

# Introduction

## *Confucianism for the Contemporary World*

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We all know that China's economy has grown rapidly since the early 1980s. Over three decades, China has become "the factory of the world," producing manufactured goods ranging from cellular phones and solar panels to T-shirts and sneakers. Today, this spectacular growth is creating millions of nouveaux riches in the country—men and women who are eager to show off their wealth by purchasing high-end luxury goods from international brands such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton.

Nevertheless, we often forget that, concomitant with this "economic miracle," a "cultural miracle" has unfolded. Condemned as a relic of feudalism for more than half a century, Confucianism suddenly enjoyed a robust revival during the 1980s and 1990s, as post-Mao China was gradually integrated into the global economy.<sup>1</sup> Not so long ago, when cultural iconoclasm was at its height during the May Fourth Movement (1915–1923) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Confucianism was blamed for everything that had gone wrong in the country—elitism, foreign defeats, imperial autocracy, local separatism, patriarchy, xenophobia, and so on.<sup>2</sup> In the ten years from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, however, the image of Confucianism changed completely. It became a theory of modernization that supported economic development, individual growth, and social progress.

During this revival, a particular form of Confucian thought—combining the moral cultivation of Lu Xiangshan (1139–1192) and Wang Yang-ming (1472–1529) with a creative interpretation of Kantian and Hegelian philosophies—gained widespread attention. Known as "contemporary New Confucianism" (*xiandai xinrujia* or *xiandai xinruxue*), this Confucian

school of thought was said to have contributed to economic success in Japan and the Four Mini Dragons (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) in the postwar period. It was also considered to be a strategy for modernizing China that would preserve the country's cultural heritage on the one hand and enable the country to catch up with advanced nations on the other.

This Confucian school of thought—first started in overseas Chinese communities in Hong Kong and Taiwan during the 1950s and 1960s—quickly took root in China, creating what some scholars call “mainland Confucianism.”<sup>3</sup> Responding to economic disparity and social injustice in post-Mao China, mainland Confucians challenged the party-state system and introduced the notions of “the division of power,” “civil society,” and “public realm” to the expanding Chinese middle class.<sup>4</sup> Recently, we see indications that grassroots organizations have begun to adopt Confucian terminology to demand social justice and better services in local communities.<sup>5</sup> Whether the “Confucian torch” has been successfully passed to the masses is unclear, but it is fair to say that Confucianism (or more precisely, Confucian ethics) is no longer monopolized by cultural elites. It has become a school of thought that speaks to the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, and the powerful and the powerless when facing the challenges of a rapidly growing economy.

### The Openness of the 1980s and 1990s

Over the years, experts have offered numerous reasons for this Confucian revival. In the mid-1990s, Arif Dirlik and Jing Wang were the first Western scholars bringing attention to this Confucian revival and linking it to global capitalism.<sup>6</sup> In the early 2000s, Gloria Davis examined the Confucian revival through the lens of the social changes in post-Mao China.<sup>7</sup> In recent years, insightful studies have been published about key figures, such as Xiong Shili (1885–1968) and Mou Zongsan (1909–1995), who built the philosophical foundations for New Confucianism—a school of thought that inspired the Confucian revival in China during the 1980s and 1990s. To highlight the contributions of these thinkers, John Makeham, Umberto Bresciani, and Ming-huei Lee trace their roots to earlier attempts at reviving Confucianism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> By demonstrating a link to previous Confucian revivals, these scholars show that New Confucianism (and by extension, the recent Confucian revival on the mainland) is part of a long-standing “conservative movement” in modern China that opposes “total westernization,” unbridled consumption, and excessive industrializa-

tion. For Serina Chan and Sébastien Billioud, however, New Confucianism is not only aimed at the Chinese, but also at anyone in the world who is interested in the balanced development of humanity.<sup>9</sup> To prove their point, they pay special attention to “A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture,” issued in 1958 by four New Confucian thinkers: Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi (1909–1978), Xu Fuguan (1903–1982), and Zhang Junmai (1886–1969).<sup>10</sup> In the manifesto, they argue, the four authors spelled out their goal of transforming Confucianism into a critique of the Western mode of thinking, particularly the notions of empiricism, linear progression, materialism, and scientism.<sup>11</sup>

However stimulating intellectually, this philosophical explanation does not clarify why New Confucianism—once a peripheral intellectual current among a small group of overseas Chinese thinkers—quickly gained popularity in mainland China during the 1980s and 1990s. The New Confucian thinkers were, after all, exile scholars who left the mainland for Hong Kong and Taiwan in the context of the 1949 Communist Revolution. In their adopted lands, they did not receive strong support for reinterpreting Confucianism. This was particularly true in Hong Kong, which, as a British colony, was an entrepôt privileging English-speaking businessmen rather than scholars of Chinese classical learning.<sup>12</sup> More important, as exile scholars, the New Confucian thinkers did not have strong ties to the mainland to start a cultural revival. Faced with the “capitalism versus communism” bipolarity of the Cold War, they were preoccupied with opposing communism. As a result, their writings, however insightful and inspiring, had to be reformulated within a new framework in order to reach mainland readers of the post–Cold War period.<sup>13</sup>

For these reasons, scholars (such as John Makeham and Song Xianlin) correctly focus attention on what was happening on the mainland during the 1980s and 1990s when discussing contemporary Confucian revival.<sup>14</sup> They point to, for example, the atmosphere of skepticism—particularly about communism and Maoism—that led Chinese intellectuals to be open to new ideas, new thinking, and new learning.<sup>15</sup> This openness, they argue, gave rise to the “culture craze” (*wenhua re*) in the mid-1980s and the “national learning craze” (*guoxue re*) in the early 1990s, both of which were essential to the appeal of New Confucianism.<sup>16</sup> Today, in their writings, well-known “mainland Confucians” (such as Jing Haifeng) still fondly recall the openness of the 1980s and 1990s as the impetus for their turn to New Confucianism.<sup>17</sup> Clearly the interest in New Confucianism during the 1980s and 1990s was due more to the perception that it provided answers to many of China’s problems of modernization than to the claim that it captured the essence of Confucius’s thought.

