kant’s corpus into Chinese, along with strong interests in Whitehead, Russell, Heidegger and Husserl. Mou also rework the history of Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism and in the last phase of his intellectual journey he engaged most seriously with Chinese Buddhism, especially with Tiantai thought.

It is clear that the revival of Confucianism today in many ways resembles the Song era. While there is a sustained interest in reviving Confucian philosophy, the philosophers have been joined, as the 20th Century passed into the 21st Century, by social theorists and ethical reformers. This makes a great deal of sense given the previous history of Confucianism. The *Rudao* has never been exclusively about philosophical matters. The heart and soul of the tradition has always been, as were so many of the founding classical schools of thought in the Warring States period, about guiding the conduct of life. Philosophy per se has a role to play but is never merely academic or technical in nature. In one of the most concise discussions of the emerging genealogy of New Confucianism, Liu Shuxian (2003b) provides an influential account of this debate. It is always about how to live life, and for a Confucian, living life is always about both personal edification that is always in service to the family, community, state, environment and world. However, in order to focus the range of globalization, here we will primarily concentrate on the philosophical side of the revival.

If the flow of information about Confucianism was from China to Europe on the early modern period the reverse was true for the 20th Century. It was during this tumultuous century that Chinese Confucian intellectuals came to terms with the influx of Western philosophy, science, technology and social theories. It was the century of Chinese semi-colonialism and also of China’s greatest modern revolutions. After the death of Mao the Confucian tradition began its comeback in Mainland China as well as in Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore and the rest of what Tu Weiming has called cultural China. It was here that the fruits of the first and second generation of the New Confucians began to have a major impact.

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13 Makeham (2008) has a discussion not only of the philosophers most closely identified with the rise of New Confucianism but also the other voices that have emerged in contemporary Chinese academic discourse. Liu Shuxian (2003b) provides a similar account, but from the perspective of one of the most recognized of the third generation of New Confucian philosophers and intellectual historians.
XIII. The Genealogy of the New Confucian Movement

Although it is true that hindsight is always clearer than contemporary vision, the New Confucians have crafted an account of the generational chronology of the revival begun in the early part of the 20th Century. It should go without saying that this is, as we have already seen, a contested vision. Who belongs in New Confucianism depends on whom you ask and what their working definition of the movement is. However, even if they would argue with substance of the sense of membership, the following has emerged as a fairly standard account.

There are now three or four generations depending on how to affiliate different scholars with different students. Bresciani (2001: 34ff) has a chart where he outlines the first three generations of the most famous of the philosophical wing of New Confucianism.

First Generation (1921-1949)
Liang Shuming Ma Yifu Xiong Shili Zhang Junmai Feng Youlan He Lin

Second Generation (1950-1979 [1995])
Fang Dongmei Tang Junyi Xu Fuguan Mou Zongsan

Third Generation (1980---)
Cheng Zhongying Liu Shuxian Du (Tu) Weiming et al
(1935---) (1934---) (1940---)

XIV. First Three New Confucian Generations (1921-Present)

Missing from Bresciani’s original list is the combination of Qian Mu (1895-1990) and Yu Yingshi (1930---) representing a distinct line of intellectual historians. No one has done more in many respects in helping to understand and redefine the path of the philosophical New Confucians. While historians are never value free, they do often decline to take a partisan stand in support of a particular philosophical position or school. This is the case for Qian and Yu. In fact, the distinction between historians and philosophers will play itself out in even more detail is the presentation of the third and fourth generations of the contemporary revival of Confucianism. Bresciani’s presentation actually conforms to the way critical scholars have told the story of how the New Confucians themselves tell the story of their origins. For instance, in the first generation all the scholars knew each other, though there were no direct teacher-student relationships.

It is in the second generation that we can talk about a rising school, though again this is now more obvious in retrospective than it was at the time. Here we find the pivotal figure of Xiong Shili being a teacher of Tang, Fu and Mou. The third generation of philosophers all had various teacher-student links to the other second-generation masters and are also all well known to each other. They were also the
teachers who in turn have trained many new students over the last decades of the 20th Century and the first two decades of the 21st Century.

There is also now a fourth generation emerging. These would be the students of the third generation. These generational matches can be somewhat tricky, as would be obvious by looking at the dates of the first and second generation as well. For instance, I was a student of Du [Tu] Weiming’s at Berkeley and had the honor of meeting with Mou Zongsan in Hong Kong in the 1970s. Does this make me a third generation or a fourth generation New Confucian (albeit a Boston New Confucian)? Or are there scholars to be found in both the third and further generation? This is probably the case with any post-factor genealogy. What is clear is that a great deal of mutual influencing and even teaching and study has gone on between the various peer groups of the New Confucians, precisely the multi-generational philosophical cohort that is now globalizing the Confucian Way.

The diversity of the third and fourth generations of the revival is more and more manifest. In some respects the work of current Confucian scholars bears a fascinating parallelism to the rise and diversification of the Song tradition. Of course, following Zhu Xi’s philosophical reconstruction of the work of the Northern Song masters, it would appear that one of the most important features of the Song revival was philosophical in nature. However, it is equally clear that the Song revival included the great political reforms of Wang Anshi, the Buddhist-influenced poetry of Su Shi and the history and ritual works of Ouyang Xiu and Sima Guang. One of the most noteworthy aspects of the contemporary revival from the late 1990s on has been the emergence of Confucian intellectuals who believe strongly that no Confucianism worthy of the name can escape social and political engagement. In fact some scholars go so far as to argue that without political theories and ritual revivals the philosophical work would not be faithful to the long history of Confucian theory and praxis, especially the praxis of shared social life. Of course Liang Shuming, sometimes referred to as the last Confucian, would have agreed with the critique of a purely academic form of philosophical Confucianism as being a highly truncated ideal for the Confucian Way. Liang was as justly famous for his rural development work as he was for his speculative scholarship.

Therefore any consideration of the globalization of Confucianism from the 2010s ought to reflect on the whole range of contemporary Confucian discourse, both philosophical in the strict sense and also the extended elaboration and reconstitution of the tradition including ritual, social and political theory.

The argument is both direct and cogent considering the long stretch of Confucian theory and praxis. The critics of the philosophical New Confucians are at least twofold. First, there are those who hold a different view of the possible future philosophical development and renewal of Confucian thought from most of the first and second generation New Confucians. The criticism is that most of the philosophically inclined of the New Confucians lean in one direction, namely that of Liu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, or what is called the School of Mind-Heart

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xinxue 心學 as opposed to other forms of Neo-Confucianism. Second, and the more pressing criticism, is that it does not really matter in which direction the philosophical development of New Confucianism goes, whether a version of xinxue or Zhu Xi’s lixue 理學. What really ought to matter is a return to a revived and reconstructed Confucian praxis. Without attention to ritual and patterns of life li 禮 from the family to the state and even international world, Confucianism is not really Confucianism. It might well become a fascinating form of modern global philosophy, but it will not longer be a transformation of Confucianism but rather a Westernized version of some aspects of Confucian philosophy grafted onto Western patterns of thought.

One very important version of this cultural criticism is embedded in the reformed Confucian political thought of Jiang Qing 歡慶. Jiang has developed a religious justification for his version of Confucianism in practice. For him Confucianism is “…the personal experience of spiritual beings and the sages (shensheng 神聖) and the expression of the way of heaven” (Makeham 2008; 263). As Makeham explains Jiang’s position, only a revived Confucianism can provide the living mandate (shengming 生命) of a teaching worthy of being the national teaching guojiao 國教 of China. In order to give a proper direction to the revived Confucian Way Jiang argues that rather than following any of the Neo-Confucian paths of thought contemporary Confucians need to return to gongyangxue 公羊學 Gongyang Learning (an interpretation of Confucianism drawn from the political valences of the canonical Gongyang text). As many commentators have noted, Jiang’s contemporary Confucianism is more resolutely political and nationalistic in nature.

As Jiang has continued to work on his project he has even suggested a potential new Confucian style constitution for China. One of the most interesting features of this constitutional reform proposal is the suggestion that one of the main branches of government ought to be a house or chamber of Confucian scholars. First, the Confucian House would connect the modern Chinese state to its true foundation according to Jiang, namely the Confucian Way. Second, it would provide a place for intellectual and academic merit in government, something Jiang finds sorely lacking in many Western democratic states. Only Confucian scholars, Jiang believes, will have the breath of moral and historical vision to provide the necessary long-term

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14 I have often thought that this is one reason why Feng Youlan is not usually listed as one of the great first or second generation New Confucians. No one has done more to introduce Confucianism to the Western world than Feng through his highly influential histories of Chinese philosophy. Moreover Feng’s own philosophical work in the 1930s and 1940s envisioned New Confucianism in the style of Zhu Xi. Feng himself called his work xin lixue 新理學 or a new study of coherent principle. Feng certainly deserves to be considered a prime example of the globalization of Confucianism.

15 It is interesting to note that while Makeham chronicles all the various kinds of emerging trends in New Confucianism he is yet to be convinced of its enduring creativity—or advance over the kind of speculative philosophy that has dominated Confucian thought ever since the Song dynasty. Liu (2003b) presents the case for the enduring value of New Confucian speculative philosophy and sensibilities.
solutions to many of the modern problems of the age. For instance, the ecological crisis clearly demands intelligent and sustained analysis and programs to mitigate the damage done to the environment by rapid industrialization. This kind of deliberative action Jiang believes is precluded by a purely Western style democracy because the elected officials are rarely people of intelligence and learning; and moreover they spend most of their careers seeking to be re-elected than serving the long term needs of the people and the country.

Fan Ruiping (2010) provides an extended defense of this kind of renewed Confucian theory and praxis. Like Jiang, Fan argues that what is needed for a genuine Confucian revival is return to the classical sources of the Confucian tradition and not merely an extension of Neo-Confucian philosophy that so defines the New Confucian movement as a philosophical enterprise. Fan wants to find Confucian moral answers to contemporary issues that are not merely a pale form of Westernized liberal Confucianism. As an example Fan provides an analysis and suggested reforms for medical ethics and polices in contemporary China that are based on different principles than those defined by Western liberalism’s foundation based on human rights discourse. Fan urges more consideration of modern Confucian theories that take into account the role of the family in moral and social development and a healthy respect for deference based on merit and not momentary political appeal.

The kind of attraction of socially engaged scholars such as Jiang and Fan is that they are appealing to important aspects of the Confucian tradition; these socially connected development and political aspects are as vital and enduring as those of scholars such as, among others, Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, A. S. Cua, Liu Shuxian and Du [Tu] Weiming discuss in terms of philosophy. But in terms of globalization, the whole question of 礼 is a highly tricky business. Rituals are very hard to transfer from one culture to another, although it can certainly be done over time with enough effort. For instance, Koreans point out that after the founding of the Choson dynasty in 1392 Korea became more wedded to Zhu Xi’s entire philosophical and social reform package than did Ming-Qing China. But it is harder to see how any massive importation of the full range of social, political and/or philosophical modern Confucianism will happen in the globalized world of the 21\textsuperscript{st} Century. We will return to this issue below.

The case of Tang Junyi, one of the most important philosophically inclined second generation New Confucians, is instructive in terms of the globalization of Confucian philosophy per se. As with so many New Confucians, Tang combined a sense of profound connection to the myriad things and events of the world inspired by Mengzi’s classical sense of forming one body with the cosmos. To the end of his career Tang believed strongly and defended extensively the primordial Confucian sense of moral concern for the world and the reasons governing the world were intelligible. More than just intelligible, they were part of the spiritual tradition of Confucianism that ought to inform the revival of contemporary Confucianism.

In step with his colleague Feng Youlan, Tang first discovered how he might link his Confucian intellectual, social and moral commitments to global philosophy via reading the New Realism popular in American philosophical circles in the 1920s. Later, Tang would expand his reading to include Kant, Fichte, Hegel, Lotze, Paulsen

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and Royce. These Western thinkers joined his work on Buddhism and Neo-Confucians to a great synthesis of multicultural philosophy that is a fine representative of globalization. Tang also has a major impact on his good friend Mou Zongsan in the 1930s—so he functioned as a dialogue partner with other New Confucians and as a teacher of the third generation of New Confucian philosophers. As Thomas Metzger has perceptively remarked in his extended discussion of Tang’s life and work (2005), Tang was able to construct a form of globalized ontological idealism replete with a strong commitment to the enduring values of the Confucian Way.\(^\text{16}\)

Probably the most influential of the New Confucian philosophers was Mou Zongsan.\(^\text{17}\) If there ever was a global philosopher it is Mou. Early in his career he was fascinated by Whitehead’s process philosophy and its possible connections to the thought world of the *Yijing*. But as every student of Mou knows, he then turned his attention to a life-long study of and philosophical dialogue with Kant. Later he included discussions of contemporary philosophers such as Husserl and Heidegger as well. But this was not all. After re-writing the entire history of the rise and development of Neo-Confucianism, Mou wrote extensively on Chinese Buddhism and made Tiantai thought an integral part of his later philosophical synthesis. In a single paragraph or page Mou will combine classical and Neo-Confucian philosophy with Tiantai speculations and the work of European philosophers. There is little doubt that more and more Western philosophers will become aware of his vast philosophical corpus in the years to come.

Given the great range of Mou’s work it is impossible to offer even a cursory summary of his work in a short space. Yet Mou himself explained in many of his books what he was seeking to achieve. He put his explanation in globalized terms via his engagement with Kant. As Mou argued at great length, if Kant has a metaphysics of morals the Confucian tradition is best understood as a contrasting moral metaphysics. By this Mou asserted that Confucianism (aided by Tiantai Buddhism in his case) could solve one of the main problems in Kantian philosophy, and by extension most of Western thought, namely the inability for the person to know things in themselves but only the phenomenal manifestation of things and not their noumenal reality. Mou thought that, when properly cultivated, Confucian thought allowed for true intellectual intuition that provides insight into and understanding of the noumenal reality of things-in-themselves. This would allow for Confucian philosophy to claim a holistic, realistic and creative understanding of the cosmos that embraces the moral, empirical and intellectual. It was a vast claim and there is a

\(^\text{16}\) As is the case with so many of the New Confucians, save for the third generation scholars who often publish in English, there is not a huge amount of material in Western languages on many of these figures. However, Metzger’s chapter in *A Cloud Across the Pacific* (2005), pp. 185-290, functions as a monograph on Tang’s life and thought.

\(^\text{17}\) With a spate of recent publications about Mou in English (see Clower, Sernia Chan, and Billioud), French and German there is a chance for Western scholars to be able to gauge the rich scope of Mou’s achievement.
growing literature in Chinese and Western languages about what to make of Mou’s brilliant example of the globalization of Confucian thought.

Along with the influence of the second generation of New Confucians, the continuing globalization of Confucianism also depends on the work of a group of Chinese and Western scholars such as Wm. Theodore de Bary, the late Wing-tsit Chan, Du [Tu] Weiming, Liu Shuxian, A. S. Cua, Cheng Chung-ying, the late Julia Ching, John Makeham, Rodney Taylor, Umberto Breciani, Stephen Angle, Robert C. Neville, Henry Rosemont, the late David Hall, and Roger Ames, just to mention some of the more prolific scholars writing in English.\textsuperscript{18} The work of these scholars ranges from discussions of Confucian-Christian dialogue, the nature of Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy, the history of the development of New Confucianism, to individual reconstructions and elaborations of Confucianism and a global philosophy in the 21st Century.

