Introduction

"Rethinking China" (*chongsi Zhongguo* 重思中國): An Asymmetry in Cultural Comparisons

The contemporary Chinese philosopher Zhao Tingyang 趙汀陽, keenly aware of the persistent and pernicious asymmetry in the way we often compare Chinese and Western cultures, has exhorted both Chinese and Western scholars alike to "rethink China" (*chongsi Zhongguo* 重思中國).[1] Emblematic of this asymmetry in cultural comparisons is the question: Who is reading whom? If we go into a Chinese bookstore or explore the collections on the shelves of a good Chinese university library, we find that most avatars of Western culture—old and new, as well as across the disciplines—are readily available in increasingly high-quality translations. Most everything, including the writings of those of us trying to provide our comparative perspectives on the Chinese philosophical tradition, are there in these burgeoning collections. And most significantly, it is the committed readership of young and eager Chinese intellectuals that provides the continuing impetus for this publishing phenomenon.

But upon entering American or European bookstores—or our university libraries—we find that the works of China's best thinkers over the past few centuries, late and soon, are almost totally absent. And what is most disconcerting about this asymmetry is that there is little if any pressure from Western intellectuals to address it. That is, in our world there is a dearth of interest, eager or otherwise, in translations of modern Chinese thinkers reflecting on their own philosophy and culture.

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1. Zhao Tingyang 趙汀陽, 天下體系: 世界制度哲學導論 [The *Tianxia* system: An introduction to the philosophy of world institution] (Beijing: Peoples' University Press, 2011), 1.

Kwong-loi Shun has made much of how this cultural asymmetry has shaped the way in which comparisons continue to be framed in the scholarship on Chinese and Western philosophical traditions:

> There is a trend in comparative studies to approach Chinese thought from a Western philosophical perspective, by reference to frameworks, concepts, or issues found in Western philosophical discussions.[2]

This troubling asymmetrical assumption of a Western teacher culture overshadowing the Chinese student culture has its history. On the Western side, well-intended Christian missionaries bent on saving China's soul introduced this ancient world into the Western academy by appealing to the vocabulary of their universal faith, ascribing to Confucian culture most of the accouterments of an Abrahamic religion. Early on, traditional Chinese philosophical texts were translated into English and other European languages by missionaries who used a Christian vocabulary to transform these canonical texts wholesale into the liturgy of a second-rate Christianity. James Legge (1815–1897), the great Scottish translator of the Chinese classics on whose broad shoulders twentieth-century Sinology has been built, was a missionary in the field. Legge appealed self-consciously to the theology of Joseph Butler (1692–1752) in the vocabulary he selected as equivalencies for Chinese terms and in his interpretation of the tradition more broadly. In translating *tian* 天 as "Heaven," *dao* 道 as "the Way," *yi* 義 as "righteousness," *li* 禮 as "ritual," *ren* 仁 as "benevolence," and so on, Legge's Confucianism became increasingly familiar to his Christian audience. In his interpretation of Mencius, for example, he wondered aloud about why Mencius did not just use "God" instead of the ambiguous term *tian* and concluded that Mencius's understanding of a benevolent human nature was almost precisely the same as that of anti-Hobbesian theologian Joseph Butler in his *Sermons on Human Nature*.[3]

Thus when we return to those same European and American bookstores and libraries to find translations of the canonical Chinese philoso-

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2. Kwong-loi Shun, "Studying Confucian and Comparative Ethics: Methodological Reflections," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 36, no. 3 (September 2009): 470.

3. *The Chinese Classics*, trans. James Legge (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Press, 1960), 2:448, note 1. For an account of Legge's journey, see also Norman J. Giradot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

phy texts initially translated by Legge, such as the *Analects of Confucius* (*Lunyu*), the *Mencius*, the *Daodejing*, the *Zhuangzi*, and so on, we find that these same titles are catalogued and shelved under the curious rubric of "Eastern Religions" but not found in the more respectable philosophy section. And when we venture into the highest seats of learning in these Western countries, we find that Chinese philosophy is being taught, if at all, in our religion and Asian studies departments rather than within the discipline of philosophy itself. We must also remember that "philosophy," far from being a neutral term, has gravitas and is reserved as an acknowledgment of respect for the quality of human thinking at its best. Historians certainly call themselves "historians" and sociologists "sociologists." But only the most accomplished or self-important of those who "*do* philosophy" or "*teach* philosophy" will have the temerity to make the bold announcement, "I am a philosopher." As a consequence of this cultural reductionism, Confucian philosophy has been literally "converted" into a pseudo-Christianity that at best can only ape the original. From a Western point of view, Confucianism is thus a tradition perceived uncritically as lacking our philosophical bona fides while also being derivative of our own religious sensibilities. Hence, Confucianism can quite comfortably be conceptualized within our Western framework without fear of substantial loss.