## Global and Local Factors

The sociocultural explanation for the rise of New Confucianism is broader in scope, but does not account for the concrete steps by which New Confucianism was transformed into a theory of modernization that supported the economic reforms in mainland China. If indeed the rise of New Confucianism occurred during China's transition from making socialist revolution to joining neoliberal global capitalism, which actors and factors made this transformation possible? What were the crucial events that turned an erstwhile esoteric philosophy into a theory of East Asian capitalism?

On this question, Arif Dirlik offers the most convincing argument. In the lengthy article "Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism," Dirlik highlights two interlocking events. The first event was a change in the structure of global capitalism: after the 1973 oil crisis, East Asia (especially Japan) rose rapidly at the expense of Europe and the United States.<sup>18</sup> Mixing a market economy with aggressive state intervention, the "East Asian development model" (a term sociologist Peter Berger coined) appeared to provide an alternative to capitalism and socialism. Sometimes referred to as "the third way," the East Asian development model was unique in achieving capitalistic modernity based on a reinvention of Confucian culture, such as transforming the traditional concept of filial piety into a family-based work ethic for modern capitalistic enterprise.<sup>19</sup> In the 1980s and 1990s, when China was transitioning from socialist revolution to global capitalism, the East Asian development model was attractive to Chinese intellectuals because it promised both capitalistic productivity and a reinvention of Chinese heritage.

The second event was Tu Wei-ming's 1985 visit to China and the subsequent academic exchanges between Chinese and U.S. scholars studying East Asian capitalism. Known to some as "the American Confucius," Tu Wei-ming (in pinyin, Du Weiming) repackaged New Confucianism by incorporating elements of Weberian sociology and process theology.<sup>20</sup> Expanding a point Mou Zongsan made, he argued that over centuries Confucianism had gone through three major transformations: (1) the codification of Confucian cosmology, epistemology, and ethics during the classical period; (2) the reformulation of Confucianism to respond to Indian Buddhism during the late imperial period; and (3) the restructuring of Confucianism to meet the challenge of the West during the modern period.<sup>21</sup> These "three epochs," Tu explained, not only demonstrated the breadth and depth of Confucianism, but also highlighted the creativity of Confucian thinkers in encountering the pressing issues of their times.

For Tu, the challenge of contemporary Confucian thinkers in the “third epoch” (*di san qi*) was to solve the problems of the modern metropolis such as alienation, atomization, bureaucratization, commodification, and excessive rationalization. He claimed that in the third epoch Confucianism must first show its relevance to the modern world by making an impact on cities such as London, New York, Paris, and Tokyo before returning to its homeland, China.<sup>22</sup> In many ways, Tu’s argument was based on his experience as an advisor to the Singapore government in the early 1980s. Partly to explain Singapore’s economic success and partly to justify teaching “Confucian values” in the school system of the city-state, Tu highlighted “the triad chord” that linked Confucian ethics to the success of East Asian economy from the perspective of Max Weber’s sociology.<sup>23</sup>

Although Dirlik acknowledges Tu’s contribution to the transformation of New Confucianism into a theory of modernization, he blames him for being uncritical of capitalism. For all that Tu’s writings offer new approaches to social policy, Dirlik argues, “what has been untouched by, and in fact benefited from, the Confucian ‘challenge,’ is capitalism itself.”<sup>24</sup> And yet, in retrospect, Tu’s role is far more important than Dirlik admits. First and foremost, Tu’s contribution lies in linking two separate discourses: the discourse of “the East Asian development model” among economists and sociologists in the United States and the discourse of “New Confucianism” among a small group of scholars in overseas Chinese communities. And the bridge between these two discourses was Max Weber’s *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Drawing from the former discourse, Tu used Weber’s text to highlight the uniqueness of “East Asian capitalism,” which, he claimed, successfully developed the spirit of capitalism based on Confucian ethics.<sup>25</sup> Drawing from the latter discourse, Tu used Weber’s text to show how certain Confucian concepts (e.g., *ren*, humanity, and *li*, rituals) could help people develop “inner sagehood” amid the hustle and bustle of the modern city.<sup>26</sup> Even though it was not exactly Herbert Marcuse’s critique of industrial society from the perspective of “one dimensional man,” Tu’s interpretation of Confucian ethics registered problems of urban life while attempting to bring fluidity, creativity, and hope to modern existence.