The group can be divided into two main groups, namely the Chinese and the Western scholars. The Chinese scholars have been writing about this for the longer period,\textsuperscript{19} now spanning four decades. One very interesting feature of their work as a group is the affirmation of the religious nature or dimensions of the Confucian tradition. This actually follows the line of thinking affirmed by New Confucians such as Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi. It is an interesting point because as W. C. Smith once wrote, this is a question that has been considered very hard to answer in terms of the Confucian tradition if certain Western definitions of religions are used. However, like Herbert Fingarette’s (1972) memorable phrase, the secular is the sacred for Confucians. The social ethics and practices of self-cultivation according to this group of scholars do become a spiritual quest, even if it does not resemble any form of West Asian religious tradition. One of the ways to finesse this discussion is to say that Confucianism may not parallel West Asian religious worlds, but it does have religious and/or spiritual dimensions that inform the whole tradition from Kongzi to the modern revival of New Confucianism. For instance, Frederick Streng’s definition of religion as “ultimate transformation” captures a way to describe the Confucian commitment to a spiritual dimension of self-cultivation and the habits of the mind-heart. Another feature of their collective writings is the fact that along with proposing new forms for a revived Confucianism, they are also careful to provide historical accounts of the classical and Neo-Confucian traditions appropriate to a Western audience.

The Western scholars provide a similarly wide range of approaches to introducing Confucianism to a Euro-American audience. Some, such as Robert

\textsuperscript{18} There is also growing interest about New Confucianism in Europe as well. A fine work in English that gives great insight into European scholarship is Billioud’s (2010) study of Mou Zongsan’s moral metaphysics.

\textsuperscript{19} With the notable exception of Wm. Theodore de Bary’s great contribution to Confucian studies that goes back now teaching at Columbia University in 1950; it is a career that continues till now (2012). Along with his friend the late Wing-tsit Chan, de Bary helped to introduce generations of Western readers to the classical and Neo-Confucian world.

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Neville’s work on Boston Confucianism (2000; 2008) are a combination of a discussion of comparative issues in Confucian philosophy and religious thought embedded in Neville’s own creative speculative philosophy. The work of Stephen Angle (2009) and Roger Ames (2011) also present and commend a comprehensive view of Confucianism that both describes and commends the tradition. In terms that Lee Yearley has suggested, Neville, Angle and Ames both explain/explicate and elaborate the history of Confucianism within the matrix of defending their own philosophical interpretation of the tradition. In doing so they are very much globalizing the Confucian Way, albeit now from a Western perspective.

XV. Why the Globalization of Philosophy?

The focus of this account of the globalization of Confucianism has dealt primarily with the vicissitudes of its philosophical revival over three or four generations from the 1920s forward. The simple reason is that it was indeed a group of philosophers who played the primary initial role in the Confucian revival in the 20th Century. We can suspect that if the revival continues and bears fruit in Chinese and East Asian life, it will be possible that other domains of social and political life will be touched by New Confucian theory and praxis. As noted above, this is indeed beginning to happen. Some New Confucians are moving beyond the speculative philosophical roots of the revival. We now find more and more studies that touch upon the social sciences and Confucian impact and influences on more than just speculative philosophy. Confucians, as we have seen above, are thinking about art, the economy and politics as well as more purely philosophical issues.\(^\text{20}\)

Moreover there are, even within the academic realm, other avenues of transmission. For instance, the Chinese government, in cooperation with Chinese universities, has been establishing Confucius Institutes around the world. These institutes do not promote Confucianism per se but rather encourage a whole range of engagement with the world of modern China, including historical studies, language training, cultural and artistic exchanges. It is emblematic of the changing fortunes of Confucianism that the Chinese government has chosen to call the vehicles for this work Confucius Institutes. There are also new institutions such as the Nishan Forum on World Civilizations in China that promote Confucian studies. The Nishan Forum takes as one of its primary tasks the organization of dialogues between Confucianism and the religions of the world in order to promote understanding between religions and spiritual traditions. It is hoped that such dialogues will lead to a more harmonious world culture. The Nishan Forum goes about its work by organizing large conferences

\(^{20}\)For a good example of the emerging social science approach to these issues see Yang and Tamney’s new work (2012). Yang Fenggang has helped to pioneer the ongoing sociological study of Confucianism for instance. Fan Ruiping (2010) provides a cogent examination of the political, moral, ethical and ritual dimensions of a reconstituted Confucianism that is critical of the group of philosophers identified as the New Confucian school but very much in support of a reconstituted Confucianism taking a role in the globalization of modern philosophy.

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as well as more focused and specialized educational seminars dealing with various aspects of the Confucian tradition.

Yet the philosophical project has been and continues to be one of the major exports of a globalizing New Confucianism to date. There are a number of reasons for this. As we have noted, New Confucianism was founded by philosophers and public intellectuals and the philosophical revival and discourse has continued unabated now for four generations. But there is yet another reason that can be advanced based on the nature of philosophical discourse itself. Philosophy, for better or worse, is abstract in nature, even in its most rhetorical and metaphorical moments. It is based on second order reflection on the nature of things. Whereas a novelist, either Chinese or Western, will tell the complicated story of the loves and tragedies of a variety of characters, a philosopher will ask a more abstract set of questions, namely what is the nature of human nature, how can we know it, and how can we interpret what we purport to know about human nature, and ultimately, what does it matter that we think in this fashion at all? What is the best dao to follow in the conduct of life? Of course the questions posed by a philosopher will depend on the historical tradition that the philosopher embraces. Chinese philosophy will ask a different set of questions than those normal in Western circles, though Chinese philosophers have uniformly been more influenced by Western concerns than the other way around. Western philosophers are just now beginning to become aware of the scope of Chinese philosophy in general and Confucianism in particular.

The abstract aspects of philosophical discourse make it both hard to transmit from culture to culture and yet it is something that also facilitates such a global transmission. The very abstract nature allows for us to discover if we are really talking about apples and oranges when we are in Beijing or Shanghai, Boston or London. Of course this account rests on the hypothesis that human beings are going to view and speak about the world using a fairly regular sorts of mental processes based on a fairly regular set of sense organs. Whereas the fact of globalization now precludes any easy discussion of universal human traits as defined by just one cultural area, it does necessarily make the cross-cultural philosophical conversation richer because of its diversity. Philosophers ask how the abstractive nature of their discourse can facilitate globalization. But globalization does not mean uniformity however. As Kongzi commented so long ago, he er butong 和 而 不同 harmony in the sense of mutual respect for the dialogue partners but not uniformity in questions, methodology or even goals. This insight holds true today. We can seek a kind of harmony that may glide along almost unnoticed as one of the ramifications of globalization. People talk with each other, write about each other, and ponder each other’s actions, thoughts, passions and motives. They learn to communicate better and better, and sometimes find this an enriching and even pleasant process.

Buddhism as a world (globalized) religion is a case in point. As Buddhism moved into China it first was meet with a great deal of incomprehension. Early thinkers speculated that Buddhism was really a strange form of Indian Daoism based on the legend that when Laozi left China he travelled west and hence Buddhism was how the Indians understood the Daodejing. The Chinese rapidly figured out that

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Buddhism was not Daoism but something entirely new in the world of Chinese philosophy and religion. Over the centuries a distinctive form of Buddhism with Chinese characteristics arose and flourished. Along with Confucianism Buddhism continues it globalization today as the most rapidly growing religion in North America. Christianity appears to be growing in China also at a rapid rate. Religion is definitely not just philosophy but religious people are drawn to philosophy as moth to the flame. Frederick Streng (1985), in a most economical and yet ecumenical fashion, defined religion as “ultimate transformation.” Philosophers, of course, will by their very inquisitive natures, want to ask the saint, guru, avatar, mendicant, nun or sage just what she or he means by the ‘ultimate’ and ‘transformation’. The Buddha would often chide philosophers for asking questions that do not conduce to liberation from the toils of illusion, but he too gave what can fairly be construed as philosophical responses to some kinds of queries.

Extrapolating from the example of Buddhism in China, what is the future of a globalized Confucianism? Actually we already know that the globalization has happened before and is continuing to happen. An example is the profound globalization of the philosophies of Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi—among many others of their generation and later generations of scholars, now on both sides of the Pacific. Both of these celebrated thinkers of the second generation of New Confucianism were profoundly committed to the revival of Confucianism in the modern world. Moreover, as we have seen, both scholars were equally committed to a careful and sustained engagement with Western philosophy. Through translations of their own works and the ongoing influence of their students, Confucianism is becoming globalized beyond its traditional East Asian world.

Of course being abstract philosophy is not some kind of conceptual panacea. Mistakes can and are made. The history of the interpretation from the time Jesuits in the 17th Century down to the modern era is littered with blunders. Easy assumptions were and are made about how to define terms and translate them across and between cultures. Is *xing* 性 really ‘human nature’? And which of the many Confucian views of human nature are we talking about because there are surely as rich a plethora of definitions of human nature in the history of Western philosophy as there are in Chinese intellectual history. Just because Zhu Xi thought that *xing* was intertwined in the texture of being human as *li* 理 does not bring more clarity—it merely complicates the discussion. Yet the vague, general and abstract nature of philosophical discourse about topics like human nature allows for a conversation to begin. Of course there will be transformations. Such was the case of Buddhism in China. Yet the transformations that produced Tiantai and Huayan Buddhism were remarkable examples of the globalization of a highly complex religio-philosophical tradition moving from one culture to another.

What will be the transformations, the transitions, the transmissions of the *Rudao* 儒道 in China? No one now knows because the question of the future of Confucianism boils with a new intensity. Will there be something like Boston Confucianism? What could the dialogue across the Pacific possibly become? Nonetheless, the dialogue will, if it happens, be part of the ongoing process of globalization.
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CONFUCIAN ROLE ETHICS: A MODEL FOR 21ST CENTURY HARMONY?

Henry Rosemont Jr.∗

Exemplary persons help the needy; they do not make the rich richer.†

Analects 8.6

George Orwell might have had the date wrong, but the horrible world he described in 1984 could yet become a reality if current geopolitical trends continue unchecked.

As competition within and between nations grows more fierce, as more states are failing and/or engulfed in civil wars, as resources become more scarce, as ideologies become more absolutist, and – most important – as the disparity between the haves and the have nots grows ever wider with terrorism becoming ever more common in response, we can see the slaughters, economic dislocations, and environmental destruction characterizing the early years of this century as harbingers of what might well be the future.‡

Globalization activities are arguably responsible for many of the problems currently destabilizing the world, and their potential for improving the lot of mankind will remain unrealized, I believe, until and unless those activities are regulated by an international authority with many of the trappings of a world government. Just as the United States would quickly degenerate if each of the 50 member states developed their own economic, legal and foreign policies with respect to the other 49 – and the same holds true for China – so, too, may we expect much, if not most of international affairs to degenerate unless there is an international organization with sufficient authority to bring harmony out of the present growing discord. It is clear, to me at least, that the “invisible hand” of unbridled capitalism cannot wield the needed baton. If harmony is a goal, then democratic procedures and processes should be cooperative rather than competitive in spirit, and those procedures must govern much in the economic realm as well; the good must be seen as an objective possibility for all rather than subjectively determined privately for each of the almost 7 billion people now living, thus placing us in competition – democratic or otherwise – with those who define the good differently.

But “harmony” is not a common term in contemporary political and moral discourse in the West, in part because it seems incompatible with the capitalist ethos of rugged individualism, competition, and self-interest, enlightened we hope, but

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†Analects 6.4. All citations to this text are from the translation by Roger Ames and myself (Random House/Ballantine Books, 1999), which I have modified on occasion.
‡The best-selling Guns, Germs & Steel by Jared Diamond, among many such books, takes up these themes. W.W. Norton & Co., 1999.

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selfish we know. To many, these qualities are valuable, or at the least, in the nature of things. Immanuel Kant, for example, described human beings in terms of:

"...the unsocial sociability of men...bound together with a mutual opposition which constantly threatens to break up the society. ...he has a strong propensity to isolate himself from others, ... expects opposition on all sides because, in knowing himself, ... he knows he is inclined to oppose others. This opposition it is which awakens all his powers, brings him to conquer his inclination to laziness and, propelled by vainglory, lust for power, and avarice, to achieve a rank among his fellows whom he cannot tolerate but from whom he cannot withdraw. Thus are taken the first steps from barbarism to culture. . . . Thanks be to Nature, then, for the incompatibility, for heartless competitive vanity, for the insatiable desire to possess and to rule!"

Although diametrically opposed to Mencius on human nature, Kant optimistically believed the continuing development of reason would eventually bring about an end to discord, but it would be harder to find a more secure foundation for the morality of capitalism than is found in these lines of his. And with 200+ years of hindsight, we can say that his faith in the triumph of reason has proved unwarranted.

Many other philosophers, theologians, legal and political theorists have thought along similar lines. I chose Kant because he also wrote the first treatise that discussed morality between nations at some length, and his Perpetual Peace hints at a world government of sorts, what he called “A league of peace” (foedus pacificum).

Without something resembling Kant’s “league of peace,” a world government of sorts, I personally hold little hope for a more peaceful and prosperous world. The United Nations is clearly the prime candidate for such an institution, but for reasons that would not surprise Kant, it is a fairly ineffectual organization largely due to the consistent efforts of the United States and, increasingly, China -- as well as France, England and Russia -- because of its growing economic and hence political influence in world affairs. Although it has accomplished much in some areas, the U.N. is not capable of effectively halting genocide, much less protecting the environments and resources of the earth, regulating trade, commerce, and immigration, or in preventing wars.

The major reason for the obstinacy of the US, China, and other powerful nations in refusing to grant greater authority to the UN is that the grant would eo ipso curb the freedom of these countries to do whatever they pleased, and would soon prove very expensive because the poorer and less powerful nations – a solid majority of UN member states -- could reasonably be expected to quickly enact legislation redistributing some of the world’s wealth toward themselves. It is thus no real surprise that the most democratic element of the UN – the General Assembly – is toothless, and what action there is at the UN takes place in the Security Council. It is

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4“Perpetual Peace,” Ibid., p.100.

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difficult to imagine any greater hindrance to democratic governance than to give 5 out of 191 members of the organization absolute veto power over any legislation.

There is clearly very little harmony in evidence at the UN, and unfortunately, many people are happy about that, owing to their beliefs about capitalism, about laws, about human rights and about human nature.(and about the organization itself; both corruption and inefficiency have marred the UN’s reputation).

These views underlying hostility to the UN, especially the democratic General Assembly, are by no means new; they go back at least to the founding of the United States as an independent nation.

When the U.S. Constitution was promulgated in 1787 it was the most democratic political instrument in history. To be sure, women, slaves, people under twenty-one years of age, lawbreakers and the mentally deranged had no suffrage, but many more men were eligible to participate in government than had ever been the case in the past, even including Periclean Athens.