The self-understanding that professional philosophy is an Anglo-European narrative with the continuing exclusion of non-Western philosophical traditions is changing slowly in our own time, but it still continues to be challenged within the corridors of professional philosophy. Comparative colleagues Jay Garfield and Bryan Van Norden published a delightfully provocative piece in the *New York Times* (May 11, 2016) suggesting that our departments of philosophy can certainly continue to ignore non-Western philosophical traditions and philosophical diversity generally—and with no troublesome consequences. But in the interests of truth in advertising, these two comparativists recommend that such departments have the courtesy to rename themselves the departments of European and American Philosophy. Excerpting from their op-ed piece entitled "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is," Garfield and Van Norden observe that

> the vast majority of philosophy departments in the United States offer courses only on philosophy derived from Europe and the English-speaking world. . . . Given the importance of non-European traditions in both the history of world

philosophy and in the contemporary world, and given the increasing numbers of students in our colleges and universities from non-European backgrounds, this is astonishing. . . . The present situation is hard to justify morally, politically, epistemically or as good educational and research training practice. . . . We therefore suggest that any department that regularly offers courses only on Western philosophy should rename itself 'Department of European and American Philosophy.' This simple change would make the domain and mission of these departments clear, and would signal their true intellectual commitments to students and colleagues.[4]

John E. Drabinski quickly posted a response to Garfield and Van Norden. He certainly embraces their motivation in this call for a "rectification of names" but wants to further refine their argument. Indeed, he insists that these same philosophy programs are better off acknowledging that they are, in fact, departments of white European and white American philosophy. If Drabinski himself is going to offer courses on "black existentialism" as a corrective, those who teach just "existentialism" ought to acknowledge the pernicious invisibility of "white" in the course title when they are being taught to our increasingly diverse student bodies. Indeed, Drabinski argues that the contemporary philosophical canon is precisely that—*a* particular canon that reproduces *a* particular history and more worrisome, *a* particular way of thinking and living that perpetuates the violence of ignoring:

What happens in those canonical texts is more than just pursuits of truth and the like. They are also texts that reproduce base ideological forms—or revolutionize them—that are key to reproducing certain kinds of societies. In the case of white Western societies, this means slaving, conquering, and subjugating societies. This is why Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, etc. all had theories of race, nation, genesis of human

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4. Jay Garfield and Bryan W. Van Norden, "If Philosophy Won't Diversify, Let's Call It What It Really Is," New York Times, May 11, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/11/opinion/if-philosophy-wont-diversify-lets-call-it-what-it-really-is.html.

difference, and justifications for all sorts of slavery, conquest, and domination.[5]

And the avalanche of posts responding to Garfield and Van Norden keep coming in, with feminist philosophy also having its say, suggesting that these contemporary philosophy departments acknowledge one more marginalization (if not exclusion) by calling themselves "Departments of Male, White European and White American Philosophy."[6]

If we are going to continue to change professional philosophy and make it a more inclusive discipline, we must acknowledge the exclusions and the distortions as well. One problem, simply put, is the extent to which in both the contemporary Western and Chinese philosophical literature we have in referencing the Chinese philosophical tradition relentlessly theorized it according to Western philosophical assumptions. We have also tended to tailor Chinese concepts to fit inappropriate categories and conceptual structures. We ponder with some philosophical nuance: "Is Mohist utilitarianism an agent-neutral or an agent-relative utilitarianism?" But it would not occur to us to ask whether John Stuart Mill is a latter-day Mohist philosopher. Again, we are now engaged in a continuing debate on whether Confucian virtue ethics is an Aristotelian aretaic ethic or a Hume-inspired sentimentalist ethic. But it would not occur to us to ask if the ethical insights of Aristotle and Hume are, in substance, an ancient and an early modern kind of European Confucianism, respectively.