Thus, by “Weberizing Confucianism,” Tu presented a compelling argument that the Chinese could develop an East Asian form of capitalism that would allow them to build an advanced economy on the one hand and remain culturally Chinese on the other. Although lacking a clear explanation of how Confucianism would develop capitalism, Tu’s argument fit the general atmosphere of the 1980s and 1990s, when the Chinese government was promoting “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Certainly Tu had

no interest in building socialism in China, but his argument resonated with Chinese readers who wanted to break down the “capitalism versus socialism” dichotomy of the Cold War and were eager to revive some forms of Chinese tradition to boost their national identity.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to Tu’s 1985 lecture tour, we should note that state-sponsored studies also helped spread New Confucianism around China. For ten years from 1986 to 1995, through generous grants from the Department of Education of the Chinese government, many conferences were held to discuss New Confucianism, and many collected works of New Confucian thinkers (particularly Mou Zongsan, Tang Junyi, and Xu Fuguan) were printed and distributed. While some scholars questioned the motives behind these concerted efforts to introduce New Confucianism,<sup>28</sup> these government-sponsored activities were clearly instrumental in spreading Confucianism across China. By the early 1990s, there were self-proclaimed “mainland Confucians” (such as Luo Yijun) whom the state had formerly employed to study New Confucianism and found themselves sympathetic to it. Later, as the number of “mainland Confucians” grew, the leaders of the “New Confucian research project”—such as Fang Keli—faced fierce criticism for spreading subversive learning within China.<sup>29</sup>

As China becomes more affluent and diverse after the turn of the millennium, the Confucian revival adopts a variety of forms. Although one can still trace its roots to New Confucianism of the 1980s and 1990s, the recent Confucian revival reaches many sectors of Chinese society and touches the lives of millions of people across the country. The Confucian revival becomes, as mentioned earlier, a platform for critiquing the party-state and pressing the government to provide more local services.<sup>30</sup> It has been transformed into self-help advice to manage fears and anxiety in a fast-growing economy, as seen in Yu Dan’s popular television programs from 2006 to 2007.<sup>31</sup> It has also become part of the propaganda campaign of the Chinese government to promote “harmonious society” and Chinese nationalist identity.<sup>32</sup> More recently, various groups that identify themselves as Confucian have appeared across China to address issues ranging from political rights and social justice to environmental protection and early child education.<sup>33</sup> Theorists of world politics also apply Confucian concepts to international issues, envisioning a new global order in which the major players are no longer nation-states.<sup>34</sup> In sum, contemporary Confucian revival has become a broad cultural phenomenon responding to the economic, existential, political, and social issues of the twenty-first century.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, despite its strong impact on Chinese politics and society, the contemporary Confucian revival is still understood in the West primarily as a philosophical movement with a strong emphasis on moral metaphysics.

Major publications continue to portray contemporary Confucian revival as an intellectual enterprise confined to scholars in the academy. While this ivory-tower image of contemporary Confucian revival is built on decades of Western publications promoting East Asian civilization, clearly a glaring discrepancy exists between contemporary Confucianism in China and its representation in the West.

### New Confucianism as a Modernization Theory

Based on the papers presented at the “Beyond the New Confucianism” April 2012 conference held at the University at Buffalo, this volume examines the contemporary Confucian revival as a potent force in shaping politics and society in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese communities. Consisting of twelve chapters, an introduction, and an epilogue, it links the contemporary Confucian revival to debates—both within and outside China—on global capitalism, East Asian modernity, political reforms, civil society, and human alienation. Thematically divided into three sections, it offers a fresh view of the contemporary Confucian revival as a broad cultural phenomenon consisting of an interpretation of Confucian moral teaching, a theory of political action, a vision of social justice, and a perspective for a new global order.

Part I focuses on New Confucianism (*xin rujia*) as a theory of modernization. The section begins with Tze-ki Hon’s chapter “Global Capitalism with Chinese Characteristics: Fang Keli’s New Confucian Research Project (1986–1995),” which provides an account of the transformation of New Confucianism from a moral metaphysics into a social theory. In the chapter, Hon argues that the 10-year New Confucian research project played a crucial role in “Weberizing” New Confucianism, and therefore provides a framework linking the philosophical discourse of overseas Chinese to the broader question of East Asian capitalism. Certainly, as critics point out, the research project was strong in popularizing the writings of New Confucians and weak in analyzing their thoughts. Nevertheless, Hon contends that the research project was significant in bringing Confucianism back to mainland China after a thirty-year absence under Mao. More importantly, the research project paved the way for applying Confucianism (particularly Confucian ethics) in resolving political, social, and existential problems caused by China’s fast-growing economy.

If “Weberization” was indeed the key to transforming New Confucianism from a philosophy into a social theory, different interpretations of Weber’s work invigorated Chinese intellectuals as they pondered the

relationship between Confucianism and capitalism. In her chapter “Confucianism, Community, Capitalism: Chen Lai and the Spirit of Max Weber,” Els van Dongen draws attention to two opposing views of Weberian sociology. In an approach known as the “Weberian thesis,” some scholars focus on Weber’s argument in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* that the Protestant ethic contributed to the rise of capitalism. The other approach, known as the “Weberian critique,” focuses on Weber’s *Economy and Society*, in which he stressed the negative consequences of modernization-as-rationalization, described as the “iron cage of modernity.” To Chinese scholars (particularly Chen Lai), the tension between the two views did not seem problematic. In fact, Chinese scholars understood New Confucianism as both a *sociopolitical* argument for economic development in the post-Cold War world and a *moral* project to create a fiduciary community in response to the alienation and fragmentation of modern society. Like many intellectuals in developing countries, Chinese scholars were eager to find a way to develop the economy and to avoid excessive rationalization and bureaucratization.