This is not to say that the Founding Fathers universally held their fellow human beings in higher esteem than Kant (although some of them probably did). It was to curb the excesses of the masses that an elaborate system of checks and balances were instituted. Democracy there might be, but not too much of it; hence an appointed Senate, electoral college, and many more constraints were placed on the ability of the electorate to determine the policies of the country. The rhetoric then as now has been that such constraints were necessary in order to prevent a tyrannical majority from imposing its will on minorities. These latter are usually seen as religiously circumscribed, but that is not what the framers of the Constitution had in mind. James Madison was remarkably candid about the matter: “In England, at this day, if elections were open to all classes of people the property of landed proprietors would be insecure. An agrarian law would soon take place.” Therefore, he went on, “Our government ought to secure the permanent interests of the country against innovation.” Which could best be accomplished by a system of checks and balances “so as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.”

Madison later came to be horrified at the unconscionable greed of the “opulent minority” and began himself to have more faith in the common man, but the deed was done, and its effects clearly visible in the country today, where the 6,126 taxpayers who made more than $10 million dollars in 2004 each received approximately $520,000 in tax cuts, which will continue at least until 2012 now that the cuts have been renewed by the 111th Congress just prior to its adjournment in 2010.

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For myself, I believe that if increasingly diverse communities, ethnic and religious groupings, and nation states are to live together in amity not enmity, and do so democratically, it is necessary to fundamentally alter the conception of what it is to be a human being that currently undergirds virtually all political, legal, and moral thinking today, and dominates the discourse on these issues as they are shaped by the government of the United States, and pretty much shared by so-called liberals and conservatives alike.

The altered concept I wish to propose has a number of similarities with the way human beings have been viewed in the three Abrahamic religious traditions, wherein each person is defined as standing in a basic set of relations to deity. But these Abrahamic views, important as they are, cannot conceptually ground dialogues for peace and social justice efforts, or the search for a more international system of governance, both because deity is construed somewhat differently by Jews, Christians and Muslims—not to mention Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Daoists, Sikhs, and the adherents of other faith traditions—and also because tens of millions of people do not accept the concept of deity at all.

The view I will advance defines human beings most fundamentally as standing in sets of relations, not with deity, but with other human beings living and dead, a view first articulated in the texts of classical Confucianism, wherein the absence of the concept of a creator deity in no way attenuates the moral, political and spiritual insights to be found in them. The concept of harmony looms large in these texts, and to my mind the concept is essential for genuine intercultural dialogues, dialogues enhanced by taking place between role-bearing cooperating persons rather than rights-bearing competing individuals.

But before elaborating the Confucian vision in the context of harmony, I must first sketch in greater detail some more of my criticisms of the concept of the rights-bearing individual as that concept is found in most contemporary legal, economic, political and moral thinking, especially in human rights discourse: human beings are basically abstract individuals, individuals who are free, and in addition, are defined as rational, autonomous and self-interested.

John Locke basically proffered this definition to argue for a number of universal human rights,8 which he employed in part as a conceptual check on the divine right of kings as articulated by defenders of monarchical power. Much good has come from this individualistic conception of persons, and the many gains in human dignity it has brought about are to be celebrated. The U.S. has been at the forefront of championing individualism, and has linked it to democracy, which is why so many peoples of the world enduring dictatorial governments have been inspired by the U.S. model.

But the dark side of individualism is coming increasingly to the fore as the growing maldistribution of wealth both within and between nations becomes starker, as transnational corporations become less accountable to any political or legal institutions in their search for ever greater profits, and as the policies and actions of the United States, adamant in pressing this unfettered capitalism grounded in rugged

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8Throughout Book II of the Second Treatise on Government, especially Chapter 8.

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individualism on all nations, are doing more to exacerbate than alleviate the gross inequalities that contribute so much to the violence in so much of the contemporary world. This dark side of the ethics of the abstract individual is that when freedom is weighted far more heavily than social justice, the political, legal and moral instruments employed in defending and enhancing that freedom virtually insure that social justice will not be achieved, as I have already hinted at above (with reference to the UN).

To see more closely how and why this is so, consider the U.S. Bill of Rights, enshrining many of Locke’s views as amended by Thomas Jefferson and focusing on freedom: of speech, of association, of worship, and to freely own and freely dispose of property legally acquired. Clearly these civil and political rights – now regularly referred to as “first-generation” rights – are linked to the individualistic view of persons: if I am essentially free, and rational, self-interested and autonomous, then certainly no one else, especially a government, should interfere with my speaking my mind, worshipping as I choose, or associating with whomever I wish, as I pursue the projects I have chosen for myself.

It must be noted however, that these civil and political rights are passive, in that they are solely focused on freedom from, which can be seen from the fact that I can fully respect all of your civil and political rights simply by ignoring you; of course you have a right to speak, but not to have me listen.

To appreciate the significance of this passivity, or “negative liberty” as Isaiah Berlin defended it,9 we must look to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights,10 which in addition to the civil and political, also lists a number of social, economic and cultural rights, such as the right to a job, education, health care, decent housing, and much more. (Articles 22-27). These “second generation” rights are active rather than passive, concerned as much with freedom to as freedom from. They are active in the sense that there are certain things I must do if you are to secure the benefits of these rights – at the least, pay more taxes.

By simply listing all rights seriatim the Universal Declaration implies that they are compatible with each other,11 but unfortunately they are not, for if I acknowledge your rights claims to housing, health care, a job, and so on, then I must actively help you obtain them so that you may pursue your own projects. But then I would no longer be fully free to self-interestedly pursue my own projects, and consequently I am strongly inclined to deny that you have legitimate social, economic and cultural

11Many people of good will have insisted on the inseparability of all the rights enumerated in the Universal Declaration. See, for example, Sumner B. Twiss, “A Constructive Framework for Discussing Confucianism & Human Rights,” in Confucianism & Human Rights, ed. Wm. T de Bary and Tu Weiming, Columbia University Press, 1998. I endorse this argument wholeheartedly from a political point of view, but cannot do so logically; the putative inconsistency I raise here I have also raised elsewhere, and has never been responded to in any way to the best of my knowledge.
rights at all. That I, too, could secure the material benefits accompanying second generation rights is no counter to this argument if I believe I can secure these material benefits on my own, or in some freely chosen, rational contractual form in conjunction with a few others. Nor can it be replied that I may freely choose to assist you on my own, for this would be an act of charity, not an acknowledgement of your rights to these goods.

Unlike most other nations, the US defines “persons” in such a way that the first-generation civil and political rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights can be used to thwart democracy and hinder social justice. “Person” is defined officially in the US “to include any individual, branch, partnership, associated group, association, estate, trust, corporation or other organization (whether or not organized under the laws of any State), or any government entity.” Such “persons” pay lobbyists large sums of money to influence legislation that affects them, and they can pay the media large sums of money to “spin” the legislation so that it misleadingly appears to be to everyone’s benefit, from giving away public lands and resources to extraction companies, to subsidizing oil companies, defense contractors and other major corporations, to repeated tax cuts for the wealthy.

Consequently, if I am well off I will be strongly disinclined to see second-generation rights as truly rights, for I would surely be less “free” and not as well off if they were. Rather will I want to elect officials who will see them as “hopes” or aspirations” as the U.S. Senate has done when it consistently refuses to ratify the U.N. International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (as all other developed countries have done, and many others as well). Former UN Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick was more explicit, referring to social, economic and cultural rights as “letters to Santa Claus,” while her successor Morris Abrams described such notions as “little more than an empty vessel into which vague hopes and inchoate expectations can be poured.”

Thus, without diminishing the great importance of first generation civil and political rights when applied to flesh and blood human beings, and with admiration for the national and international NGOs that police their abuse, it must nevertheless be emphasized that when taken to the personal and corporate levels, respect for first generation rights doesn’t cost very much, requires very little effort, is a bulwark protecting the rich and powerful, and has thus become a hindrance to the implementation of second-generation rights, and attendant social justice both nationally and internationally.

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14 Rogue States, op.cit., p.113.
15 Ibid.
16 Especially, but not confined to, exemplary groups like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, School of the Americas Watch, and Witness for Peace.
But only if human beings are defined as most fundamentally free, rational, self-interested and autonomous individuals is it possible to feel morally justified in doing nothing with respect to alleviating the unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of health care, poverty, disease and much else that make for wretched lives on the part of far too many of our fellow citizens (i.e., the miseries second-generation rights are intended to obviate), a moral stance taken by not a few U.S. governments, and virtually every national and transnational capitalist corporation – which, again, are legally construed as individuals with regard to first generation rights. When the wretchedness of the poor becomes impossible to ignore for a few moments (e.g., New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina) there was a great deal of sympathetic feelings and offers of aid on the part of most average Americans, but for many in government, media, and the punditocracy, a “blame the victim” argument was regularly put forward despite its clear absurdity.

This, then, all too sketchily, is the dark side conceptually of viewing human beings most basically as individuals, and valuing individual freedom above all else: we too easily lose sight of our sociality, our obligations to others, our common humanity; liberty is purchased at the expense of social justice, and democracy is seen largely as an arena in which competing interest groups do battle. In such an intellectual climate – reinforced by international legal and other institutions dominated by the U.S. – there is little reason to hope that a more equitable distribution of the world’s goods will ever take place, or attendant violence to diminish, or world peace achieved. Harmony will elude us.

Now it might seem that by challenging the concept of individual freedom I am at least implicitly championing a collectivism of some sort, Stalinist or Fascist. But individualism and collectivism do not exhaust our social and political possibilities any more than selfishness and altruism exhaust our moral possibilities. These Manichean splits are modern Western conceits, and basically serve as rhetorical support for maintaining the individualistic status quo. If all challenges to individuals making individual choices in their own self-interest in capitalist societies can be made to appear as subtle endorsements for the gulags, killing fields and labor re-education camps, then obviously we must give three cheers for individualism and capitalism, drowning out all dissent. But if the status quo is grossly unjust, and to the extent the status quo is justified by appeals to individualistic and competitive conceptions of economics, government, democracy, human rights, and morality, to at least that extent do we need to consider other views of what it is to be a human being.

One candidate for such a view, suitably modified for the contemporary world, is that of the classical Confucians, whose texts provide significant conceptual resources for forging new pathways to national and international social justice, and democratic global concord. One of the very strong pulls of individualism is that it seems to preserve, and at times enhance, our unique individuality; none of us wishes to be no more than a face in the crowd. But although the concept of a purely abstract, autonomous, free, self-interested individual self is altogether alien to classical Confucianism, their texts do indeed allow, indeed require, each of us to be unique with respect to others, and to be seen as unique by those others. To elaborate and
defend this claim I must proffer briefly my own reading and interpretation of those texts.

The Analects, Mencius, Xunzi and the Records of Ritual (Li Ji) are by no means in full accord on all points, and there are several tensions within each text itself; they nevertheless present an overall coherent view of human beings, and the good life for human beings. This life is an altogether social one, and central to understanding it is to see that Confucian sociality has aesthetic, moral, and spiritual no less than political and economic dimensions, all of which are to be integrated.

None of the early texts address the question of the meaning of life, but they do put forward a vision of being human, and a discipline in which everyone can find meaning in life\(^\text{17}\). This meaning will become increasingly apparent to us as we pursue our ultimate goal, namely, developing ourselves most fully as human beings to become jun zi, “exemplary persons,” or, at the pinnacle of development, sheng, or sages. And for Confucians we can only do this through our interactions with other human beings. Treading this human path (ren dao) must be ultimately understood basically as a religious quest, even though the canon speaks not of God, nor of creation, salvation, an immortal soul, or a transcendental realm of being; and no prophecies will be found in its pages either. It is nevertheless a truly religious path, yet at the same time a humanistically oriented one; for Confucius, we are irreducibly social, as he makes clear in the Analects: “I cannot run with the birds and beasts. Am I not one among the people of their world? If not them, with whom can I associate?” (18:6)

Thus the Confucian self is not a free, autonomous individual, but is to be seen relationally: I am a son, husband, father, grandfather, teacher, student, friend, colleague, neighbor, and more. I live, rather than “play” these roles, and when all of them have been specified, and their interrelationships made manifest, I have been fairly thoroughly uniquely individuated, but with very little left over with which to piece together an autonomous individual self, free to rationally conclude mutually advantageous contracts with other rational individuals each seeking their own self-interest.

While this view may seem initially strange, it is actually straightforward: in order to be a friend, neighbor, or lover, for example, I must have a friend, neighbor, or lover. Other persons are not merely accidental or incidental to my goal of fully developing as a human being, they are essential to it; indeed they confer unique personhood on me, for to the extent that I define myself as a teacher, students are necessary to my life, not incidental to it. Note in this regard also, that, again, while Confucianism should be seen as fundamentally religious, there are no solitary monks or nuns, anchorites or anchoresses, or hermits to be found in the tradition.

Our first and most basic role, one that significantly defines us in part throughout our lives, is as children; familial deference/reverence (xiao) is one of the highest excellences in Confucianism.

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From our beginning roles as children – and as siblings, playmates, and pupils – we mature to become parents ourselves, and assume many other roles and responsibilities as well, all of which are reciprocal relationships, best generalized as holding between benefactors and beneficiaries. Each of us moves regularly from benefactor to beneficiary and back again, depending on the other(s) with whom we are interacting, when, and under what conditions. When young, I was largely beneficiary of my parents; when they were aged and infirm, I became their benefactor, and the converse holds for my children. I am benefactor to my friend when she needs my help, beneficiary when I need hers. I am a student of my teachers, teacher of my students, colleague of my colleagues. Taken together, the manifold roles we live define us as persons. And the ways in which we meet the obligations attendant on these relational roles, and the ways others meet similar obligations toward us, are both the ways whereby we achieve dignity, satisfaction, and meaning in life.

From this emphasis on familial deference it should be clear that at the heart of Confucian society is indeed the family, the locus of where, how, and why we develop into full human beings. There have been several communitarian movements opposed to individualism in the West, but they have tended to focus on larger ways of circumscribing the communities: on the basis of religion, or of national citizenship, ethnicity, language, and so forth. Only in Confucianism is the family the center of the communitarianism which then extends outward.18

A central government is also important to the good society, because there are necessary ingredients of human flourishing – especially economic – which the family (and local community) cannot secure on their own. The early Confucians saw the state not as in any way in opposition to the family, but rather saw both as complementary; stated in contemporary democratic terms, if we wish to live in a state that insists I meet my fatherly responsibilities, it should insure that I have the wherewithal – i.e., an education, job, etc. – to do so, and not simply decry my laziness or stupidity for failing to do so – “blame the victim” again. Similarly, this state must assume responsibility for the well-being of those who have no family networks for support. In his essay “The Regulations of a King,” Xunzi instructed the ruler as follows:

In the case of those who belong to the five incapacitated [i.e., handicapped] groups, the government should gather them together, look after them and give them whatever work they are able to do. Employ them, provide them with food and clothing, and take care to see that none are left out.19 And he further instructs the ruler to:

18 Indeed, in several of the utopian communitarian societies, like the Oneida community or the Shakers, the family as generally defined was disvalued. For a discussion of how family values can be liberatory rather than suffocating and oppressive, see “Humane Family Values,” by Michelle Switzer and Henry Rosemont, Jr., unpublished manuscript.
Select those who are worthy and good for office, promote the kind and respectful, encourage filiality and fraternity, look after orphans, widows, and the poor; then the people will feel safe and at ease with their government. These are remarkable passages. Xunzi is insisting that the government provide extensive social security and welfare services to the needy – well over two millennia ago.

