

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 successfully 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 provides 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 in 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 study the region from an interconnected global-contextualist perspective, exploring global and local issues such as social change, economic development, ethnic and cultural identity, and

¹See Angle, Stephen, and Slote, Michael. 2013. *Virtue Ethics and Confucianism*. Routledge.

multilingualism.² 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.³

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

²See <http://www.hss.ntu.edu.sg/Research/Clusters/GlobalAsia/Pages/GlobalAsia.aspx>.

³See Chuang, Szu-Fang. 2010. “Confucianization through Globalization: Evidence from the US,” *Journal of Chinese Human Resource Management*.

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. Muhlhahn 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.⁴ 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."⁵

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

⁴See Muhlhahn, Klaus, and van Looy, Nathalie (ed.). 2012. *The Globalization of Confucius and Confucianism*. LIT Verlag.

⁵Paris Nishan Forum. 2012. "Confucianism and New Humanism in a Globalized World". <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/BSP/images/UNESCO-Nisan%20Forum%20-%20Summary%20hdo%20amendsdoc.pdf>.

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..."⁶

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

⁶ Melvin, Shelia. "Modern Gloss on China's Golden Age." 3 September 2007. www.nytimes.com. Feb 2013

under Heaven, the quality of life of a particular society depends on the level of self-cultivation of its members.⁷ 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.⁸ 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

⁷See Tu, Weiming. 1998. “An alternative vision of modernity: From a Confucian perspective.” *Harvard China Review, Magazine Online*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1 (1).

⁸See Kim, Young-oak and Kim, Jung-kyu. 2013. *The Great Equal Society: Confucianism, China and the 21st Century*. World Scientific Publishing Company.

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

⁹See Bell, Daniel A., 2010. *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*. Princeton University Press.

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 guidable 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 ascendancy 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

¹⁰ See Lew, Seok-Choon. 2013. *The Korean Economic Developmental Path: Confucian Tradition*, Palgrave Macmillan.

III. Confucian Studies Based on Asian-Americanism

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 21 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.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.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

¹¹ See Chang, Gordon. 2002. *Asian Americans and Politics: Perspectives, Experiences, Prospects*. Stanford University Press.

¹² See L. Mar. 2012. "Feminism, Family, and Confucianism in Asian America." <http://crg.berkeley.edu/content/feminism-family-and-confucianism-asian-america>.

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

¹³See Lin, Yu-long. 2012. *An Immigrant's Journey to the West: Confucianism & Americanism*. University of Indianapolis Press.

¹⁴See Liu, Eric. 2014. *A Chinaman's Chance: One Family's Journey and the Chinese American Dream*. Public Affairs.

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

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-Europeanists. 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 ethical views, all of them acknowledge that “there many different forms of 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’ (*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.” 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 modern understanding of words. 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, pre-eminently, 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-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. 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.¹⁶ 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

¹⁶ See Berthrong, John H. 2004. “Boston Confucianism: The Third Wave of Global Confucianism” In Liu Shu-Hsien, John Berthrong, Leonard Swidler, Eds., *Confucianism in Dialogue Today: West, Christianity & Judaism*. Philadelphia: Ecumenical Press.

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 misconceptualized, 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 value 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.

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