After being transformed into a theory of modernization, New Confucianism has been applied to concrete political problems. The next two chapters in part I are examples of using Confucian concepts to envision a new political order nationally and internationally. In both chapters, the authors go beyond what is conventionally considered as New Confucianism, namely, the moral teachings of Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming and the intellectual genealogy that stretches from Xiong Shili to Mou Zongsan. For instance, in “Realizing *Tianxia*: Traditional Values and China’s Foreign Policy,” Daniel A. Bell explains how some Chinese thinkers envision a new global order based on the Confucian concept *tianxia* (all-under-heaven). For these Chinese thinkers, Bell argues, *tianxia* encapsulates a vision of global order that does not involve a world government that has ethical and political priority over national states. Rather, a transnational global order will be established by being cognizant of the “obligations that we owe to people living outside the territorial boundaries of our states, even though they are not as intense as the obligations we owe to fellow citizens.” Bell further argues that, although the ideal of *tianxia* would have to be modified somewhat to fit the political reality of the twenty-first century, he sees a “Confucian-inspired foreign policy” as being both realistic and humane, especially in three areas: a hierarchical world order, political meritocracy, and social harmony.

Similarly, in “Confucianism to Save the World,” Tongdong Bai employs Confucian concepts to envision a pluralistic political order. Adopting an argument shared by many mainland Confucians, Bai considers Confucianism more a political philosophy than a moral metaphysics. In Bai’s



words, “not only is Confucianism chiefly a political philosophy, but it is a modern political philosophy.” This political interpretation of Confucianism allows Bai to achieve two goals. First, he emphasizes the similarity between the so-called Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods (when Classical Confucianism emerged) and the multipolar international environment that we see today. This similarity, he contends, makes Confucianism an inspiring political philosophy because it balances multiplicity with unity, agency with structure. Second, he can imagine a Confucian government that would, like many Western democratic governments, support freedom of speech, the rule of law, and civil liberties. While Bai’s argument in this part may seem controversial to some readers, we need to remember that he is proposing an alternative form of governance substantially different from the party-state system of the People’s Republic of China. Like other mainland Confucians (such as Jiang Qing),<sup>36</sup> he is suggesting a new political structure that may one day be accepted in China as well as in the rest of the world.

### The Moral Foundation of Contemporary Democratic Institutions

While part 1 focuses on the contemporary Confucian revival as a cultural force of modernization, part 2 examines the moral dimension of the revival by focusing on two thinkers: Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi.<sup>37</sup> This turn to morality, however, is not just to affirm the moral roots of the Confucian revival, particularly the moral metaphysics of New Confucianism. It is also to clarify the role of Confucian ethics in the pluralistic society of the twenty-first century. Collectively the six chapters in part 2 demonstrate that the contemporary Confucian revival is a result of and a response to rapid sociopolitical changes in Chinese communities across the Taiwan Strait. The chapters show that through creative interpretation of its core ideas, Confucianism can be a vital force for a diverse and pluralistic society of the twenty-first century.

This creative use of Confucianism for contemporary life is particularly clear in Ming-huei Lee’s chapter, “Building Democracy: The Theory and Practice of Contemporary New Confucianism.” A philosopher trained in Germany, Lee begins his chapter with an explanation of the subtlety of Mou Zongsan’s moral metaphysics, particularly his seemingly opaque concept “the self-negation of moral consciousness” (*liangzhi zhi ziwo kanxian*). Then he shows why Mou emphasizes the development of “the inner sage” as the precondition for “the outer king.” By giving preference to the moral mind over political institutions, Lee points out, Mou highlights the importance

of recovering moral sensitivity to counter the individualism, materialism, and pragmatism of contemporary society. His observation of recent Taiwan politics leads Lee to conclude that Mou's moral metaphysics is even more relevant today because it stresses the need for training clear-headed citizens to make political decisions based on moral intuition rather than utilitarian goals.

Similarly, in his chapter "Self-Restriction and Progressive Confucianism," Stephen C. Angle expands on Mou Zongsan's moral metaphysics. Like Ming-huei Lee, Angle focuses on Mou's concept of "the self-negation of moral consciousness," but, unlike Lee, he is interested in Mou's thought on the *indirect* relationship between morality and politics. By keeping morality and politics separate but connected, Angle argues, Mou provides a new model for political participation that can be described as "Progressive Confucianism." In this new model, Angle envisions the possibility of political engagement where "politics emerges out of the ethical activity of individuals as they merge together in political life, and a certain kind of political structure is ultimately needed as the indirect means to more complete ethical practice." In this manner, Angle asserts, "Progressive Confucianism" not only will provide a basis for pluralistic governance in China, but it will also make important contributions to political theory in democratic societies around the world.

An-wu Lin's chapter, "Confucianism and Civil Society: The New Meanings of 'Inner Sage' and 'Outer King,'" reinforces some of the themes covered in Angle's article. For two decades since the 1995 death of Mou Zongsan, Lin has fought a battle in Taiwan to replace "New Confucianism" with "Post-New Confucianism" (*hou xinrujia*). As part of Post-New Confucianism, as Lin conceived, New Confucian thinkers will turn their attention from developing personal morality to developing "civil society" through the cultivation of what Jürgen Habermas calls "communicative acts" in the public sphere. Calling his version of New Confucianism a "Civil Confucianism" (*gongmin ruxue*), Lin, like Angle, hopes to establish a dynamic relationship between morality and politics while keeping the two spheres separate. As such, Lin is determined to create a new image of Confucianism by focusing on "the modern proclivity for privacy and individual rights."