Further, he requires it for just those people who could not pose any threat to the government; he is not merely urging the king to buy off potential troublemakers. And even more remarkable, by requiring the government to find jobs for all who can hold them, Xunzi displays an insight uncommon even today: welfare cannot be effective if it simply keeps people as beneficiaries; to live with dignity, everyone must also be able to acquire the wherewithal to be benefactor as well, they must have something to give to their community.

The ideal Confucian society is thus basically communally oriented, with customs, tradition, rituals, ceremonies and manners serving as the binding force of and between our many relationships to one another. This, then, in woefully brief compass, is Confucian humanism in action as I read the early texts: interacting with others as benefactors and beneficiaries in an intergenerational context. Confucius himself was absolutely clear on this point, for when a disciple asked him what he would most like to do, he said:

I would like to bring peace and contentment to the aged, to share relationships of trust and confidence with friends, and to love and protect the young (5:26)

Much more, of course, needs to be said about the early Confucian view of what it is to be a human being, but I believe much more can be said. The concept of the family can be retained, for example, while making women equals to men, and it can be enhanced by allowing two (or more) nurturers of the same sex to be responsible for child-rearing and care of the elderly – both with state help. Neither sexism, racism, nor homophobia are logical implications of the Confucian family and larger political system. It must be noted that if the goal of human life is to develop one’s humanity to the utmost, and to help others do the same, then we have a clear criterion for measuring the worth and quality of our interactions in the families and communities to which we belong: we are not merely to accept them as unalterable givens. Rather must we consistently ask to what extent our interactions and communities conduce to everyone’s efforts to realize (make real) their potential? That is to say, while deference and loyalty were given great weight, and had to be learned and practiced, I have dealt at length with the significance of these and other views of Xunzi’s in my “State & Society in the Xunzi: A Philosophical Commentary,” in Virtue, Nature and Agency in the Xunzi, ed. T.C. Kline, III & Philip J. Ivanhoe. Hackett Pub. Co., 2000.


See the Introduction to the Analects, op. cit., p.55.

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remonstrance was obligatory when things were not going well. As the Master said, “To see what it is appropriate to do, and not do it, is cowardice.” (2.24).

It is clear that persons living in accord with a role ethics will take second generation social, economic and cultural rights very seriously, while necessarily remaining sensitive to the civil and political, all in the effort to achieve harmony. That is to say, immediate concern for securing and implementing second generation rights would not, in a Confucian role ethics, come at the expense of first generation civil and political rights. If you and I can only flourish as we help each other realize our full humanity as benefactors and beneficiaries, why would I want to silence you, not let you choose your other friends, or follow whichever faith tradition inspires you? That is to say, with role-bearing persons as our philosophical foundation, moving from second to first generation rights is conceptually and attitudinally straightforward: if my flourishing is dependent on your flourishing, why would I want to degrade you, stifle your creativity, or ignore your poverty or other afflictions?

But the converse does not hold. It requires a cognitive (and affective) shift to move from respecting civil and political rights passively to actively helping others obtain the benefits attendant on respecting social, economic and cultural rights. And the history of the U.S. provides little grounds for expecting the shifts to take place: It is now 220 years since civil and political rights became the law of the land, yet over 20% of American children are growing up in families whose income is below the poverty line, three million people are estimated as being homeless, and over two million are in prison. Many millions remain without health care even as Republicans regather to overturn the recent health care bill that provided for many of the nation’s poor. Private pension plans are being unilaterally abolished and abandoned, while at the same time the wealthiest 5% have enjoyed three substantial tax cuts beginning in 200123. Thus far those cuts have already given roughly $93,500 to every millionaire (about $215 to middle income folk, and of course nothing at all to those at the bottom of the economic ladder).24 And to protect and increase that wealth, the government has more than doubled its defense budget from 1998 to 2010 despite the earlier end of the Cold War with the breakup of the Soviet Union.25

To redress these immoral imbalances at home, and to cease being a terror in the politics among nations abroad, US citizens must begin to see, feel, and believe themselves to be more basically socially dependent beings than independent, isolated individuals, and that view must gain more currency in other countries as well. Each of these views can become self-fulfilling prophecies, so we must ask which of them is more conducive to a more peaceful and just world.

I opt for the Confucian model of role-bearing persons interacting cooperatively, because with it the goal of human concord – harmony – stands a better chance of

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23Sources for all these figures are in my “Two Loci of Authority,” in Confucian Cultures of Authority, ed. Peter Hershock & Roger T. Ames. SUNY Press, 2006.
being realized than the rights-bearing, competitive because self-seeking individual does. And harmony should indeed be a goal, because the positive elements of individualism – especially our unique personhood – need not be sacrificed in the struggle to achieve the goal. As Confucius said, “The exemplary person (junzi) seeks harmony (he), not sameness.” (13.23)

Think of music, as Confucius, Mencius and Xunzi often do in the early texts. Each part must retain its distinct features if the goal (realizing the piece of music) is to be achieved: sopranos, altos, tenors and basses must all be true to themselves, so to speak, in order for the chorale to be a beautiful piece of music. This is what harmony means, it is not a metaphoric stretch.

Or think of food (as the Master and his followers also did frequently) To make an appetizing dish, as my colleague Roger Ames has often noted in this regard, a number of different ingredients must be combined in such a way as to retain their distinctive flavors while yet blending together -- in harmony – to produce a palate appealing dish, as discussed, for example, the early text Spring & Autumn Annals of Master Lu:

In combining your ingredients to achieve a harmony (he), you have to use the sweet, sour, bitter, acrid, and the salty, and you have to mix them in an appropriate sequence and proportion. Bringing the various ingredients together is an extremely subtle art in which each of them has its own expression.26

In the same way, if we wish to bring harmony to our families, so must each of us utilize our unique talents and abilities within the unique set of roles we live as benefactor here and beneficiary there, and then come to extend ourselves beyond the family to larger communities, the nation, the world – which is ultimately a path of spiritual self-cultivation.27 Obviously we cannot do any of these things if we are only faceless parts of some collective. But, keeping the imagery of the family clearly in mind, neither as children, parents, grandparents or other close relatives can or should we devote much time and energy to looking after our own interest, but trust others to look after ours as we look after theirs.

It must be noted that harmony can only be achieved against the background of an agreed-upon goal: the masterful performance of a motet or symphony, the creation of the gustatory delight, the flourishing of the family. Other goals can also be reached most successfully against the background of the concept of harmony, including goals in which cultural values figure prominently. In recent work Charles Ess, for example, has noted that with the goal of establishing an internationally acceptable information ethics, privacy concerns are of great importance, yet there are major conceptual differences between how privacy is seen in China and the US – which could be expected -- but more than that, he found significant differences between the US and

26Roger regularly used recipes as examples of harmony while yet preserving the uniqueness of the components in his lectures, and it was he who was responsible for inserting this quote into n.216 of our Analects translation (pp.254-58).


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Norway on the issue. Yet, although for different reasons, all three countries have signed on to the relevant protocols. He then compares the differing conceptions of privacy in China, Hong Kong, and Germany – where concord was also reached – and sums up his analysis as follows:

This interpretive . . . pluralism . . . holds together through a shared focus on “privacy” despite what remain deep and irreducible cultural differences with regard to the meaning of “privacy,” as interpreted through the very different lenses of what each culture presumes about human beings . . . and with regard to the rationale for and implementation of data privacy protection laws.

In doing so, this interpretive pluralism thus preserves distinctive cultures, histories and traditions of both East and West – while articulating shared (but not always identical) points of ethical agreement needed for a global Information Ethics intended for an interconnected and interdependent global society.28 The claim that Ess is making mirrors one of my own exactly, namely, that harmony can be achieved when goals (goods) can be agreed upon and their achievement objectively ascertained, despite significantly differing value orderings definitive of the several cultures involved in the dialogic process. And if much can be accomplished even with very different conceptions of what it is to be a human being, and given the centrality of the United States in all international affairs, how much more cross-cultural harmony might be achieved if rights-bearing individuals in the US began to give pride of place to their role-bearing brethren. That is to say, while there are differing orderings of values among nations with respect to matters of freedom, poverty, law, and much else, everyone knows what it is to be a son or a daughter, and why grandmothers should, ceteris paribus, be listened to.

Much more needs to be said about the adaptability of a Confucian role ethics to a global context, but it just might bring the peoples of the world closer together, both within and between nation states.29

An idealistic vision perhaps, but the realities of the world today are sufficiently ugly that a strong sense of idealism seems to be rationally and morally obligatory, and the Confucian vision, especially as it leads us spiritually outward from the family to encompass the whole human race past, present and future,30 has strong resonances – another musical term – with significant strains of Western thought as well, and hence need not be considered altogether a foreign import. The 17th Century – pre-Enlightenment – metaphysical poet and Anglican cleric John Donne wrote in his most famous meditation:

28 “Ethical Pluralism & Global Information Ethics.” In Luciano Floridi and Julian Savulescu, eds., “Information Ethics: Agents, Artifacts, & New Cultural Perspectives,” a special issue of Ethics & Information Technology, forthcoming. I am grateful to Ess for sharing his manuscript with me.


30 See n.27.
No man is an island, entire unto itself. . . .
Any man’s death diminishes me, for I am involved in Mankind.
And therefore do not send to know for whom the Bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.\textsuperscript{31}

I have often quoted these lines, for they evidence a paradigmatically Confucian sensibility. As everyone is aware, the concept of ritual propriety – the \textit{li} – is central for the philosophy of Confucius, and he makes clear why it is: “Achieving harmony (\textit{he}) is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety.” (1.15)

And it may be the most important function of taking seriously the early Confucian texts today – not alone in China -- in our search for a better world.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{No man is an island}, ed. Rivers Scott. The Folio Society, 1997. Meditation XVII, p. 75
\textsuperscript{32}Parts of this essay have been published in different venues in recent years.

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CONFUCIANISM AND THE SPIRIT OF OUR TIME

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Philosophers and scholars of Chinese philosophies have engaged in a heated debate on the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time, as well as Confucianism and globalization. This is timely significant. I believe that Confucianism is compatible to the spirit of our time, as it was compatible to the spirit of various times in the past, and can be an inspiring force in globalization today. Indeed, I claim, and will continue to claim, that Confucianism is globalized today, though those universal claims which it makes need to be sifted out or universalizing some of its claims still has a long, bumping road to travel. Here, we should draw a distinction between globalization and universalization. Globalization is a process of having a global presence and marked by spatial expansion. Universalization is a process in which the universality or universal acceptability of a claim is recognized and consented. Confucian ethics has a globalized presence today, not merely being a system of beliefs and values operating only in Asian cultures. This does not mean that the world is confucianalized. Rather, it is to say that Confucianism has joined other globalized ethics such as Western liberal ethics or Christian ethics, becoming a significant voice in the world today. Thus, Confucian ethics is globalized, but not yet universalized.

The marching of Confucian ethics in the global arena is speeded up by China’s really becoming a more and more global power. Efforts to articulate a constructive relation between Confucianism and the spirit of our time are continuously made, though the burden to sort out various issues involved is still heavy. There are conflicts between the two, no question of that. After all, one represents a cultural tradition, and another represents modernity. One is particular, and another is universal. But interacting conflict is the mother of everything. More and more Confucian values are renovated in line with the spirit of our time. And the spirit of our time finds also more and more Confucian expressions. Historically, Confucianism has demonstrated an inherent creativity to renovate itself to continue to be an inspiring force in the world. Today, Confucianism continues to demonstrate its creativity and vitality.

Still, how best to understand the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time remains an outstanding issue. Many proposals have been put on the table and most of them are yet to be critically examined. Old concepts such as Confucian humanism, Confucian socialism, Confucian constitutional democracy, Confucian Chinese-Way, Confucian modernity, Confucian East-Asian way, and

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Asian value argument continue to find good presses and markets. New concepts such as the so-called “pluralistic universality” thrive and join the dance. When the curtain is lifted, and the interlude is over, two kinds of problem are on the stage. The first kind is the conceptual problem—that is, the problem of the nature of the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time. The second kind of problem is the normative problem—that is, questions of justification and justifiability of various claims on Confucianism and the spirit of our time as mentioned above. There are various issues of authority, legitimacy, justification, and rationality of those claims.

Perhaps, intending one stone for two birds is always ambitious and may be too ambitious sometimes. Still, in this essay, I intend to do nothing less than that. I want to argue for follows. First, the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time is one between the particular and the universal. It is not one between two particulars or between two traditions, which many writers in effect presuppose. Second, the concept of pluralistic universality, which is entertained by some today, is self-defeated. Logically, this concept is self-contradictory. Historically, Confucianism has the concept of pluralistic embodiments of universality, not pluralistic universality. Third, Confucian values can, and should, be renovated in line with the spirit of our time. The recent reconstruction of China’s core cultural values provides a good example for us to understand the relationship between Confucian and the spirit of our time. My underlying objective is also to develop a new conception of the significance of Confucianism in our time. My contention is therefore that Confucianism is one of the few ancient philosophies having rich concepts of self, human dignity, and personal dignity; such concepts, through proper renovation in line with the concept of basic rights, can be the most viable concepts for us today. Without further introduction, I shall start to present my case.

I. The Universal and the Particular

Let me start with a court and dogmatic claim: the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time is one between the particular and the universal, not a relationship between two universals or one between two particulars. In our time, the spirit of our time is the universal, not a particular. It consists in the universal norms, values, and ideals in our time. In comparison, though containing universal insights and claims, Confucianism in whole is a particular, not a universal. Confucianism is a particular form of philosophy and system of cultural values in whole. Confucian ideal in whole is a particular cultural ideal, not a universal ideal. Noteworthy, the very qualification “Confucian” indicates that such philosophy, values, and ideals are particular. To claim a philosophy to be a Confucian philosophy is to claim it to be a particular called “Confucian”. To claim specific values as “Confucian values” is to claim them to be a particular system of values called “Confucian”. To claim given ideals to be Confucian ideals is to claim them to be particulars called “Confucian”. Needless to say, to claim that a distinction exists between the particular and the universal is to claim that either one is not identical to the other or not reducible to the other.
That said, to claim that X is a particular is also to claim that X is a particular embodiment of the universal. A particular is not merely an individual existence, but one embodying the familial or the universal. For example, one’s finger is a particular embodiment of the universal called “finger”. By this token, a particular value, if it is truly a value, must also embody what is universally valuable. This is true even of a particular instrumental value in a given context. For example, in given contexts, compromise is required for social cooperation. In such context, compromise is an instrumental value. But compromise can be an instrumental value here if and only if it is instrumental to cooperation, and cooperation can be a value if and only if it does something good or represents something good that is not only good in terms of such contexts, but also good in terms of general or universal goodness. Needless to say, X in whole as a particular value is to be distinguished from the universal which it embodies. That is to say, X in whole is not identical to the universal which it embodies. Thus, Zhuangzi famously claimed: a white horse is not horse. A white horse is a particular horse, just as a black horse, a brown horse is. Horse is the universal—that is, the universal as the secondary substance of all horses that ever exist. By the same token, one can say that Confucian human dignity is not human dignity itself, but a particular embodiment of human dignity, just as Western human dignity is.