But this theorizing of China in terms that are not its own is not simply the *déformation professionnelle* of Western philosophers; it has its Chinese history as well. As Shun in describing the cultural asymmetry continues:

> This trend is seen not only in works published in the English language, but also in those published in Chinese. Conversely, in the contemporary literature, we rarely find attempts to approach Western philosophical thought by reference to

5. John A. Drabinski, Diversity, 'Neutrality,' Philosophy (website), accessed May 11, 2016, http://jdrabinski.com/2016/05/11/diversity-neutrality-philosophy/.

6. For links to a variety of responses, see http://pages.vassar.edu/epistemologically-wise/2016/05/16/the-debate-over-the-garfield-van-norden-essay-in-the-stone/.

> frameworks, concepts, or issues found in Chinese philosophical discussions.[7]

Shun is arguing here that the cultural asymmetry we find in the Western literature on Chinese philosophy is just as marked and egregious when we turn to Chinese-language publications. As Shun has observed, this entrenched asymmetry is as true of contemporary East Asian intellectuals as it is of their Western counterparts. East Asian scholars certainly continue to speak and write in their own vernacular languages, but these languages have been significantly transformed by their encounter with the conceptual structure of a dominating Western modernity. The most astute of our comparative philosophers have been aware of this problem for some time. In articulating the most fundamental problems of translation between these traditions, Cambridge University rhetorician I. A. Richards, for example, observes that trying to understand China on its own terms has "a practical urgency as well as a theoretic interest." Writing in 1932, Richards goes on to worry that

> before long there will be nobody studying Mencius into whose mind philosophical and other ideas and methods of Western origin have not made their way. Western notions are penetrating steadily into Chinese, and the Chinese scholar of the near future will not be intellectually much nearer Mencius than any Western pupil of Aristotle and Kant.[8]

How has this asymmetrical situation come about in East Asia? In the middle and late nineteenth century, the institutional apparatus of Western education was transplanted wholesale to reconfigure East Asian education to its very core. The institutions of European and American education—the public school systems through to the universities with their disciplinary taxonomies and curricula—were imported across the board into the East Asian cultures of Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam. The Meiji Japanese reformers and then the Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese intellectuals—at once enamored of and overwhelmed by Western modernity—created their own Sinitic equivalencies drawn largely from traditional Chinese literary resources to appropriate and give voice to the

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7. Shun, "Studying Confucian and Comparative Ethics," 470.

8. I. A. Richards, *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932), 9.

conceptual and theoretical language of the imported Western academic culture. The vocabulary of modernity with its liberating Enlightenment ideas was translated into and transformed fundamentally the vernacular languages of East Asia, prompting these cultures to theorize their own traditions through a largely Western conceptual structure.

Columbia professor Lydia H. Liu 劉禾 has discussed in considerable detail not only the complexity and the politics of this process of synchronizing the East Asian languages with the vocabulary of Western modernity but also the role of Chinese literary tradition as a resource for constructing this vocabulary. In thinking through the impact of this newly emerging conceptual structure as it surfaced and reconfigured the discourse of modern Chinese academic literature, Liu herself probes the "*discursive construct of the Chinese modern.*" "I am fascinated," says Liu,

> by what has happened to the modern Chinese language, especially the written form, since its early exposure to English, modern Japanese, and other foreign languages. . . . The true object of my theoretical interest is the *legitimation of the "modern" and the "West"* in Chinese literary discourse as well as the *ambivalence of Chinese agency* in these mediated processes of legitimation.[9]

Pointedly alluding to Foucault's concern over the definitive role that authority and power relations play, Liu cites Talal Asad who, in offering an appropriate critique of British imperialism, tells the story of a continuing process of self-colonization in our Asian sources. This Asian deference to European knowledge production has immediate relevance to the problem rehearsed here, which is the persisting asymmetry that attends cultural translation more broadly:

> To put it crudely, because the languages of the Third World societies—including of course, the societies that social anthropologists have traditionally studied—are "weaker" in relation to Western languages (and today, especially to English), they are more likely to submit to forcible transformation in the translation process than the other way around. The reason

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9. Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity—China, 1900–1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), xvi–xviii.

for this is, first, that in their political-economic relations with Third World countries, Western nations have the greater ability to manipulate the latter. And, second, Western languages produce and deploy *desired* knowledge more readily than Third World languages do.[10]