In "A Mission Impossible? Mou Zongsan's Attempt to Rebuild Morality in the Modern Age," Ke Sheng reflects on the role of New Confucianism in the twenty-first century. Unlike the previous three authors, Sheng does not believe that the New Confucian thinkers are capable of resolving "the modern predicament." Citing Scottish philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre, Sheng defines the modern predicament as the universal problem of establishing moral values in a thoroughly secular and materialistic world. Employing this definition, Sheng finds New Confucianism ill-equipped to solve the

modern predicament because it is basically an invention of modern times. In addition, Sheng also finds that New Confucianism lacks the flexibility to adapt to different circumstances even though it makes universal claims of relevance to all people in the world. In the end, Sheng concludes, even Mou Zongsan (the most original thinker among the New Confucians) could not find a solution; hence the title of the article: a mission impossible.

For readers who want to see Confucianism play an active role in the twenty-first century, Sheng's article may come as a surprise. It is particularly intriguing, coming after three articles that demonstrate the possibilities of building a pluralistic society based on a creative interpretation of the New Confucian moral metaphysics. At the same time, Sheng's pessimism is a healthy reminder that the reinvention of Confucianism in the twenty-first century is by no means an easy task.<sup>38</sup> As Sheng points out, the main obstacle to a Confucian revival is not the Confucian moral values, but the changed world. In a world driven by competition, consumption, and material gains, convincing people—particularly the poor and the disenfranchised—to patiently develop their “inner sagehood” so that they may one day become “outer kings” is difficult.

### New Understanding of Tang Junyi

As shown in the first four chapters in part 2, Mou Zongsan is the key thinker behind the development of New Confucian moral metaphysics. Consequently, current literature on New Confucianism often focuses on him, as if he is the New Confucian thinker par excellence. By contrast, Tang Junyi is less familiar to Western readers, even though he was a contemporary of Mou and one of the authors of the 1958 Manifesto. This imbalance is unfortunate because in his lifetime Tang was better known than Mou due to his esteemed position as a top administrator at New Asia College in Hong Kong. In addition, his charismatic personality and moral passion won him numerous followers, many of whom are still promoting his version of Confucianism to high school and college students in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

To redress this imbalance, part 2 includes two chapters on Tang Junyi. In “The Challenge of Totalitarianism: Lessons from Tang Junyi's Political Philosophy,” Thomas Fröhlich discusses Tang's struggle with totalitarianism.<sup>39</sup> Based on a close reading of Tang's writings, Fröhlich identifies an inner tension in Tang's political view: his unbounded optimism for political modernization on the one hand, and his acute sensitivity to the danger of totalitarianism on the other. Fröhlich finds out that throughout his active

life as a scholar, Tang was unable to resolve this inner tension, although the crimes against humanity unleashed by totalitarian regimes were increasingly clear to Tang, particularly from reports on the Holocaust and the political campaigns in mainland China. This inability to conceptualize (let alone resolve) the inner tension, Fröhlich argues, shows a bigger problem of New Confucian thinkers, namely, their reluctance to come to grips with barbarism and dehumanization in modern society.<sup>40</sup> Fröhlich's observation also reminds us of the misreading of Weber's works that Els van Dongen discusses in her chapter in part 1. From Tang Junyi to Chen Lai, Chinese thinkers have been consistently missing Weber's grim diagnosis of modern society. They embrace the Weberian thesis because it supports their optimism about modernization, but they are not interested in the Weberian critique because they do not see the danger of "the iron cage of rationality" destroying humankind and human civilization.

In "A Critique of Colonialism and Capitalism: Tang Junyi's Views on Plurality and Openness," Hok Yin Chan offers a different view of Tang, focusing on the political environment of colonial Hong Kong that provoked Tang to develop his Confucian humanism. Chan argues that, although it was often criticized for being broad and uncritical, Tang's Confucian humanism was actually a critique of colonialism and capitalism. More importantly, his promotion of the Confucian Five Relationships (especially the relationship between friend and friend) was aimed at ameliorating the alienation and fragmentation of modern society. From Tang's critique of colonialism and capitalism, Chan draws a stern lesson. He finds that the problems that Tang confronted in the 1950s and 1960s (such as social injustice and alienation) are the same ones that we are facing today in neoliberal global capitalism. Certainly it is comforting to know that Tang's writings are still relevant to this day; at the same time, it is disturbing to learn that the world has not made much progress in improving the human condition in the last five decades.

Taking seriously the complicated history of Confucian revivals of the twentieth century, the six chapters in part 2 seek to offer a broad and inclusive understanding of a multifaceted cultural movement that has recently become an important cultural, political, and social force in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. By presenting different images of Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi as political actors and thinkers, the six chapters demonstrate that Confucianism of the twenty-first century is capable of addressing a wide range of issues, such as alienation in a big city, commodification in a market economy, the concentration of power by the state, and social injustice in monopolistic capitalism.

## Confucius as a Commodity and a Cultural Icon

As mentioned earlier, although started with an interest in New Confucianism in the 1980s and 1990s, recently contemporary Confucianism has been driven by its broad appeal to different sectors of Chinese society. In part 3, two chapters examine the wide variety of ways that Confucianism is presented in contemporary China. To begin the discussion, Marc Andre Matten compares two forms of ancestral worship in “Worshipping Ancestors in Modern China: Confucius and the Yellow Emperor as Icons of Chinese Identity.” Through a comparison of the rituals that have grown up around the Yellow Emperor and Confucius since the late nineteenth century, Matten argues that the two have been closely linked to the construction of Chinese national identity, even though the concept behind the two forms of worship is quintessentially Confucian (i.e., filial piety). Despite the vicissitude in the rituals due to politics, Matten points out, cultural iconoclasm does not appear to have had a lasting negative effect on them. Even at the height of cultural iconoclasm—notably the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution—worship of Yellow Emperor and Confucius continued as long as political leaders saw the value in mobilizing the Chinese citizens. In this sense, Matten argues, modern China has experienced no rise or fall in Confucianism. The Confucian concept of filial piety, directed at these important cultural forefathers, has continuously served the cause of nation-building.