That a particular cannot, and should not, be identical to the universal can be seen by the fact that a universal can be a predicate of a particular, but a particular cannot be not a predicate of the universal. Thus, for example, a white horse is a horse and all white horses are a kind of horses. But it is not the case that horse is a white horse, and all horses are white horses. We can say that a Confucian value is a value and Confucian values are a form of values. But we cannot claim that value is Confucian value, and all values are Confucian values. In short, to claim that value X is a Confucian value is to claim that X in whole is a valuable quality from the Confucian perspective; that X is a Confucian value in the same way Y is a Christian value. Accordingly, it is the claim that X may be a particular embodiment of a universal value, but it itself in whole is an instance of what it may possibly embody, not what it embodies itself, just as a white horse is a particular horse, not universal horse itself.

This is the fate of Confucian values in their relationships to the spirit of our time. What we often call “Confucian values” or ideals are not the universals which these values may possibly embody. They may embody or can be renovated to embody those timely universal values, but they are not timely values in themselves. Even if we can sift various universal contents out of Confucian values—for example, Confucian claim on human dignity is universalizable, the Confucian system of values in whole or those particular Confucian concepts whose claims can be universalizable in themselves are particular and cultural. As indicated above, conceptually, to claim them to be Confucian is to claim them as particulars. Taking the Confucian concept of human dignity as the guide. Confucianism makes claim on human dignity and its claim can be universalized. Indeed, one can make even a stronger claim: not only Confucian claim on human dignity is consistent with any universal claim on human dignity we know today, but also supportive to other universal claims on value—for example, the value of human rights. For example, to a great extent, Josef Seifert
(2013)’s concept phenomenological of “ontological dignity of the human person as such” can also be read as a Confucian concept and Seifert’s argument for human rights in terms of such a concept of human dignity can be used by Confucianism too. Louis Henkin also indicates, “human rights are rooted in a conception of human dignity” (Henkin 1998, 309). Jürgen Habermas (2010) insists that the concept of human rights in the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights is rooted in the concept of human dignity too. Thus, Confucian claim on human dignity is not only universalizable, but also consistent with other universal claims on human values that are part of the spirit of our time.

Noteworthy, Confucianism is one of the few ancient philosophies that have developed a rich concept of human dignity that is central to the concept of basic human rights in our time today. On this point, at least two ideas of the Confucian concept of humanity are undeniable. First, in the Confucian conception, humanity is an intrinsic value and being a human is an intrinsic value and the purpose itself, not a means to other purpose. Confucian claim on being a human as an intrinsic value is the richest among all ancient philosophies. Second, the value of being a human or human dignity is inviolable. In Confucianism, human dignity is not only an intrinsic value, but also a supreme value or more exactly an inviolable supreme value. Both Confucian claims on humanity are also claimed in the UN 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, which is a universally operational charter of human rights today. That said, while Confucian claims on humanity can be universal, the Confucian conception of humanity as a whole, mitigated by others Confucian values, is a particular expression of the universal spirit of humanity, and its relationship to the universal idea of humanity of our time and all time is a relationship between a particular and the universal, not one between two particular traditions or conceptions.

Other Confucian values may also embody the universal in Confucian forms. But as Confucian conceptions, they in whole are the particular, not the universal. This is true even of such Confucian values as social harmony, duty, justice, propriety, piety, trustworthiness, loyalty, and so on. Even these Confucian values are the particular in the same sense as a white horse is not horse itself. Thus, for example, Confucian conception of harmony in whole is not the universal idea of social harmony any more than a white horse is horse itself. Therefore, the claim that Confucian values are, or can be, universal needs qualifications. The claim is valid if it is that ideas that Confucian values embody can be universal. But the claim will be invalid if it is that a particular Confucian value in whole is universal or that a set of Confucian values in whole are, and can be, universal. Noteworthy, possibility is also that Confucianism may not make literarily a claim X, but its other claims claim may be supportive to claim X or imply X. In such a context, at least we can say that Confucianism and claim X are not only compatible, but are mutually supportive and enhancing.

Speaking of the relationship between Confucianism and the timely value of human rights in our time, Julia Ching once observed:

1. Support for certain human rights concepts can be found in the writing of leading Confucian thinkers, early and late.

*Journal of East-West Thought*
2. Most Eastern Asian countries have been quick to endorse human rights and quite ready to claim them as their own.
3. East Asian countries historically much influenced by Confucian culture have demonstrated that the observance of democratic practices and human rights is not incompatible with, and can be beneficially adapted to, Confucian tradition (Ching 1998, 79).

Ching’s claims can be rephrased as follows: the concept of human rights, though not found in traditional Confucianism, is quite consistent with core concepts of Confucianism; people living in Confucian cultures endorse the concept of human rights without giving up their Confucian conceptions of value; incorporating the concept of human rights into Confucianism will do great good to Confucianism, including Confucian values, itself. In short, not only compatibility and mutual acceptability exists between Confucianism in whole and the concept of human rights, but also many Confucian values and the concept of human rights can co-promote and co-enrich. Also, Confucian embodiment of the concept of human rights is emerging in horizon. The great potential benefit and fruitfulness of Confucian embodiment of the concept of human rights has already revealed in horizon. I would like to support Ching’s claim by adding that the relationship between Confucianism in general and the idea of human rights is one between the particular and the universal, as well as between the traditional and modernity. All the same, there is no incompatibility between them. Mutual acceptability exists between them. Confucian embodiment of the concept of human rights enriches the concept. In turn, the embodiment of the concept of human rights in Confucianism modernizes Confucianism.

One may argue that there are exclusively and purely Confucian values. That is to say, they are values only in Confucian thinking and in term of Confucian way of existence. Such an argument cannot stand. A value in whole may be a particular, but it cannot be an exclusively particular in the sense that it does not embody any universal in content and claim. That said, for the sake of argument, if some values are exclusively Confucian—no embodying any universal claims, they are values only from a given perspective, not universal. One cannot claim simultaneously both that value X, say, filial piety, is exclusively Confucian and that the same value X, say, filial piety, is universal. To claim value X is exclusively Confucian is to claim it to be a value exclusively and only from the Confucian perspective and therefore to be an exclusively particular. To claim it to be an exclusively particular is to claim it not to be the universal at the same time. Thus, logically, if value X is universal, then it is not exclusively Confucian. If it is exclusively Confucian, it is not universal. If one claims that value X is exclusively Confucian, one can argue that it may be one of those local values which have legitimate claims in their own and which those universal values should interact with. One would not be reasonable to argue either that it is more legitimate than those universal values or that it is a different kind of universal as the so-called pluralistic concept of universality would claim. There is no universal that is exclusively particular. All the same, to claim that there are values that are exclusively Confucian and do not embody the universal is a mistake at the outset, just as no one...
can reasonably claim that a white horse is a horse but does not embody universal horse-ness or does not belong in the family of beings called “horse”.

Chenyang Li (2013) puts forth a seductive concept of globalizing cultural values. The concept is pregnant with insight that cultural values should be engaged and included in the discourse of universal human values. Also as indicated above, cultural values such as Confucian values can be globalized—that is to say, they can have a global presence, even global influence. That said, we need to treat the concept “globalizing” here with cares. Being globalized should not be confused with being universalized. The universal embodied in cultural values can be sifted out in global discourse and therefore be globally appreciated, but cultural values as particulars cannot be universalized because they may not be universalizable in whole. As I shall see it, many cultural values such as Christian values or Islamic values have been globalized. First, they have a global presence. Second, they are respected as conversation partners in the global discourse of human values. Third, they are globally taught. Fourth, their globalization is helped by immigration and the global spread of their cultural institutions. That said, they are not necessarily universalized. Those universal claims in them are yet to be sifted out and consented globally. All the same, globalization of cultural values should be distinguished from universalization of cultural values. We can globalize a given cultural value in whole, but not universalize that value in whole. The particular cannot be universalized by the unforced force of human reason in moral argument, even if they can be globalized by the support of institutional forced force such as military or economic system. Moreover, the kind of rational global discourse should be based upon reason and truth, not on aggression and oppression. That is to say, what should be globalized should be globalizable in terms of reason and truth. What are not globalizable based on reason and truth—for example, religious fundamentalism or terrorism—should not be globalized. What should be accepted globally should be globally acceptable in terms of reason and truth. Imperialism should be rejected here. And cultural relativism should retire too. At any rate, what is merely cultural has no globalizability and universalizability. To attempt to globalize them—what are merely cultural—is akin to force Chinese rice on the Russians or to force all men in the world to wear skirts as Irish men do—comic, unnecessary, and counterproductive.

Speaking of the possible contribution of Confucianism to contemporary discourse of human rights in the globe, Tu Weiming correctly indicates that the Confucian values of humanity, harmony, piety, loyalty, trust, and self-discipline are compatible with the idea of human rights. He rightly insists: “The potential contribution of in-depth discussion on Asian values to a sophisticated cultural appreciation of the human rights discourse is great … The perceived Confucian preference for duty, harmony, consensus, and network … needs not to be a threat to rights-consciousness at all” (Tu 1998, 299). That said, in mapping the possible significance of Confucian values to the spirit of our time, for example, the universal ideal and norm of human rights, we must distinguish between what is cultural and what is universal. What is cultural cannot, and should not be, be universalized on basis of human reason, as argued above. We should recognize that the values of humanity, harmony, piety, loyalty, trust, and self-discipline are, and can be, Confucian values because they embody what are not
merely Confucian in the first place. For example, the values of humanity, piety, loyalty, trust, self-discipline embody ideas are also emphasized in Christian and many Western cultures. Some Confucian ideas can be universalized because they embody the universal. By this token, those timely ideas embodied in Confucian values can be sifted out and universally appreciated. As for those cultural claims in Confucian values, their possible contribution would not be that they can become the universal, but that they can be constructive participants in the global discourse of human values. Correspondingly, the possible contribution of Confucian values to universal human values lies further in the possibility that the chemistry between them (Confucian values) and other cultural values may generate new universal human values and the possibility that the chemistry between them (Confucian values) and existing universal human values may generate new universal human values. All the same, it remains true that any claims on the possibility to universalize what is merely cultural is akin to claim the possibility to make a rabbit out of an empty hat, a deception and self-deception.

Meanwhile, what is cultural and particular is not a candidate for alternative to the universal, and what is the universal is not a candidate for alternative to the particular. To claim that the universal should be embodied in the particular is one thing. To claim that the particular is an alternative to the universal, or the universal should be replaced by the particular is quite another. For example, Article 7 of “Report of the Regional Meeting for Asia of World Conference on Human Rights”, known as The 1993 Bangkok Declaration, reads, “Stress the universality, objectivity and non-selectivity of all human rights and the need to avoid the application of double standards in the implementation of human rights and its politicization and that no violation of human rights can be justified”. Article 8 also reads, “Recognizing that while human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.” In both articles, the Bangkok Declaration defends the idea of universal human rights, declaring that “no violation of human rights can be justified.” Meanwhile, the Declaration argues that application of the idea of universal human rights in Asia must do justice to the Asian historical, cultural, and regional conditions. So far, so right.

That said, Asian values are not alternatives to the universal value of human rights. To claim that the universal idea of human rights should be integrated into Asian values is not to claim that it should be diminished in front of Asian values. It is to claim that it should be living in Asian values. As the universal, it should dwell in Asian values. In context of its conflict with Asian values, it is that those values that are not compatible to the norm of basic human rights should be discarded, not the universal norm of human rights. Thus, in terms of Asian values, the question about which rights belong in basic human rights is a proper question. So is the question about the extent within which individual rights can be mitigated by collective rights. The question about which Asian context is a legitimate ground for a people or nation-state to resist, even reject, the universal norm of human rights is a wrong question.
By this token, it is incorrect to evoke Asian concepts of value to resist or reject the universal norm of human rights. It is incorrect to claim either that the norm of human rights is not universal or that Asian values have priority over the value of human rights. But claims are invalid and false. The norm of human rights is universally operating norm of our time today and indeed even institutionalized in the UN charters. Equally crucial, the norm of human rights is not merely globalized, but also universalized. That is, the acceptability and universality of the norm and value of human rights is more or less consented by most of people in the world. Even those who evoke Asian values to resist the idea of human rights also pay lip service to the idea. As for arguments such as that of Li GuangYao of Singapore that not everyone signed and believe in what is claimed in the UN 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, they may appear to be plausible, but in effect cannot stand. True, not every nation signed on the UN epoch-making document. But the context in which limited numbers of nations directly participated in making universal claim on human rights does not limit the scope of the claim of human rights itself—that is, the universality of the claim on human rights.

Meanwhile, the claim that Asian values including Confucian values have priority over the universal idea of human rights smuggles in three unjustified assumptions: (1) Asian “values” can be truly values without embodying the universal understanding that recognizes human dignity; (2) there are contexts in which the universal is not applicable; thus, there Asian contexts in which the universal idea of human rights cannot be applied; and (3) the idea of human rights is not a universal idea, but a particular—that is, Western—idea. Assumption (1) is incorrect because no “value” can be value if it is antithetical or opposite of universal value. In this context, no so-called “cultural values” can be truly values if it does not share the understanding that humans have intrinsic worthiness called “human dignity” and therefore are never merely some means to tools to other purpose, but are purposes in themselves. Thus, no matter what particularity one evokes, no injustice from the point of view of universal value—for example, no raping woman—can be a value. Yes, some disvalue may still be practiced in some cultures because of history and tradition. This does not make these disvalues some values or practices of them valuable. A pig does not change into a dragon simply because it lives a long time. Assumption (2) is conceptually self-defeated. Being universal means being applicable in all contexts, though concrete applications of the universal vary from contexts to contexts. Assumption (3) is false, as mentioned above. Henkin draws an interesting comparison between Confucian values and the idea of human rights as exemplified in the United Nations Charter and the UN 1948 Declaration of Human Rights (Henkin 1998, 311-312). The comparison is flawed. It in effect reduces the idea of human rights to merely a cultural idea.

One can argue that some so-called universal values may in effect be merely some cultural values. For example, one may argue that the value of liberty is merely a Western value, not a universal one. This argument can stand in cases wherein some cultural values are proclaimed to be universal values. That said, it still remains true that one cannot claim both that X is universal and that X can be replaced by Y that is a particular. By this token, with regard to some norms that are considered to those
universally operating norms of our times such as global justice and basic human rights, one may argue that these norms are in effect Western and therefore can be resisted by people of other cultures. One cannot claim both that they are universal, and that they can be replaced by particular cultural norms. To claim that we should have what Confucianism dubbed as “quan (flexibility and creativity)” in applying these universal norms to particular contexts is one thing, and to claim that they cannot be applied to given particular contexts is quite another.