The reductionistic theorizing of China as it has been perpetuated, first through the lens of Christianity and then via the conceptual structures of Western modernity, has been further aggravated by the condescending rhetoric of the powerful and influential philosopher G. W. F. Hegel. For Hegel, the beginning of philosophy in history requires the political freedom for the human will to aspire to the universal. But as we all know so well, opines Hegel, the Oriental character, with its passive spirit immersed in nature and substance, is able to think only in bare particularities. Hegel, in his *Philosophy of History* (and other works), describes China in the most deprecating terms as a primitive culture wholly without *Geist*—that is, without any capacity for internally induced change or confirmation of what is universally right. To Hegel, such a timid spirit does not own the freedom of consciousness necessary for thought to think itself and thus has no role in the historical evolution of philosophy and no place in philosophy's universal and singular system.[11] Hegel's "impact-response" interpretation of a passive, indolent China has dominated the "best" of Western interpretive sources since the nineteenth century. Led by the distinguished Harvard historian John Fairbank in his own time, the language of impact-response became the orthodox and pervasive reading of Chinese history as recently as the 1980s.[12]

This asymmetry in cultural comparisons is the consequence of what has been a double-barreled erasure of Chinese philosophy broadly: first

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10. Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 3.

11. Wu Xiao-ming, "Philosophy, *Philosophia*, and *Zhe-xue*," *Philosophy East and West* 48, no. 3 (1998): 406–452, esp. 411–419.

12. See the "impact-response" critique of Fairbank by one of his most prominent students, Paul A. Cohen, in *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984). In fairness to Fairbank, in his later works he gradually distanced himself from this Hegelian interpretation. For a broad account of the evolving interpretation of Chinese history, see David Martinez-Robles, "The Western Representation of Modern China: Orientalism, Culturalism and Historiographical Criticism," *Digithum* 10 (2008), accessed August 22, 2017, http://www.uoc.edu/digithum/10/dt/eng/martinez.pdf.

from without, and then from within. In the Western academy, Chinese philosophy has become a remote and exotic version of an Abrahamic worldview called "Eastern religion" that at least from a Hegelian perspective does not rise to the status of philosophy. And again, with the complicity of the Chinese academy that has itself defined philosophy in Western terms, Chinese "philosophy" can only be legitimate to the extent that it meets the Western criteria of what constitutes philosophy as a professional discipline. This situation has meant that contemporary Western intellectuals—many of whom are inclined to regard their own religious traditions as obsolete, dogmatic, and of little contemporary relevance—have come to see the secular West as the teacher culture and China as having little or nothing to offer a changing world cultural order. And in the wake of their own history of educational self-colonization, contemporary intellectuals in East Asia, evincing little interest in the antiquarianism of their own cultural traditions, are largely inclined to embrace modern liberalism with the good and useful knowledge it continues to produce.

The consequence of this history of cultural reductionism is that the value of the word "Confucianism" in the West, when understood at all, evokes the values of a potted ideology transmitted through unchanging canons, rote learning, patriarchy, hierarchy, footbinding, and other forms of misogyny—a tradition that properly belongs to the past. The Anglo-American process philosopher A. N. Whitehead, who himself had an enormous investment in an ontology that begins from the reinstatement of change as one of its defining characteristics, represents this negative sentiment when he declared that it was Confucius who occasioned "a time when things ceased to change" and who was thus responsible for "the static civilization of China."[13]

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13. See Lucien Price, ed., *Dialogues of Alfred North Whitehead* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954), 176–77. Whitehead said, "If you want to understand Confucius, read John Dewey. And if you want to understand John Dewey, read Confucius." Whitehead seems quite oblivious to the process sensibilities of both Confucius and Dewey and in fact dismisses both of them explicitly as "pragmatists" whose commitment to what he considers to be a naïve empiricism precludes any but the most uninteresting of philosophical adventures. Having first criticized Christian theology roundly for banishing novelty through formularizing truth, Whitehead then turns to an assault on both Confucius and Dewey for abjuring questions about the "ultimacies" that underlie the simple facts of experience. Here Whitehead is explicitly criticizing both Confucius and Dewey for being vulgar pragmatists who, in limiting their interest to the bald facts, preclude the fruitful consequences that emerge when we ask "silly" and "superfluous" (i.e., metaphysical) questions and, in so doing, give rise to novelty.