In “The Chinese Media’s Campaign for Confucianism: Motivations, Implications, and Problems,” Junhao Hong, Miao Liu, and Wen Huang give us a detailed study of how Confucianism is portrayed in mass media in contemporary China. Focusing on the culture industry (particularly movies, television, newspapers, magazines, and the Internet), the three authors compare the ways that Confucianism is disseminated as a cultural product, both to consume as a commodity and to exchange as a currency.<sup>41</sup> Revealingly, this study shows that the dissemination of Confucianism as a cultural product is facilitated by both the market and the state. For the former, the goal of the dissemination is for profit; for the latter, the goal is for domestic security and international recognition. Despite their different goals, the entrepreneurs and the government have plenty of reasons to continue to promote Confucianism as a cultural icon.

Together these two chapters highlight obstacles and shortcomings when one looks at Confucianism today. According to the two authors, contemporary Confucianism has been highly susceptible to political use. Whether it is for building a national identity or for improving the country’s

image abroad, Confucianism (and Confucius particularly) is often deployed as a tool to achieve a political goal. This susceptibility for political use is significant, especially if we take into account the long history of Confucianism serving as a ruling ideology during the imperial period. How can we distinguish radical Confucianism (or Angle's "Progressive Confucianism") from state Confucianism? Where do we draw the line between the government's promotion of Confucianism as a culture and the government's cooptation of Confucianism as a measure of thought control? These are indeed difficult questions to answer.

### Confucianism of the Twenty-First Century

In the epilogue, "Beyond New Confucianism: Expanding the Contemporary *Rudao*," John H. Berthrong concludes this volume by reflecting on the history of Confucian revivals since the beginning of the twentieth century. As a "Boston Confucian" who participated in intense debates with Tu Wei-ming and Robert Neville during the 1980s and 1990s, Berthrong brings an insider's perspective to Confucian revivals as cultural phenomena in China and the United States. In his account, he explains the complex process by which contemporary Confucianism becomes a transnational cultural movement that stretches across the Pacific Ocean. In this unfolding of Confucianism that began in mainland China in the early twentieth century, spread overseas in the midcentury, and then returned to China at the end of the century, Berthrong sees an expansion of the contemporary *Rudao* (the Confucian Way) in which communities, big and small, are joined for the same purpose of building a better world based on an understanding of Confucian teachings. What makes this contemporary *Rudao* fascinating is its diversity. Different groups of people may look at Confucian teachings differently: some stress the political vision; some emphasize the social agenda; some focus on the moral philosophy. And yet, Berthrong sees a common thread among these groups that, in one way or another, are looking for ways to improve the human condition and turning to the Confucian canon for guidance.

In short, Berthrong demonstrates that contemporary Confucianism is able to address issues and questions of the twenty-first century because of its creativity, openness, and, above all, its acute sensitivity to human suffering and all forms of injustice. Contrary to the idea that Confucianism becomes a "lost soul"—an irreparable disconnection between Confucianism as a system of thought and a contemporary Chinese society no longer founded on an agrarian, kinship-based, and gentry-led structure,<sup>42</sup> Ber-

throng argues that the many forms of contemporary Confucianism are not only relevant to the pluralistic society of the twenty-first century, but also capable of transforming the world into a better place. As such, Berthrong reiterates the main theme of this volume: both within and outside China, New Confucianism is, and continues to be, a major force of change in the twenty-first century.

### Notes

1. For a stimulating account of this “cultural miracle,” see Kenneth J. Hammond and Jeffrey L. Richey, “The Death and Resurrection of Confucianism, in *The Sage Returns: Confucian Revival in Contemporary China*, edited by Kenneth J. Hammond and Jeffrey L. Richey (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015), 1–9.

2. Much has been written about the May Fourth Movement and the Cultural Revolution. For the May Fourth Movement, see esp. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960); Lin Yü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Anti-Traditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979); and Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). For the Cultural Revolution, see William Joseph, Christine P. W. Wong, and David Zweig, eds., *New Perspectives on the Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, 1991); Elizabeth J. Perry and Liu Xin, *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997); and Joseph W. Esherick, Paul G. Pickowicz, and Andrew G. Walder, eds., *The Chinese Cultural Revolution as History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

3. I thank Ming-huei Lee for pointing out the difference between New Confucianism of overseas Chinese community and “mainland Confucianism” that has emerged since the 1990s.

4. For the political and social background of the spread of New Confucianism in mainland China, see Song Xianlin, “Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China: The “Culture Craze” and New Confucianism,” in John Makeham, ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 81–104. For the political ramifications of this Confucian revival, see Daniel A. Bell, *China’s New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 3–18.

5. See Sébastien Billioud, “Carrying the Confucian Torch to the Masses: The Challenge of Structuring the Confucian Revival in the People’s Republic of China,” *Oriens Extremus* 49 (2010): 201–224.

6. See Arif Dirlik, “Confucianism in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism and the Reinvention of Confucianism,” *Boundary* 2, 22, no. 3 (Fall 1995): 229–273; Jing Wang, *High Culture Fever: Politics, Aesthetics, and Ideology in Deng’s China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 64–71.

7. See, e.g., Gloria Davis, ed., *Voicing Concerns: Contemporary Chinese Critical Inquiry* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), esp. 123–134.