All the same, in order to map out properly the possible significance of Confucianism to our time, it is important for us first to recover the view that the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time—that is, those core values of our time—is a relationship between the particular and the universal wherein Confucian values are the particular, and the core values of our time are the universal. It is important for us to remember that this relationship is not one between two particulars, e.g., two set of cultural values, or between two universal. It is also not a relationship between the part and the whole. By this token, the questions which we should ask here are what timely universal we can sift out of Confucian values, and which Confucian embodiment of the timely universal enrich the universal in its embodiment. For example, in discussing the relationship between Confucian values and the universal norm of human rights, we should ask the questions of which Confucian ideas pertaining to human rights can be sifted out of Confucianism, which Confucian values can be compatible to the norm of human rights, and which Confucian embodiment can enrich the multifold embodiments of the norm of human rights.

In sum, any claims that Confucian values are alternatives to those values of the spirit of our time fail to see that Confucian values are particular and those values of the spirit of our time are the universal. The failure in present discourse of Confucianism to appreciate the universality of some Confucian claims—in particular Confucian claims on human dignity, person dignity, and justice in line with humanity—on human values is also due in no small measure to the inability to see the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time to be one between the particular and the universal. Therefore, we here should understand the burden of exploring the relationship between Confucian values and the universal spirit of our time in terms of a two-fold task. First, it is to distinguish between universalizable claims in Confucian values and what Confucian values are globalized. Second, it is to understand how best to embody the universal in Confucian values, not how best to choose between Confucian values and the universal. That is, our task here is not to find an alternative to the universal, but find a proper integration of Confucian values and the universal.

II. Globalization and Universalization

The discussion in the preceding section leads us to the distinction between globalization and universalization, between globalizing Confucian values and universalizing Confucians values. A failure to draw such a distinction between them is the source of some parental problems in the discourse of the relationship between...
Confucian values and the spirit of our time today. Such a distinction is conceptually necessary to define the horizon and normatively important to enhance the vision.

With regard to conceptual issues, some scholars today operate with the assumption that the relationship between Confucian values and such timely ideas as global justice, basic liberty, human rights, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, and crimes against humanity is one between Eastern and Western cultural values. Thus, for example, Henkin draws a distinction between Confucian value and the human rights value as if the value of human rights is merely a Western value. Chen Lai also argues,

So far as values are concerned, we can should acknowledge this. That is, such values as justice, liberty, rights, reason, and personality which the West emphasizes utmost are specially developed by the modern West and recognized to be universal values. Meanwhile, we believe, in comparison to justice, liberty, rights, reason, and personality, there is another set of values—that is, humaneness, equality, duty, compassion and community that are values having universality. These two sets of values are all needed universal human values in the world today (Chen 2014, 221).

Chen Lai’s claim that the above mentioned two sets of values are universal is a justified claim. That said, his underlying concept that the first set of values is Western and the second set is Confucian and Eastern is wrong. One can see Chen Lai’s error by simply asking the rhetoric question: Has Confucian culture not emphasized justice, human dignity, the rule of reason, and person of substance? Are these not values emphasized in the Analects, Mencius, The Great Learning, and the Doctrine of Mean? Have Confucianism not emphasized humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness? Conversely, have Western culture not emphasized humaneness, equality, duty, compassion and community? Which philosophy explores the concept of duty better than Kantian philosophy? In short, the concept that the relationship between these two sets of value is one between Western and Eastern values is wrong. One can see also Henkin’s error by asking a simple question: Have China and other countries whose cultural heritages are Confucian not recognized the norm and value of human rights?

In connection with his misconception of the relationship between Confucian values and those timely ideas of the spirit of our time, Chen Lai puts forth the concept that universality is plural(多元普遍性 duo yuan pu bian xing). The concept has good press among a significant number of scholars in mainland China. According to Chen Lai, philosophy today should devote itself to exploring the possibility of pluralistic universality. He claims, “Is pluralistic universality possible and how is it possible, this should be a topic for philosophical thinking in our age of globalization” (Ibid, 222).

The concept of pluralistic universality is not a plausible one. If by pluralistic universality, Chen Lai means cultural pluralism, Chen Lai does not break any new ground and would not produce any new irritation. But evidentially, Chen Lai’s ambition is far greater than defending cultural pluralism. Like Tu Weiming, Chen Lai is a devoted philosopher who argued for the universality of Confucian values. Unlike Tu Weiming who more or less is willing to live on the idea that the universal must be
embodied in the particular, Chen Lai wants to claim that the particular is a kind of universal; Confucian values themselves are universal. His basic contention is that all cultural values are relative and therefore each is the universal in its own (Ibid. 221-222). The ramifications of the concept of pluralistic universality warrant a detailed examination of it here.

Conceptually, the concept of pluralistic universality is logically self-contradictory. The concept is that the universal has multi-embodiments or what neo-Confucian masters dubbed as “the principle is one, but its embodiments are plural. Instead, the concept is that universality is plural. But universality means identity and singularity. It is not, and cannot be, plural. It makes no sense to talk about pluralistic universality any more than talking about four-corner triangle unless one uses the word “universality” not to mean universality, but in different meaning. Universality and plurality can co-exist only in embodiments—that is, the same universal has plural embodiments. There can be no plurality of universality itself. Chen Lai claims that his concept of pluralistic universality is a structuralist one (Ibid, 262). That is to say, the kind of universality which he emphasizes is structurally plural. His qualification does not help in any ways. What exactly does the qualification mean is not easy to spell out. No matter what, his concept that universality is plural, not singular and identical, is self-contradictory and self-defeated at the outset unless he uses the term universality to mean particularity.

Chen Lai draws his inspiration from the sociologist Roland Robertson’s conception of two-fold process of globalization. According to Robertson, globalization is a two-track process wherein the universal is applied in particulars and what is particular is globalized and thus universalized (Ibid.). Chen Lai insists that instructive as it is, even Robertson’s conception do not do full justice to Eastern values (Ibid.) As he sees it, both Western and Eastern civilizations have universality, and the difference is that the universality of Western civilization is an actualized—understood as globalized—one while the universality of Eastern civilization is yet to be fully actualized—understood as being globalized (Ibid). This is to say, “both Eastern and Western civilizations, as well as their values, inherently have universality” (ibid). Fair to say, the Chinese word “you (有) have” is an ambivalent concept here. It can mean “contain” or “have”. Thus, Chen Lai statement can be read as “Eastern and Western civilizations, as well as their values, inherently contain something universal”—that is, they both have something universal that can be shared by the other. This reading is a safe one. By such reading, Chen Lai’s claim would be promising. However, by this reading, Chen Lai would be claiming that the universal is one, but its embodiments are plural, not that universality is plural. Apparently, this is not what Chen Lai wants. What Chen wants to claim is that Eastern civilization and Western civilization each is the universal in its own and therefore the East and the West each is a center of universality. That is the problem!

Robertson fails to draw a distinction between globalizing and universalizing. But a distinction exists between them. Globalization is a process wherein global acceptance occurs. Universalization is a process wherein universal acceptability is established and informed consent to it is rationally formed. X is globalized when X is
accepted in a global scale. But X is universalized if and only if X is globally acceptable. What is accepted in global scale may not be globally or universally acceptable. There are economic, political exploitations of the weak by the stronger nations precisely something from the stronger nations that may not be globally acceptable but force themselves on weak nations to accept them. As far as values are concerned, that a system of values are globalized means that they are globally accepted, not necessarily that their universal acceptability or their universality is established.

Chen Lai fails to see Robertson’s failure. He also fails to draw the distinction between globalizing and universalizing. Therefore, he mistakes the possibility of globalizing Confucian values as the possibility of universalizing Confucian values (Ibid, 262-263). Indeed, his claim that Western values actualize their universality is a wrong claim that conflates global acceptance and universality. Given practice is the test of a value, Chen Lai may have a point in insisting that acceptance actualizes acceptability. That said, it is incorrect for him to claim that acceptance mean acceptability and thus global acceptance mean universality. What is acceptable will not become a real force of life until it is accepted. It does not follow whatever is accepted has acceptability and universality. Noteworthy, while the concept that globalization is plural is not self-contradictory, the concept that universality is plural is logically self-contradictory. That is to say, globalization can be plural, but universality is not. Equally crucial, the concept of cultural relativity which Chen Lai evokes rejects the concept of universality, not leading to a concept of pluralistic universality.

Noteworthy further, the two neo-Confucian arguments which Chen Lai evokes to argue for his concept of pluralistic universality in effect lead to different conclusions, not the concept that universality is plural. The first neo-Confucian argument which Chen Lai evokes is the neo-Confucian motto, “the principle is one, but its embodiment is multifold” (Ibid, 222). This neo-Confucian motto evidentially says that the universal is one, not plural. Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi’s famous metaphor for the motto, “the moon is one, but its lights are millions”, clearly insists that the universal principle is one and singular, not plural. Another neo-Confucian argument that Chen Lai evokes is the argument that “when the energy is one, the principle is one; when energies are tens of thousands, and then principles are tens of thousands”. This neo-Confucian argument clearly supports the concept of diversity of principles and multiculturalism and can be used to defend multiculturalism. But this argument does not lead to the conclusion that universality is plural. The main point of the argument is that principles of different can be many and diverse. But to argue for diversity of principles is one thing. To argue for the concept that universality is plural is quite another. Evidentially, diverse principles can be merely particular principles.

Chen Lai indeed draws a distinction between what he dubs as “spatial universality” and the universality of the content of thought (Ibid, 234). The distinction does not help either. By spatial universality (空间普遍性 kong jian de pu bian xing), he refers to the spatial scope of spread of thought, in his words, “how big the space on which thoughts are spread” (Ibid). By the universality of the content of thought (思想
内涵的普遍性 si xiang nei han de pu bian xing), he more or less refers to whether the content of a given thought is about universal questions. It is unclear if the distinction is intended to be one between globalization and universality. Also, fair to say, when a given thought is of universal human question, the possibility of its universality is increased. However, concerning about universal human question itself is never a sufficient condition for the universality of a given thought. Say, a claim X is of love, and love is a universal human issue. This fact does not warrant a claim that X has universality. Whether X has universality depends on whether X has truth that is universal, not on whether X is of a universal human question.

Meanwhile, the issue whether a thought is of universal human question should be treated with cares. A universal human question should be that which is universally applicable—that is, universalizable, not necessarily question that has been universally asked or is being universally asked. Thus, for example, the question of woman’s right to abortion may not be much asked in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cultures that are mainly made of Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist heritages, but mainly asked in cultures that have Christian heritage. This does not mean that the question of woman’s right to abortion is not universalizable and thus universal. The question of universal human bond among all human beings is universalizable, though not universally asked.

This returns us back to the Janus face of the universal. As Habermas indicates, the universal have the validity claims that have a Janus face: “As claims, they transcend any local context; at the same time, they have to be raised here and now and be de facto recognized if they are going to bear the agreement of interacting participants that is needed for effective cooperation” (Habermas 1987, 322). That is to say, the universal claim first made by a culture does not make the claim cultural. A source of the errors of Chen Lai and others is their failure to draw such a distinction between being cultural and rising first from a culture. That a claim first rises from a culture does not mean that it is cultural—that is to say, its validity is limited only to such cultural space and time in which it arises. If X from Western culture or Eastern culture is universalized, X is the universal dwelling in Western culture or Eastern culture or is first claimed by Western culture or Eastern culture, not that X is a Western value or Eastern value that is universalized. More crucial, the universalization of values claimed first in Western cultures is not identical to the process of globalization of Western values. Instead, it is a process wherein the universal is sifted out and therefore recognized as the universal.

Chen Lai rightly indicates that both Western and Eastern systems of values contain what are universal. But strictly speaking, it is incorrect for him to claim that “Eastern and Western civilizations and their values in effect both have inherent universality” (Chen 2014, 362). It is more correct to say that both Eastern and Western civilizations and systems of value contain universal claims and embody what are universal. It is more correct to say whether it is first claimed in Eastern civilization or Western civilization, the universal is the same universal. Meanwhile, to say that X embodies something universal, say, Y, is not to claim that X is inherently universal in a strict sense. Thus, to say that Confucian system of values contain a
universal claim on human dignity is not to say that Confucian system of values is inherently universal or has inherent universality. To say that Confucian conception of human dignity has a universal claim on human dignity is also not to say that Confucian conception of human dignity in whole or in totality is inherently universal either.

With regard to Confucian values, I would like to make a strong claim here. I would like to claim that in different forms, some Confucian values have already been globalized because of the rise of modern China and Chinese participations in the global discourse of human values. We can understand their globalization as follows. First, they have a global presence and therefore have a global influence because of China’s global presence—for example, China’s global economic, political presence. Every time when a Chinese institution establishes a branch in another part of the world and introduces a corporal culture that emphasize Confucian values, it is globalizing Confucian values. Every time when China as a standing member of the UN security council or a responsible member of Un casts her vote on international affairs and renders her judgment that is based on Confucian values, Confucian values are further globalized. This global presence of Confucianism is strengthened in the global spread of Chinese cultural institutions too. Here, even if their global influence are limited, there is a distinction between having some, but small global influence and having no, between having and having no global presence. Second, they are accepted—not necessarily endorsed—in the global human community in various forms. For example, they are included as legitimate conversation participants in the global discourse, they are even endorsed and practiced by some in various parts of the world. In short, to a great extent, Confucianism is a more globalized philosophy and way of thinking in the world we live today. The very fact that it is taught and talked in various parts and arenas of the globe, e.g., in universities, communities, public spheres, and political arenas vouches for its global acceptance in different forms. Third, scholarships on Confucianism also spread in a global scale and become global scholarship. Confucianism and Confucian values have become an important subject-matter of global studies and investigations. Fair to say, this does not mean that Confucianism is endorsed global wide. However, it is undeniable that Confucianism is known global wide. Equally crucial, Confucianism is no longer the name for something backward for many in the globe. Instead, it is more and more recognized to be a potential source of insights.

That said, I believe that the task to sift out those universal claims made in Confucian values is still heavy and the road is still long. In front of us are two extreme approaches and attitudes: (1) cultural relativism and cultural postmodernism and (2) cultural imperialism. Cultural relativism is the doctrine that all values are cultural and relative; accordingly, there is no universal human value. Cultural imperialism is that doctrine that one set of cultural values is superior to another set of cultural values, e.g., the view that Western cultural values are superior to eastern cultural values, or the view that Eastern cultural values are superior to Western values. The concept that universality is plural smugles in cultural relativism and cultural post-modernism on the one hand and cultural imperialism—that is, the view that Eastern values are superior to Western values—on the other hand. Thus, the
thesis, “Let the Western be back to the West” and let both Eastern and Western cultures return back to their relative positions, is pregnant with both insights and illusions. It contains insights because it correctly indicates that both Eastern and Western cultures are particulars, not the universal, just as a white horse is not identical to horse, and therefore we should resist cultural imperialism. It contains illusions and danger because it can open the door wide to cultural relativism. Again, the argument that everyone is relative leads to the conclusion of pluralism, not to the concept that universality is plural.