In the Chinese world, too, the term "*ruxue*" 儒學 that we translate as "Confucianism" does not fare much better among contemporary young intellectuals. There has been more than a century of internal Chinese critique of this antiquarian tradition that began in earnest with the May Fourth reformers and their mantra demanding that China "overturn the house of Confucius" (*dadao Kongjiadian* 打倒孔家店). Many of these iconoclasts advocated a process of complete Westernization in which traditional Chinese culture would be abandoned altogether. This internal cleansing continued with the Great Cultural Revolution that sought to purge all remnants of the decadent Confucian tradition. The poignant images of the late 1980s documentary *River Elegy* (*Heshang* 河殤) still linger, with the Yellow River's stagnating silt clogging the pores of a China struggling to make its way to the liberating blue ocean of Western institutions and values. For many among the recent generations of Chinese who have lived through or in the recent wake of these times, any belief in the worth of the indigenous Confucian way of thinking and living has at best worn thin. And recent overt attempts to revive this antique tradition through a collaboration of China's own political and academic forces—with their perceived conservative catechism being foisted upon young China—have been viewed with considerable suspicion. For many if not most of the current generation, *ruxue* as "Confucianism" is little more than someone else's oppressive, xenophobic alternative to the newly emancipating values of a liberal and democratic modernity. Thus it is that a situation has emerged today where, in the minds of many Western and East Asian intellectuals alike, a simple equation can be drawn between the progressive forces of "modernization" on one side and the liberal goals of "Westernization" on the other. Confucian culture has thus come to be viewed as a tired, old-fashioned, and invincibly conservative ideology best left outside the door.

In making this observation about the seeming impotence of Confucian philosophy and culture, there is another asymmetry that needs to be addressed. Today in the Chinese academy we hear the voices of many scholars who espouse liberal values and advocate for the recognition of human rights and the importation of democratic principles and institutions in reconstructing their own cultural tradition. Indeed, most Western scholars, and many if not most among their own Chinese audiences as well, are generally inclined to regard such East Asian liberals as cosmopolitan urbanites who are, with their emancipating values, courageously leading the most educated and progressive of their countrymen into the twenty-first century.

But what about the other way around? Is it aberrant for some contemporary Western thinkers looking for a truly practicable ethics to question complex, abstract, and remote theories that are seemingly irrelevant to our real lives but pretend to serve as explanations for how we ought to achieve and express our moral competencies? Is it naively empirical for these Western scholars to look to our daily practices and reflect on how unrelenting critical attention to the growth in meaning within our everyday roles and relationships might have the power to transform these ordinary affairs of the day into something extraordinary? Is it a mere curiosity that some Western intellectuals with little sympathy for the obsolete supernaturalism and self-abnegating demands of Abrahamic religions would on reflection find their own human- rather than God-centered religious assumptions locating real religious experience within family and community relations aligned in some degree with Confucian values? Again, is it strange for these same Western scholars as modern-day accommodationists who, in aspiring to optimize the rich cultural diversity within their own disparate worlds, find that their own personal commitment to deference and inclusion resonates with the traditional Confucian understanding of a superlative, always hybrid "harmony" that allows alternative cultures who are merely different *from* each other to activate these differences and differ fully *for* each other?

Modernization as Westernization?

Is the equation between modernization and Westernization that marginalizes Confucian culture, both within and without China, humanity's best hope? Or, as we experience the sea change occurring in today's global economic and political order, would we be better off inventorying and taking advantage of all of the cultural resources available, Eastern as well as Western?

In a single generation, the ascendency of Asia, particularly the rise of China, has dramatically reconfigured the global economic and political order. In the same generation since 1989, the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) has grown to include twenty-one Asia-Pacific nations with 40 percent of the world's population. The GDP in this same region has more than tripled, and trade in and with the region has increased exponentially by over 400 percent. The Chinese economy grew over the first few decades at sometimes double-digit rates to overtake Japan as the second-largest economy in the world. And with its continued exponential

growth still hovering around 6 percent, China is predicted to become the world's largest economy sometime in the 2020s. Up to now, these economic and political changes have been relatively easy to track. But perhaps such a seismic geopolitical shift will have less visible but also transformative cultural consequences for the human experience.

We might say that we live in the best and worst of times. We can say that these are the best of times because of what we humans as a species have become. That is, a fair claim can be made that world hunger is no longer a problem for us. This magnificent animal known as the human being has now developed the science and the technology that could enable a global initiative to quickly address the world's hunger problem in all of its complexity. We do not have a problem if we already have its solution. Our present predicament, then, is not a technological one; it is ethical. While we clearly have the science to solve world hunger, we lack the moral resolution to act upon it.