8. See John Makeham, ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); John Makeham, *Lost Soul: “Confucianism” in Contemporary Chinese Academic Discourse* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008); Umberto Bresciani, *Reinventing Confucianism: The New Confucian Movement* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies, 2001); Ming-huei Lee, *Der Konfuzianismus im modernen China* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2001).

9. See N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), and Sébastien Billioud, *Thinking through Confucian Modernity: A Study of Mou Zongsan’s Moral Metaphysics* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

10. The 1958 Manifesto is also known as the 1958 Declaration. For a translation of the Manifesto see Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957–1962), vol. 2, 455–483. In the epilogue of this volume, John Berthrong discusses the background and interpersonal relationships of the authors of the Manifesto.

11. For the significance of the 1958 Manifesto, see N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, 260–279.

12. For a discussion of the cultural milieu of colonial Hong Kong, see chap. 10 by Hok Yin Chan herein.

13. To his death, Mou Zongsan was adamantly anti-Communist. For an account of one of Mou’s stormy encounters with mainland scholars, see Fang Keli, “Xiandai xinruxue de yishi xingtai tezheng” 现代新儒学的意识形态特征 [The characteristics of the New Confucian ideology], in *Xiandai xinruxue yu Zhongguo xiandaihua* 现代新儒学与中国现代化 [Contemporary New Confucianism and Chinese modernization], edited by Fang Keli (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997), 210–222.

14. See John Makeham’s introduction to *Lost Soul* and Song Xianlin’s article “Reconstructing the Confucian Ideal in 1980s China” in *Lost Soul*.

15. One way to appreciate the openness and creativity that prevailed during the 1980s and 1990s is to read Li Zehou’s 李泽厚 writings. In the late 1970s, his essays exposed the misuse of history under the Gang of Four, thereby setting the tone for an intellectual liberation; see *Zhongguo jindai sixiang shi* 中国近代思想史 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1979). In the mid-1980s, he reexamined the intellectual history of modern China, thereby encouraging readers to look for new ideas and new perspectives; see *Zou wo ziji de lu* 走我自己的路 (Beijing: Sanlian, 1986) and *Zhongguo xiandai sixiang shilun* 中国现代思想史论 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1987). In the early 1990s, after relocating to the United States, Li continued to influence Chinese readers by asking them to “bid farewell to revolution”; see *Gaobie geming* 告别革命 (Hong Kong: Tiandi, 1995).

16. For the openness of the 1980s and 1990s, see Gan Yang 甘阳, ed., *Bashi niandai wenhua yishi* 八十年代文化意识 [The Cultural Consciousness of the 1980s] (Shanghai: Shijie chubanshe, 2006). See also Xu Jilin 许纪霖 and Luo Gang 罗



岗, *Qimeng de ziwo waji: 1990 niandai yilai Zhongguo sixiang wenhua jie zhongda lunzheng yanjiu* 启蒙的自我瓦解: 1990 年代以来中国思想文化界重大论争研究 [The self-dissolution of Enlightenment: Studies of the major intellectual and cultural debates since the 1990s] (Jilin: Jilin chuban jituan, 1997), esp. 1–36. For specific examples of how the openness helped to inspire a Confucian revival, see the memoirs of those who participated in the “culture craze” and the “national learning craze” in Liang Tao 梁涛 and Gu Jianing 顾家宁, eds., *Guoxue wenti zhengming ji (1990–2010)* 国学问题争鸣集 (1990–2010) [A collection of polemical writings on national learning, 1990–2010] (Guilin: Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe, 1990), esp. 3–9, 24–27, 35–44.

17. Jing Haifeng 景海峰 is explicit about the impact of the cultural milieu of the 1980s and 1990s on his study of New Confucianism. See his *Xinruxue yu ershishiji Zhongguo sixiang* 新儒学与二十世纪中国思想 [Contemporary New Confucianism and Twentieth-Century Chinese thought] (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 2005), 315–317.

18. Dirlik, “Confucianism in the Borderlands,” 236–247.

19. For the original argument of Peter Berger, see Peter L. Berger and Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, eds., *In Search of an East Asian Development Model* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988), 3–11.

20. Dirlik, “Confucianism in the Borderlands,” 254–268.

21. For Tu Wei-ming’s full argument about the three epochs and the significance of the third epoch, see Tu Wei-ming 杜维明, “Rujia disanqi fazhan de qianjing wenti” 儒家第三期发展的前景问题 [The question of the development prospect of the Third Epoch of Confucianism], in *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua: Du Weiming xinruxue lunshu jiyao* 儒家传统的现代转化: 杜维明新儒学论著辑要 [The modern transformation of Confucian tradition: A collection of writings on New Confucianism by Tu Wei-ming], edited by Yue Hua 岳华 and Guan Dong 关东 (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1992), 234–277.

22. Tu does not talk explicitly about this “global tour” of New Confucianism. But Yue Hua and Guan Dong emphasize the “global tour” in their editorial preface, or “bianxu” 编序. See “bianxu” in *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua*, esp. 14.

23. See Tu Wei-ming, ed., *The Triadic Cord: Confucian Ethics, Industrial East Asia and Max Weber* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1991), esp. 3–56.

24. Dirlik, “Confucius in the Borderlands,” 267.

25. See Tu Wei-ming 杜维明, “Cong shijie sichao de jige cemian kan ruxue yanjiu de xin dongxiang” 从世界思潮的几个侧面看儒学研究的新动向 [Looking at new development in New Confucianism from the perspective of several currents of world thought], in *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua*, 303–329.