III. The Task to Live up to the Spirit of the Time

Re-examining the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time, we are returned to the most recent reconstruction of values in China. The reconstruction provides us with profound illuminations. In its 18th National Congress, the Communist Party of China puts forth a system of so-called core socialist values consisting in prosperity and being strong (富强), democracy (民主), civility (文明), (social) harmony (和諧), liberty (自由), equality (平等), justice as fairness(公正), the rule of law (法治), patriotism (爱国), professionalism (敬业), trustworthiness (诚信), and kindness (友善). Fair to say, what is proposed is not merely a set of Chinese core socialist values in our time, but also a set of Chinese core cultural values in our time. A few things are noteworthy.

First, in the proposed new set of Chinese core values under the name of core socialist values, some core Confucian values are renovated in line with the spirit of our time into the timely spirit of China. For example, prosperity and being strong, civility, (social) harmony, and justice as fairness, patriotism, professionalism, and kindness are all among core Confucian values. In the proposed 24-word Chinese core values, those mentioned Confucian values are successfully renovated in line with the spirit of our time. This fact not only testifies to the renovatability of Confucian values, but also indicates how Confucian values can continue to live and be an inspiring force of our time. It points out that Confucian values should be renovated to live up to the spirit of our time in order to be part of the spirit of our time. Here, it is not the spirit of our time should be trimmed down to be in harmony with traditional Confucian values. It is that Confucian values must be renovated in order to live up to the spirit of our time.

There are certainly other Confucian values that can be renovated to be part of spirit of our time for China and even for the world and that are not included in the proposed set of core values. For example, the Confucian values of tolerance and toleration, human dignity, personal dignity, humanity, and righteousness in terms of humanity. I claim, and will continue to claim, that Confucian claims on these values are not only universalizable, but also a crucial source of the compatibility between Confucianism in whole and other timely universal values such as human rights, global justice, and crimes against humanity. Noteworthy also, China remains actively being contributive to international tribunals concerning crimes against humanity. This
indicates the profound affinity of the concept of crimes against humanity with Confucian concepts of humanity and righteousness in terms of humanity.

The second thing to be said is that in the new set of Chinese core socialist values, some core values of the spirit of our time have their Chinese translations. Democracy, the rule of law, liberty, and justice as fairness are among those core values of the spirit of our time. Their universality is once again demonstrated in the fact that they are also part of the spirit of our time for China, and can be embodied in particular Chinese forms. Fair to say, Chinese embodiments here still leave much to be desired. For example, it should not only be democracy, but should be constitutional democracy in the new set of Chinese core socialist values. It should not only be the rule of law, but the rule of laws that are democratically, legitimately established. Thus, both the Chinese concepts of democracy and the rule of law can be better in embodying the ideas of democracy and the rule of law of our time. The similar can be said of liberty. It should not only be liberty, but should be basic liberties as basic rights. Still, the timely values of China as proposed are democracy, the rule of law, and liberty, not aristocracy, Monarchy, tyranny, the rule of man or lawlessness, oppression and repression. In other words, what are in Chinese new value systems are part of the spirit of our time.

The third thing to be said is that those renovated traditional Confucian values and those Chinese translated core values of the spirit of our time are successfully combined into a new coherent set of Chinese core socialist values or core cultural values. The successful integration of them proves again the compatibility between Confucianism and the spirit of our time. It also indicates the possibility of further larger scale, and deep integration, for example, traditional Confucian values and the value of basic human rights as part of the operational norm of our time can be integrated. It rejects, at least it gives us an example to reject, any tendency to use the particularity of Confucian values as an excuse to resist the universal. It rejects any tendency to reject Confucian values as a possibly ally to the universal and the timely universal. It indicates clearly the possibility of Chinese embodiment of the universal through an integration of Confucian values and those universal values of our time.

The fourth thing to be said is that the 24-word Chinese core cultural values are compatible to six epoch-defining values of our time: global justice, human rights, constitutional democracy, crimes against humanity, and social toleration. Accordingly, a new system of Chinese cultural values centered on the 24-word core values is compatible to the spirit of our time defined by those six epoch-making values. Admittedly, the 24-word Chinese new core cultural values still leave much to be desired and some of their totalitarian contents should be eliminated and their liberal contents should be expanded. That said, the 24-word Chinese new core cultural values are geared toward to developing a more democratic, law-governed China and Chinese culture wherein liberty, equality, justice, and social cooperation thrive, not toward a China and Chinese culture where oppression, repression, and dictatorship are values and norms.

The fifth thing to be said is that a new system of Chinese cultural values can be enriched and lifted up further by importing those missing core values of our time including human rights, global justice, social toleration, and crimes against humanity.
It can also be enriched by recovering some missing Confucian values including human dignity, personal dignity, and righteousness in terms of humanity that also have universal claims. This amounts to saying that a new system of Chinese cultural values can be enriched by drawing further both from Confucianism and the spirit of our time with an understanding that the spirit of our time is the parameter to which cultural values should be lifted up to. Here, to plant those missing universal human values such as the value of human rights is to embody them in the particular, while recovering those missing Confucian values in line with the spirit of our time is to renovate and reconstruct the particular. Here, the fact that Chinese culture have no X and Y is not a legitimate reason for Chinese culture to resist X and Y. A new system of Chinese cultural values cannot be modern if they do not embody and contain those timely universal human values. Meanwhile, a new system of Chinese cultural values will not utilize utmost its national and cultural heritage and resource unless it makes those truths and insights which its tradition contains continue to live in new light.

The sixth thing to be said is that the assumption of some kind of unbridgeable cultural gaps between Confucian values and the spirit of time is a total wrong assumption. The assumption is based on a false assumption that the relationship between Confucianism and the spirit of our time is one between one set of cultural values and another set of cultural values. But the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time is not a relation between two reasonable particulars. Noteworthy, unbridgeable cultural gaps and incompatibility can exist between two particulars, but not between a reasonable particular and the universal. That is to say, unbridgeable cultural gaps and incompatibility do not exist between Confucian values in whole as a reasonable particular and the spirit of our time as the universal. Noteworthy, the assumption of unbridgeable cultural gaps and cultural incompatibility between Confucian values and the spirit of our time confuses the concept of conflict and incompatibility. But conflict is not incompatibility. Neither does it mean the existence of unbridgeable cultural gaps. Diversity is not identical to incompatibility either. What are in conflict can still be compatible. Indeed, it is not unreasonable for us to see that existence consists in conflicts. For example, Daoism claims that everything is a totality of yin-yang energies and everything exists in a dialectical way of yin-yang conflict. But we certainly cannot assume that in this world, nothing is compatible to anything else.

Craig K. Ihara (2004), David Wong (2004), Chad Hansen (2004), and some scholars often recall the Confucian emphasis on role obligation and community to question about the universality of the idea of human rights in Asian context. Doing so, they commit three flaws. First, the concept of role obligation is not incompatible to the concept of basic human rights and an emphasis on communal good and one’s communal obligation is compatible to an emphasis on individual rights. The minimal thing to say is their arguments—for example, Ihara’s argument—commit the logical fallacy of appealing to the wrong authority. Second, it is untrue that Western ethics that emphasize individual rights do not emphasize public good, communal good, and role obligation. Therefore, their arguments are based on a wrong assumption of a distinction that does not really exist. Third, it is true that Confucianism does not have a concept of human rights. That said, one must also not forget that Confucian ethics
emphasizes first of all a person is, and should live as, a human being, not a tool or thing-like. As mentioned above, Confucian ethics has a rich concept of human dignity and personal dignity. To conceive Confucian values to be an alternative to the value of human rights is to forget that in Confucian ethics, the first value is humanity—the value of being a human.

All the same, the 24-word Chinese core cultural values are illuminating for us to understand the compatibility between Confucian values and the spirit of our time. It leads us to see that globalization of Confucian values today involves a two-fold task: on the one hand, it is to sift out those universalizable universal claims in Confucian values and on the other hand, it is to let Confucian values in whole co-live with other cultural values under the guidance of the spirit of our time. That is to say, one part of the task to globalize Confucian values is to locate those Confucian values and ideas that can be integrated with the spirit of our time and therefore to universalize them in the process of their globalization. To universalize them is to let their validity claims to be universally recognized and therefore their global presence and acceptance is based upon their universal acceptability. Meanwhile, another part of the task to globalize Confucian values is to locate a mechanism of cultural toleration on which those Confucian values that are valuable only in Chinese or other Asian cultural contexts can co-live with other cultural values, e.g., Western cultural values. It is to develop virtues, norms and rules that facilitate cultural toleration and inclusion in the global value discourses.

In such a context, we should distinguish between two kinds of dialogue: (1) dialogues between Confucian values and the spirit of our time and (2) dialogues between Confucian values and other cultural values. In dialogues between Confucian values and the spirit of our time, the fate of Confucian values is determined by one choice: be lifted up to the ideas and values of the spirit of our time or be retired from our life today. Any so-called cultural gaps between Confucian values and the spirit of our time indicate nothing but that Confucian values must be renovated and lifted up or otherwise become history. There can be no excuses of cultural particularity to applications of the spirit of our time in particular cultural contexts. In other words, dialogues between Confucian values and the spirit of our time do not occur between two equal parties, by between the led and the leader. They are essentially dialogues of how best to renovate Confucian values in line with the spirit of our time. They are dialogues with only one direction wherein Confucian values move toward the spirit of our time.

Especially, the ideas of human rights, global justice, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, and cultural toleration are six epoch-making ideas of our time and summarize the essence of the spirit of our time. Dialogues between Confucian values and these six ideas are between tradition and the spirit of our time, as well as between the particular and the universal. In such dialogues, it is Confucian values that must be lifted up to embody the six timely universal claims on human rights, global justice, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, and cultural toleration. Of course, the argument that Confucian values should be lifted up to these six epoch-making ideas is not the argument that people in Asian culture should dogmatically embrace Western interpretation of these ideas.
Instead, people in Confucian cultures should develop their Confucian interpretations of these epoch-making ideas. That said, no excuse of cultural contexts is a legitimate reason to resist these six epoch-making ideas. To find a Confucian expression or interpretation of these epoch-making ideas is not to shun away from these ideas in the name of Confucianism. Any claim of the particularity of Confucianism as the legitimate reason to resist these six timely ideas implies a distortion of the relation between the universal and the particular in understanding.

In dialogues between Confucian values and other cultural values, dialogues are ones among equal systems of cultural values wherein different systems of cultural values engage one another but do not need to change for the sake of other. In such dialogues, the task is to find common ground for co-existence and stable mechanism of cultural toleration, e.g., legal framework or so on and to attempt to generate produce something universal through the chemical interaction of different systems of values. In such a context, conflict is the mother of the new. Conflict is the mother of Hegelian superseding. In such a context, no system of cultural values should claim itself to be the only embodiment of the universal and therefore to be the universal. Instead, we must always bear in mind that a white horse is not horse, as the Daoist master Zhaungzi famously claimed.

That said, multiculturalism need not go hand in hand with cultural relativism or the so-called pluralistic universality. As the neo-Confucian motto indicates: the principle is one, but its embodiments are multifold; that is, the universal is one, but its particular embodiments are diverse. By this token, multiculturalism is better understood as multifold embodiments of the universal. Here, we must reject both cultural imperialism and cultural relativism. We should reject what Hilary Putnam calls metaphysical realism on the one hand, and what Chen Lai dubs as “pluralistic universality” on the other hand. Metaphysical realism is the doctrine that there is, and can be, only one correct system of expression of the universal—that is to say, there is, can be, only one correct embodiment of the universal. The concept “pluralistic universality” is the concept that universality is plural. Both concepts have a wrong view on the relationship between the universal and the particular. Metaphysical realism identifies the universal with one particular embodiment of the universal. The concept of so-called pluralistic universality identifies the universal with diverse embodiments of the universal.

In short, Confucian system of values lives if and only if Confucian values continue to inspire. Confucian values can continue to inspire if and only if they are constantly renovated in line with the spirit of time. If Confucian values cannot live up to the spirit of our time, they will be pushed away from the historical platform.

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present discourse of the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time should be re-tuned. Most importantly, we should reject any claims that Confucian values are the alternative to those timely universal human values of our time. Such claims, as indicated above, presuppose one erroneous concept: Confucian ethics is geared to turn persons into merely thing-like functions in
society, forgetting the most fundamental of Confucianism: human persons are the foundation for everything. Therefore, we should see that only when we continue to renovate Confucian values in line with the spirit of our time, we can make Confucian values a vital force of our time. Some conceptual clarifications are needed here.

First, the relationship between Confucian values and the spirit of our time is one between the particular and the universal. Therefore, the matter at hand is how best Confucian values should be renovated in line with the spirit of our time. More specifically, the question here is how best to lift Confucian values up by the ideas of global justice, human rights, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, and cultural toleration. The possible contribution of Confucian values to global human values will not come from any direction in which Confucian values are conceived as alternatives to the spirit of our time, but only from the direction in which Confucian values not only richly embody the spirit of our time, but also their claims consistent with the spirit of our time are sifted out and universalized.

Second, Confucianism is essentially compatible to the spirit of our time. How best to renovate Confucian values in line with the spirit of our time is a test of our creativity. Historically, Confucianism has been again and again renovated to live up to the spirits of various times. Today, it can, and should, be renovated in line of the spirit of our time.

Third, some Confucian values and norms have been globalized and Confucianism is globalized today. But Confucian values are yet to be universalized. That is, their universal claims are yet to be sifted out and recognized. In particular, while Confucian views on duty, social harmony, and community doubtlessly contain claims that are universalizable, Confucian views on humanity, righteousness in line with humanity, human dignity, personal dignity, self free of the causality of material interests, and toleration are even richer with universal claims in light of the six epoch-making values: global justice, human rights, constitutional democracy, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, and cultural toleration in our time.

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BOOK REVIEWS


We owe Leo Tolstoy gratitude for a profound exploration of humanity in a time of radical transformation. His Anna Karenina is a classic whose thought-provocative presentations of human nature, will, dispositions (such as love, betrayal, infidelity, and jealousy), desires (for power, ranks, sexual intimacy, and possession), alienation in mask and hypocrisy, the institutions of family and marriage in a time of radical change, reforms of society, practices, and humans themselves, as well as beliefs in God, homeland, and in humans themselves still resonate well and profoundly with us today. It is a classic whose insights into humanity were true and profound yesterday, are true and profound today, and will continue to be true and profound tomorrow.

The nineteenth century, like ours, was an age of fundamental, profound social transformation and re-structure, accompanied by radical intellectual, ethical-moral ferment. Humanity, its best and its worst, as embodied in a group of illustrative protagonists Anna A. Karenina (Arkadyevna Karenina), Alexei Kirillovich Vronsky, Konstantin "Kostya" Dmitrievich Levin, Alexei Alexandrovich Karenin, Stephan Arkadyevich Oblonsky, Dolly Oblonskaya, Ekaterina "Kitty" Alexandrovna Shcherbatskaya, Sergei Koznychev, Nikolai Dmitrievich Levin, Betsy Tverskaya, Lidia Ivanova, Sergius Ivanovich Koznychev, and various others, is exposed in the vistas of the past that is distilled, present that is still novel, and future that is in pregnancy. More specifically, humanity is exposed in the background wherein the old Russia is challenged and reformed, and a new Russia dawned at the horizon and Russian economy and social institutions including government, laws, media, army, education, and art were under radical reforms and transformations. It is exposed in human struggle in change, openness, radical uncertainty, and historical embedment.

