

## Philosophy and Religions

### NEW CONFUCIAN POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY – TU WEI-MING'S FIDUCIARY COMMUNITY

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*This paper engages with the thought of the contemporary New Confucian and Harvard scholar Tu Wei-ming. Its particular focus is on what could be termed "New Confucian Political Philosophy." Yet, is it appropriate to speak of a specific political philosophy within Confucianism, or, more specifically, within its 20<sup>th</sup> century successor New Confucianism? Is it fit to use familiar categories of political philosophy such as liberal-communitarian, individual-society, or democratic-authoritarian in order to scrutinise New Confucianism? Taking questions such as these seriously, this paper starts with some important methodological issues and only then turns to Tu Wei-ming's proposal of a fiduciary community, that is, of a community of trust. Among other issues, the Confucian family, self-cultivation, and the concept of politics as rectification are discussed. At the end, Tu Wei-ming's ideas of how to make this Confucian sense of politics and of community contribute to contemporary political philosophy are briefly addressed.*

The topic of this paper is a prominent spokesperson of contemporary New Confucianism; the scholar and Harvard Professor Tu Wei-ming (Du Weiming 杜维明, 1940). New Confucianism (*xinruxue* 新儒学) denotes an ongoing movement and represents a third epoch of Confucianism that follows the classical period of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi in pre-Qin China, and the neo-Confucian resurgence in the Song and Ming dynasties.<sup>1</sup> This third epoch is usually divided into three periods, of which the first two have already gone by the so-called first generation headed by Xiong Shili (熊十力, 1885–1968), Liang Shuming (梁漱溟, 1893–1988), Feng Youlan (冯友兰, 1895–1990), and He Lin (贺麟, 1902–1992), and a

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<sup>1</sup> He Lin is the first using the term "New Confucianism" to describe this new intellectual trend in a journal article of August 1941. See Liu Honghe, *Confucianism in the Eyes of a Confucian Liberal: Hsu Fu-kuan's Critical Examination of the Confucian Political Tradition*, New York: Peter Lang, 2001, 4. See also: Zheng Jiadong, "Xiandai xinrujia gainian ji qita 现代新儒家概念及其他 (About the Term 'Modern New Confucians' and Others)," *Research in History of Chinese Philosophy* 33 (October 1988): 112–118.

second generation, largely composed of students of Xiong Shili, namely Mou Zongsan (牟宗三, 1909–1996), Tang Junyi (唐君毅, 1909–1979), and Xu Fuguan (徐复观, 1902–1982). Today, Tu Wei-ming is commonly counted as belonging to the third generation of New Confucianism, alongside Taiwan's Liu Shuxian (刘述先, 1934\*), Hawai'i's Cheng Zhongying (成中英, 1935\*) and others. This categorisation is of course artificial in character, and a great deal has been written about who belongs to which generation and who does not. Furthermore, there is already talk of a budding fourth generation.

In this paper, the focus is on Tu Wei-ming's thought. His extensive scholarly work covers a broad spectrum: singular studies on Mencius, Wang Yangming, and other seminal figures and themes of Confucian and neo-Confucian philosophy; a propagation of a specific sense of religiousness within Confucianism; a constant rethinking of the role of the Chinese intellectual now and then; and the potential contribution of the Chinese and especially the Confucian tradition in a moving and globalising world. Reacting to the May Fourth Movement's demands, the belief that the Chinese tradition must be revitalised in order for China to cope with the challenges she faced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the ones she faces today is shared by all New Confucians.

In the following, I want to inquire into one aspect of Tu Wei-ming's work, that is, into his portrayal of a Confucian community, which he characterises as fiduciary.<sup>2</sup> The term "fiduciary" derives from the Latin *fides* and stands for "trust, confidence." I want to examine this concept of a fiduciary community from the viewpoint of political philosophy, a viewpoint under which Tu Wei-ming's thought is not often portrayed.

The goal of this investigation is to tentatively answer three questions. First, can we legitimately speak of political philosophy in New Confucianism? Secondly, having answered the preceding question affirmatively, I will inquire into Tu Wei-ming's characterisation of a fiduciary community, while remaining as much as possible within a Confucian realm. Finally, I will delineate the potential contribution of this Confucian sense of community, as Tu Wei-ming outlines it, to the broader context of political philosophy, as well as raise some, in my opinion, problematic issues inherent in this endeavour.