On this score then, it is the best of times. But it is also the worst of times. Our recent and dramatic geopolitical reorientation has all the troubling dynamics of a "perfect storm": global warming, pandemics, food and water shortages, environmental degradation, massive species extinction, international terrorism, proxy wars, nuclear proliferation, and the list goes on. Our unprecedented scientific and technological successes are mixed with ever-amplifying environmental, political, and social challenges. Indeed, this perfect storm has several underlying conditions that might encourage us to view our current predicament as requiring a shift from prioritizing technical solutions for world problems to privileging what is ultimately an ethical dilemma—that is, for us to acknowledge our lack of commitment to do what we know is right. After all, the fundamental difference between a problem and a predicament is that where problems are to be "solved," a predicament can only be "resolved" by effecting a radical change in human intentions, values, and practices. If we are to survive, human beings as a species will need to live and think differently.

There are four defining conditions of our current situation. First, human beings and our ways of being in the world are clearly complicit in the predicament we are facing. We are in some important degree responsible for it. Secondly, this predicament is not constrained by national, cultural, or social boundaries. Crises such as pandemics and climate change have global reach and affect everyone regardless of nationality or status. Thirdly, an organic relationship obtains among this set of pressing challenges that renders them in large degree zero-sum—we either address

them all, or we can solve none of them. These challenges cannot be met seriatim by individual players engaging them piecemeal but must instead be addressed by the shared commitment of a world community acting in concert. Lastly, the good news is that we human beings probably have sufficient cultural resources to identify and activate the changes in values, intentions, and practices needed to respond immediately and effectively to our current predicament.

Contemporary historian of religion James P. Carse provides us with a distinction between "finite" and "infinite" games that might be useful in beginning to think through how Confucian values might make an important difference in a newly emerging cultural order.[14] In formulating this finite and infinite distinction, Carse uses "games" as an analogy for the many activities that constitute the human experience broadly—for the many things human beings "do" such as business, sports, politics, military security, international relations, and so on. With such finite games the focus is on the agency of single actors engaging in a game played over a finite period in accordance with a finite set of rules that guarantee a winner and a loser. Finite games thus have a defined beginning and end and are played by individual agents with the express purpose of winning. This understanding of game playing seems most immediately relevant to those competitive human activities we think of in terms of means and ends and that are directed at the success of one player over another. Our individualism's pervasiveness and the liberal values that attend this self-understanding of who we are as human beings has made finite games a familiar model of the way we often think about human transactions at every level of scale: as particular persons, as corporations, and as sovereign states.

Infinite games have a different structure and a different desired outcome. There are no beginnings or endings in infinite games. And the focus is on strengthening collaborative relationships within entities to succeed together rather than engaging in a competition among single actors who then play to win. Further, infinite games are played according to rules that can be altered by players as required to serve the purpose of continuing to play the game. Indeed, with no beginnings and no discernable ends, the goal is quite simply a shared flourishing. The relationship among family members might be a good example of the infinite games we play, where a mother is committed to strengthening the relationship

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14. James Carse, *Finite and Infinite Games* (New York: Ballantine, 1987).

she has with her son, and son with mother, so that together they can effectively manage increasingly complex problems. In the case of infinite games, the interdependence of relationships means that mother and son either coordinate their efforts and continue to succeed together, or they fail together. Infinite games begin from strengthening relations and are thus always a win-win or lose-lose proposition.

When we look for the cultural resources necessary to respond to the global and national predicament I have described as a "perfect storm," we must anticipate the need for a critical shift in our values, intentions, and practices that takes us from the preponderance of finite games played among self-interested, single actors to a new pattern of infinite games played through the strengthening of those relationships at every level of scale—personal, communal, corporate, and those among nation-states as well. We need to move from finite to infinite games to face and hopefully overcome the shared challenges of our day. Priority must be given to those values and practices that will support replacing the familiar competitive pattern of single actors pursing their own self-interest, with the collaboration of players strengthening possibilities for coordinated flourishing across national, ethnic, and religious boundaries.

This monograph argues that the Confucian tradition—particularly the Confucian conception of relationally constituted persons as "human becomings"—has an important contribution to make in this effort as we struggle to resolve our current human predicament. We urgently need a more inclusive world cultural order: one that draws upon all of the resources available to us and can provide the change in our values and practices necessary to guarantee a future for our children, grandchildren, and the generations to come.