26. Tu Wei-ming 杜维明, “Rujia lunli yu dongya qiye jingshen” 儒家伦理与东亚企业精神 [The Confucian ethic and the East Asian entrepreneurial spirit], in *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua*, 329–360.

27. For the influence of Tu Wei-ming on Chinese philosophers, see chap. 2 by Els van Dongen herein.

28. Some Taiwan scholars have suggested that the massive New Confucianism research project was part of the Chinese Communist Party's efforts to "unify" Taiwan. See Fang Keli, "Xiandai xinrujia de yishi xingtai tezheng."

29. For an analysis of the contributions and limitations of the "New Confucian research project," see my chapter herein.

30. See Kenneth J. Hammond, "The Return of the Repressed: The New Left and 'Left' Confucianism in Contemporary China," in *The Sages Return*, 93–111.

31. See Anthony DeBlasi, "Selling Confucius: The Negotiated Return of Tradition in Post-Socialist China," in *The Sages Return*, 67–92. For a glimpse of how Yu Dan interprets Confucianism, see her English-language publication *Confucius from the Heart: Ancient Wisdom for Today's World* (New York: Atria Book, 2006).

32. See Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, 3–56. See also chap. 12 by Junhao Hong, Miao Liu, and Wen Huang herein.

33. See reports of these grassroots organizations in Sébastien Billioud, "Carrying the Confucian Torch to the Masses." See also the discussion of Confucian religious activities in Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, *Le Sage et le peuple: Le renouveau confucéen en Chine* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2014) and the broad range of social issues discussed online in Jeffrey L. Richey, "Chat Room Confucianism: Online Discourse and Popular Morality in China," in *The Sage Returns*, 113–125.

34. For Chinese debates about the new global order, see chap. 3 by Daniel A. Bell herein.

35. For studies of the wide range of circumstances in which Confucianism (broadly defined) is invoked in contemporary China, see Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, "Confucianism, 'Cultural Tradition,' and Official Discourse in China at the Start of the Century," *Chinese Perspectives* 3 (2007): 50–65; Sébastien Billioud and Joël Thoraval, "Jianhua: The Confucian Revival as an Educative Project," *Chinese Perspectives* 7 (2007): 4–20; Anna Sun, *Confucianism as a World Religion*, esp. chaps. 7–9.

36. In the last few years, thanks to Daniel A. Bell's summaries and translations, Jiang Qing's political views are available in English. See Daniel A. Bell, *China's New Confucianism*, 175–191; Jiang Qing, *A Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Past Can Shape Its Political Future*, translated by Edwund Ryden, edited by Daniel A. Bell and Ruiping Fan (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013).

37. Part 2 would be more complete if I could include articles about Xu Fuguan and Zhang Junmai, the other two authors of the 1958 Manifesto. Unfortunately, over the three years when this volume was prepared, I was unable to find scholars interested in contributing chapters on Xu and Zhang. For those interested in Xu as a political thinker, Aihe Wang's *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), esp. 1–22, offers a glimpse of his critique of authoritarianism. For those interested in Zhang as a transnational scholar, please read Joseph Ciaudo, "Questioning Sinodicy: An Inquiry into Zhang Junmai's Cultural Discourse (1919–1937)" (PhD diss., 2016, College de France).

38. A similar view is found in the chapters by Thomas Fröhlich, Hok Yin Chan, Marc Andre Matten, and Junhao Hong herein.

39. For another study of Tang Junyi's philosophy, see Thomas A. Metzger, *A Cloud across the Pacific: Essays on the Clash between Chinese and Western Political Theories Today* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2005), 185–290.

40. Thomas A. Metzger and Zhang Hao 张灏 have also pointed out the absence of critical reflection on modernity among Chinese thinkers. For Metzger, the absence is due to the Chinese propensity toward “epistemological optimism.” See Thomas A. Metzger, *A Cloud across the Pacific*, 1–184. For Zhang Hao, the absence is due to the lack of an awareness of human evil. See Zhang Hao, *Youan yishi yu minzhu chuantong* 幽暗意识与民主传统 [Consciousness of darkness and the democratic tradition] (Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 2006), esp. 23–43.

41. Recently, detailed studies have been written about Confucianism as a cultural icon and a commodity. See, for instance, articles by Robert L. Morre and Julia K. Murray in *The Sage Returns*, 129–194; Lionel M. Jensen, “Culture Industry, Power, and the Spectacle of China’s “Confucius Institutes,” in *China in and beyond the Headlines*, edited by Timothy B. Weston and Lionel M. Jensen (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 271–299.

42. Yu Ying-shih coined the term “lost soul” (*you hun* 游魂). For Yu, any attempt to revive Confucianism is doomed to failure because of the immense gulf between thought and social reality. See Yu, *Xiandai ruxue de huigu yu zhanwang* 现代儒学的回顾与展望 [Contemporary Confucianism: Retrospect and prospect] (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2004), esp. 53–58, 263–270. John Makeham reiterates Yu's view in his introduction to *Lost Soul*. Some mainland Chinese scholars also support Yu's and Makeham's views. See Fang Chaohui 方朝晖, *Xuetong de mishi yu zaiyao: Rujia yu dangdai Zhongguo xuetong yanjiu* 学统的迷失于再造: 儒家与当代中国学统研究 [The loss and reconstruction of intellectual paradigms: Studies of Confucianism and contemporary intellectual paradigms] (Xi'an: Shaanxi shifan daxue, 2010), esp. 9–29.