### **Prolegomena to Political Philosophy in New Confucianism**

Before engaging with Tu Wei-ming and the fiduciary community, one preliminary question must be posed: Does it make sense to speak of a political philosophy in New Confucianism? The question is certainly meaningful, for there are several problems attached to it. First, there is the simple observation that, with the notable exception of some works by and on Xu Fuguan as well as some early works by Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan, there are virtually no

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<sup>2</sup> Tu Wei-ming adopted the term from a book by Michael Polanyi, who in Chapter 8 presents a "fiduciary programme." See Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964.

publications on New Confucianism that specifically treat political philosophy. This is all the more astonishing considering that most New Confucians are famed to have written on a wide variety of philosophical topics such as moral philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, philosophy of culture, even logics and philosophy of language. So why do we not find much on political philosophy? One reason might consist in the fact that much of the harsh criticism Confucianism faced throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century – from the post May Fourth intellectuals' cry "Down with the Confucian house!" (Hu Shi 胡适) to the anti-Confucius campaign during the Cultural Revolution (*pikong* 批孔) – was specifically directed against what was perceived as a Confucian feudal political system and a patriarchal ideology. In light of this, it is not surprising at all that the New Confucians of the first and second generations, in their attempts to revitalise Confucianism, did not rush to make political philosophy the topic of the day. Hence, as regards the second generation, it has been suggested that their silence might be partly explained through their experiences as they, facing the Communist Party's takeover of power on the mainland, fled for Taiwan and Hong Kong, yet without finding an encouraging environment there.<sup>3</sup> However, ever since Taiwan began its slow movement toward a democratic system and the P.R.C. lived through a revival of Confucianism in the 1980s, contemporary New Confucians seem willing to engage again with political philosophy head-on. This goes hand in hand with the more open-minded 1990s when, for example, contenders of liberalism debated with the so-called New Left (*xin zuopai* 新左派), the latter comprising a variety of differing philosophies such as communitarianism, multiculturalism, neo-Marxism, and postmodernism. As regards Tu Wei-ming, he recently appears to be increasingly participating in a forming liberalism – New Confucianism debate.<sup>4</sup>

Given these favourable conditions for a prospective discussion of New Confucian political philosophy, some problems nevertheless remain to be sorted out. The term "political philosophy" is problematic. Can we actually speak of a specific political realm in New Confucian philosophy, separable from concerns of personal ethics and morality, aesthetics, or spirituality? For one thing can surely be said about Confucianism and Chinese philosophy in general: one of its most distinctive trademarks is its correlative and all-encompassing approach. Instead of analytically dividing things up and compartmentalising them in branches, kinds, disciplines, or categories a Chinese sensibility is essentially aesthetic and prefers to place the myriad things (*wanwu* 万物) on a continuum (the great transformation, *da hua* 大化). In Chinese philosophy and hence in Confucianism, it somehow all hangs together. Metaphorically speaking, the difference may be highlighted by the picture of a borderline.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the interesting account of the relationship between Xu Fuguan and Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) in: Liu Honghe.

<sup>4</sup> See the lengthy interview by Chen Ming with Tu Wei-ming: "*Rujia yu ziyoushuyi – he Du Weiming jiaoshou de duihua* 儒家与自由主义-和杜维明教授的对话 (Confucianism and Liberalism – A dialogue with Prof. Tu Wei-ming)," in *Rujia yu ziyoushuyi* 儒家与自由主义 (Confucianism and Liberalism), ed. SDX & Harvard-Yenching Academic Series, Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2001, 1–127. See also Tu Wei-ming, "Confucianism and Liberalism," *Dao, A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 2, 1 (2002): 1–20.

Polarising the metaphor, one can either see its separating function, dividing something into two, or regard it as a place where two things meet, emphasising their connection. Confucianism clearly opts for the second approach.

It is because of this holism that the term “political philosophy” is problematic in at least two ways. On the one hand, political philosophy is an academic discipline that has not developed as such in the Chinese cultural narrative. To speak of philosophy as a discipline in a Chinese context is already disputable. Of course, I am not alluding to the well-known fact that the Chinese term for philosophy *zhexue* 哲学 is a late import from the Japanese language, which has often been used to underscore the narrow-minded argument of there being no such thing as philosophy in China. I am thinking of the more fundamental absence of a theory–praxis distinction, which stems directly from the above-mentioned holism. Ivory tower thinking or a Jean-Jacques Rousseau, writing the educational novel *Emile* while being simultaneously highly oppressive of his own children, is a Confucian impossibility. Philosophy, in a Chinese context, is not separable from practical affairs. Chinese philosophy therefore, as Roger T. Ames remarks, stretches “beyond the boundaries of what would be defined as ‘philosophy’ within the contemporary Western context.”<sup>5</sup> In its all-inclusiveness, Chinese philosophy is constitutively interlinked with political matters. This becomes even clearer when focussing on the role Chinese philosophers play:

Chinese philosophers – traditionally scholar-officials – continue to be institutionalised intellectuals who have the practical responsibility to forge a “way” for the daily workings of government and society. “Philosophy” in the contemporary Chinese context continues to range over the relationship between prevailing cultural values and the social and political life of the people.<sup>6</sup>

Given this intimate interrelationship between philosophy in general and political matters, it would not be far-fetched to argue that, in Chinese philosophy, any sub-discipline – be it ethics, metaphysics, or anything else – is in fact always political philosophy too. Now, this argument does of course not only work for political philosophy, but holds for the other philosophical sub-disciplines as well. Consequently, it is of utmost importance that one is aware of this all-pervading inclusiveness when approaching New Confucianism under the viewpoint of a single academic discipline such as political philosophy.