Tolstoy’s heroine Anna A. Karenina is an embodiment of humanity in cross-road. “In addition to her intelligence, grace, and beauty, she also possesses sincerity.”(p.824) She read new books and was hungry but gifted for knowledge. She searched for herself and true happiness. She lived for love and died for love. Unhappily married and driven by the raging storm of passion for true love, she fell into love with the equally passion-consumed, dashingly handsome Count Vronsky. They started a love affair that eventually ended in Anna’s tragic suicide. They struggled, e.g., eloped to Europe and then returned to live unconventionally together. They resisted pressure from society to give up. However, in the end, they were still overcome by themselves and could not avoid becoming the victims of their time. Anna is glorious, passionate, authentic, and has a generous heart. That said, “like her lover she presumes too much of herself and the life for which she wishes; she does not realize how much she is part of her cultural and economic milieu.”(p.xxii) She was an avant-garde whose thoughts, choices, and actions were not governed by existing rules, but she could not be a total rebel who owed Russian social norms at the time nothing but contempt. She was only a human being who had her limit and made
error. Moreover, unbridled, her passionate nature also became her Achilles’ heel and she was overcome by her own passion. Losing hope of her battle for true love and happiness, she committed suicide. Vronsky is passionate, brave and cunning. He could have known himself better before he decided to be a rebel. He trembled before social pressures, and stumbled before existing social norms and laws. He could not resist the seduction of society. He could not reconcile his desire for his so-called “man’s rights for freedom” and his responsibility for love. In the name of his rights of freedom, he unintentionally drove his lover to despair. His desire to have their situation “normalized”—that is, married legitimately—and their to-be children to be legitimately his children run into a direct conflict with Anna’s “love-only” philosophy. For him, his act was one of a responsible lover. For Anna, it was an indication of the diminishing of love. As a result, he ultimately failed to be the guardian of his lover and their love. It would be unfair to criticize Vronsky as a “shallow man”. He was not. He was a full individual as Anna was. He was daring and brave in love as he would be in war. He was only a human being who audaciously challenged tradition and convention on the one hand and willingly be constrained by society on the other hand. He was only a human being caught between a world that refused to leave its historical platform and a world was in horizon but yet to arrive. Love dared lovers to attempt. But love cannot guarantee lovers good fates. The Karenina-Vronsky love was a tragedy whose fate might not be sealed at the outset, but became inevitable in the course because of human thoughts, choices and actions. Frailty, thy name is human, to paraphrase Shakespeare.

With the Karenina-Vronsky love saga as the central thread, dramas of other protagonists also come into play. Conflicts, contradictions, and even absurdity come along with truths. The simple but liberal-minded Levin’s aspiration and struggle ended with his enlightenment that he was and would continue to be only a human; as a human he lived, worked, reformed, and made errors. He was an unbeliever in God. But when his wife suffered and in danger, “neither his doubts nor the impossibility of believing with his reason—of which he was conscious—at all prevented his appealing to God.”(p.834). Humans, all too human, as Nietzsche would say. The “normal” bureaucrat Karenina struggle to flourish in society amid family-breaking down. He advanced and advances in his ambitions for rank, statues, wealth, powers and so on, but alienated more and more from his self and continued to turn himself into a thing-like being. The Aristocratic Stephan Arkadyevich Oblonsky committed adultery and had a love affair with his children’ governess. He believed that his wife Dolly Oblonskaya ought to forgive him, if not for the sake of their children but at least for a consideration of justice. In his part, he struggled with himself about whether he should go to his wife to ask for forgiveness: “’To go, or not to go?’ he asked himself; and his inner consciousness answered that he ought not to go; that it could only result in hypocrisy; that it was impossible to restore their relations because it was impossible to render her attractive and capable of exciting love, or to turn him into an old man incapable of love. Nothing except hypocrisy and falsehood could now result—and these were repugnant to his nature.”(p.11) Meanwhile, the lights of cultural and historical milieu are continuously on, further dramas of further

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protagonists start following the conclusions of the dramas of some protagonists and during the performances of others, making society and the world as their battlegrounds. One after another, Tolstoy’s protagonists become living philosophers of humanity—its best and its worst—in time and space. Love is the main theme of the novel, but humanity is the subject-matter that organizes the novel in whole. It is humanity in living, in revealing, and in searching that one reads throughout the novel.

Not surprisingly, free thoughts flourished in Russian society during this period as mushrooms thrive after rains. At that time, freethinker needed not be “a man brought up with ideas of religion, law, and morality, who himself, through struggle and pain, had attained freedom of thought.” (p.551). A freethinker could be any person from a man to a woman, from a university professor to a blacksmith, or from a judge, provincial marshal to a farmer. Not surprisingly, Tolstoy’s Anna was, alike various others, a free thinker. She loved Vronsky. But her love did not hold her away from her liberal thoughts on love, marriage, family, woman’s education and various other subject-matters, thoughts that run into sharp conflict with Vronsky’s. Human beings need thoughts as they need air. They need fresh thoughts as they need fresh air. Thoughts and beliefs are powerful. New thoughts defy regulation, tradition, culture, society or the way that things are and have been. They disregard the distinction between right and wrong. They arise. They flourish. They battle their ways into society and culture. And they work in humans or they effect on humans.

What is to live as a human being? Tolstoy raised the question at the outset of the novel as Victor Hugo did in his novels. How one ought to live one’s life? The hedonist Oblonsky fell that in comparison to people in Moscow who merely existed or vegetated, people in Petersburg “lived, really lived.” (p.857). Oblonsky was not a rebel. However, for him, people in Moscow merely existed or vegetated because people in Moscow existed as thing-like beings to whom love retired, happiness was irrelevant. For him, in Moscow, there were cafés, omnibuses and societies, but no really living people. The liberal-minded Levin also found that people in Moscow did not live, but spent and waste time. For him, a life in Moscow life was too empty to be “living”. Once started their rebellion, Anna found that she could not “live” in Moscow while Vronsky could not live happily in country as Anna hoped that he could with the irony that country gave him the freedom he did not appreciate but aspired for the so-called man’s rights of freedom which he could found only in society. Anna could not live in Moscow because her human dignity was insulted and her personhood was insulted. Vronsky could not be living in country because his life did not give him full sense of self-fulfillment. For him, life in country was not exciting enough because he as a man was not fully living as a man. Other human questions are raised too. For example, what is love? What is human feeling? What is the relation between human nature and human feelings? What are rights? Who have rights? What is freedom? What is responsibility? Tolstoy claimed that his heroes and heroines be truths. In effect, they were questions! They embodied questions of humanity of his time and all times.

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Publication of the Confucian Philosophy of Harmony is a significant event in the community of scholars in Chinese studies. Chenyang Li, who is Associate Professor of Philosophy and founding director of the Philosophy program at Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, has brought to us a scholarly work based on more than a decade of his accumulated research in Confucianism in particular and Chinese classic philosophy in general. Scholarly reviews have it that this book makes significant contributions to the studies of classic Confucianism in the Western world. “The ideal of harmony is central to the Confucian tradition, but … not a single book-length manuscript has explored its value in the three thousand year Confucian tradition. Chenyang Li’s book finally fills the gap,” said Daniel Bell. Although research projects on Confucian idea of harmony are not absent in the literature of studies of Confucianism, Li’s book, standing on the top of the literature, offers “the most comprehensive and intriguing scholarly treatment of the concept of harmony in Confucianism,” said Vincent Shen. In the “Foreword” of Li’s book Roger Ames gives the following evaluative comment: “Although the expression ‘harmony’ (he 和) as one of the central terms of art carries enormous philosophical weight in the Confucian tradition, in the Western literature on Chinese philosophy it has frequently been elided with a meaning of harmony not its own. …Chengyang Li has brought more than a decade of his painstaking research on Confucian harmony into monograph form to address this problem and this sense and this history of harmony into focus for us.” All these comments highlight the scholarly contributions that Li’s book makes to the studies of Confucianism and show that this book is of interest to students and scholars of Chinese studies, East Asian studies, and philosophy in general. My reading of Li’s book endorses these comments. And more can be read off behind the words and between lines.

Unlike those armchair philosophers, whose interest, concern and vision do not go beyond the academic perimeters, Li paints a picture of Confucian philosophy of harmony that embraces both theoretical plausibility and practical applicability. This feature is reflected in the general structure of his book which is divided into two parts. Part I, which consists of five chapters, is theoretically focused, clarifying the concept of harmony in Confucianism. Part II consists of another five chapters and describes how the Confucian ideal of harmony applies to various levels of human life. These two parts are strategically structured in such a way that they are both logically consistent and argumentatively coherent, exhibiting the unity of theory and practice as a salient feature of Confucianism. As Roger Ames’ remarks in the Foreword… “he is able to quarry the Confucian tradition and lift out of it ideas that can be applied profitably to address less than productive attitudes in the increasingly complex world in which we live.” Overall, the reader should be convinced that harmony is one of the central themes that run through the social, political, ethical theories of classic Confucianism as well as an ultimate goal that cuts across personal, familial, communal, social, and cosmic levels in a life of the Confucian style.

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For those who are intrigued by the Confucian conception of harmony, especially for those who would like to learn about harmony of the Confucian style in contrast to that of the Western style, reading Li’s interpretations of Confucian canonic texts may be a thought-provoking maneuver that gives rise to controversial issues for future research projects. Throughout his book, Li attempts to convince the reader of two interrelated points formulated on the basis of his interpretation of the Confucian conception of harmony. Both are academically interesting and intellectually stimulating. The first point is that Confucian harmony is harmony with creative tension. This point entails that for Confucians, tensions together with their sources (differences) and consequence (conflicts) are not external conditions which coexist with harmony, nor they are merely necessary conditions that circumstantially prompt demands for harmony, but rather they are intrinsic properties or internal constituents of harmony. One must consider this idea in light of his second point which is that for Confucians, harmony is an ideal to attain rather than a pre-established order to accord. Individuals, families, communities, societies, and the human world are not inherently harmonious. Harmony for Confucians is a dynamic process of balancing and rebalancing diverse forces, aiming at equilibrium at various levels. In this process there are not only tension and possibly conflict but also coordination and cooperation among the involved parties. This process thereby transforms (resolves or dissolves) tensions and creates a harmonious state of existence. According to Li, it is this whole process rather than merely its final state that is what Confucian harmony is really meant to be. Therefore, “harmony with creative tension” must mean that tensions are included in harmony. Li’s book encourages further research projects that require us to quarry Confucian classics and take up the following issues. There is the question of how Confucians would synchronize harmony as tension resolution (or dissolution) and harmony as tension inclusion. There is the matter of how Confucians would reconcile the apparent disagreement between the point that Confucians do not believe in pre-established harmony and the point that “Confucians hold as a fundamental point of faith that the universe is ultimately harmonious” (p. 43). Issues may also arise from our strategic approach to classic Confucianism, especially our approach to drawing implications of its modern relevancy. The terms “dynamic” and “creative” have been fashionable for decades in the studies of Confucianism from Harvard to Hawaii; however, given abundant evidence that indicates that classic Confucianism valued stability and conservation, describing classic Confucianism as dynamic and creative tends to yield torrential elaborations out of meager textual inputs.

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This is a book on discourse. Discourse is understood as the result of an incessant process of collective creation that intellectually structures both the determining of diverse desires for living in an ideal way, often employing imprecise conceptions in accordance with certain values, but not others, and the contingency of unintentional actions benefiting this ideal. The study undertaken here is not, nevertheless, a merely speculative exercise. On the contrary, aware as we are of the historical privilege of witnessing one of the greatest instances of recreating Confucianist thought—actually, the adaption of the alluvial Confucianism that reached the nineteen century to the requirements of our contemporaneity, which we conventionally and rationally call New Confucianism or the ‘third epoch of Confucian Humanism’. Indeed, this is a book whose goal is to analyze the Confucianist discourse specifically, as well as with the hope of making a theoretical contribution to discourse studies in general.

As for the goal mentioned previously, we should point out the genesis of the initial evolution of New Confucianism, as a movement and as discourse, takes us back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Also note that the later development of its thought, faithful to the principle of creativity that defines the Confucianist ontology, have manifested an unequivocal harmony with our times. It is clear, moreover, that New Confucianism has contributed new ideas to the numerous debates, which a poly-connected world has made more complex, by bringing individual forms of thought and culture into contact.

The book explores how Confucian thought, which served as the ideological underpinning of traditional, imperial China, is being developed and refined into a New Confucianism relevant for the twenty-first century.

It traces the development of Confucian thought, examines significant new texts, and shows how New Confucianism relates to various spheres of life, how it informs views on key philosophical issues, and how it affects personal conduct. It argues that New Confucianism, unlike its earlier manifestation, is more accommodating of a plurality of ideologies in the world; and that understanding Confucianism and how it is developing is essential for understanding contemporary China; how Confucianism lies behind the drive, seemingly disconnected from ethics, for economic enrichment, regardless of the social inequality, environmental degradation and other problems which result.

Based on a large amount of the information processed, an overall synopsis is presented of the philosophical and ideological principles of New Confucianism. Likewise, the theory of multipurpose cooperation is set forth, in which the entire study presented in this book is framed; its elements and the dynamic charted by these elements. This general theory of discourse construction explains the necessary complexity of prognoses – on the social and political transitions in China, for instance

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– when they must inevitably include the influence of a creative discourse as the New Confucianist is.

In line with the dual goal of approaching discourse both in general and specific terms, this study will unfold: (1) within a theoretical framework that has taken shape and cohered as we analyze the New Confucianist discourse, which we call multipurpose cooperation—the dynamic of which is explained, by way of conclusion, in Chapter 5–(2) and following a methodology made up of four approaches, each of which responds to a differentiated dynamic (see Chapter 1–4), inspired by the very etymology of the word discourse, that is ‘running to and fro’ but ‘in logical sequence’.

Framed by the theoretical and methodological design, the analysis of the construction of New Confucianist discourse is based on the theoretical assumption that discourses are dynamic concretions which we can identify, with varying analytical effort, within discursive space configured by the discourses themselves within which they interact. In other words, discourses are singularizations constantly being refined which, by virtue of the association of ideological elements with different degrees of affinity, occur within complex, heterogeneous and permeable structures called discursive spaces. The ideological elements that are made up of these spaces differ much in origin, and not all come to form integral parts of discourse. Many of them are conjectural and will have difficulty finding a possibility of integrating themselves through affinity into any lasting discourse. The dynamic and characteristics mentioned previously of discourses and ideological elements bring about the fact that discursive spaces are endowed with a highly flexible intellectual perimeter, and are permanently conditioned and modified; especially through the processes of construction and evolution of the discourses.

Thus, the discourse construction is based on the contemporary intellectual context of Confucianism, on the discursive spaces of New Confucianism, on the major contributions to it, and on a text of reference as A Manifesto for Chinese Culture is.

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