The term “political philosophy,” on the other hand, is problematic because the understandings of what “political” means within the academic discipline are far from unitary and in each case an expression of a specific cultural narrative. This narrative would be unthinkable without Greek and Roman antiquity or without the Enlightenment. Yet, what to do with the Confucian narrative, which does not display the individualistic idea, the

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<sup>5</sup> Roger T. Ames, „Contemporary Chinese Philosophy,“ in *Companion to World Philosophies*, ed. Eliot Deutsch, Ron Bontekoe, A *Companion to World Philosophies*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999, 518.

<sup>6</sup> Ames, 518–519.

Enlightenment conflict between liberty and equality, or the clear-cut private–public distinction with its Habermasian intermediary of a civil society? If an engagement with New Confucianism from a political philosophical viewpoint is to be meaningful and not just to be another instance of orientalism, a radical openness towards conceptual frameworks, methods, and employed terms is required.

New Confucianism must be presented “on its own terms,” if it is to constitute a genuine contribution to the discipline. “On its own terms” here does not stand for the hermeneutical impossibility of stepping outside of ourselves and understanding the other by adopting the other’s perspective. This would be methodological naivety. “On its own terms” is an invitation to delve deeper into the bedrock of the other. It is directed against viewing the other just in terms of content onto which one’s own methods, conceptual frameworks, and clusters of terms are applied. It is to query for the methods, conceptual frameworks, and clusters of terms employed by the other, and to display a radical openness for going beyond that which is familiar to us.

Thus, it would be wrong to ask, for example, whether New Confucianism is communitarian or liberal, or whether it is democratic or autocratic. The appropriate question is rather what its own divisions or dichotomies are, if such terms are at all applicable, and where there are possible similarities, without assuming these to be commonalities.

I hold that if there is sufficient awareness that, in Chinese philosophy, everything hangs together, and if there is radical openness to the set of terms used, then New Confucianism can legitimately be scrutinised under the viewpoint of political philosophy, and then it might indeed genuinely contribute to the discipline. Keeping this in mind, I will now proceed with Tu Wei-ming’s proposal of a fiduciary community.

### **Tu Wei-ming’s Fiduciary Community – The Proposal**

Tu Wei-ming has developed his notion of a fiduciary community from an interpretation of the *Zhongyong* 中庸, published in 1976 and entitled *Centrality and Commonality*, which has become one of his most read works.<sup>7</sup> In this book, he identifies three major interrelated issues that constitute the unfolding of a humanist vision, namely the profound person (*junzi* 君子), the fiduciary community, and moral metaphysics. It must be emphasised that the term “humanist” in Tu Wei-ming’s use denotes an emphasis and indeed an almost exclusive concentration on human life, here and now, and a conscious relegation of a superhuman or supernatural realm, for example a transcendent God, an idea largely absent in the Confucian

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<sup>7</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*. A Revised and Enlarged Edition of *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung* (1976), Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989. There also exists a Chinese translation of *Centrality and Commonality*, see: Tu Wei-ming, *Lun ruxue de zongjiaoxing* 论儒学的宗教性 (An Essay on Confucian Religiousness), trans. Duan Dezhi 段德智, Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 1999.

cultural narrative. However, the qualification “humanist” is not intended to place the human being opposite to nature, as has been done in some European forms of humanism. This is affirmed by Tu Wei-ming’s elaborations on the Confucian sensibility as “anthropocosmic” over against an anthropocentric view.

In a second and enlarged edition of the book published in 1989, he further makes clear that underlying all of these interrelated themes, hence also the fiduciary community, is a sense of Confucian religiousness. Already these few remarks suffice to illustrate the above-mentioned holism: taking the notion of a fiduciary community as the locus for social or political philosophy, it finds itself from the beginning interwoven with what academic philosophy would respectively call moral philosophy, metaphysics, or religion.

Let me now try to describe Tu Wei-ming’s notion of a fiduciary community in some more detail. A first important cornerstone of such a community, as all of Confucianism holds, is the family. One is born into one’s family without a choice, and it is in the family that much of the initial socialisation takes place. In fact, Tu Wei-ming interprets the Confucian family as a “microcosm of an ideal society,”<sup>8</sup> a place in which ancestral worship and filial piety (*xiao* 孝) are practised and in which many generations live together in harmony as well as in conflict. Hence, the family works as a metaphor for how the members of the community should interact with each other, emphasising mutual trust, intergenerational respect and co-operation, a hierarchical organisation based on mutuality as well as difference in function, and suchlike. It works further as a metaphor for the relationship between the ruler and the people, for the former should be to the latter like a father to the son.

The priority given to family, however, is not to be understood as nepotism. Tu Wei-ming frequently uses the picture of concentric circles to illustrate the Confucian notion of graded or differentiated love. It holds that affection and concern for others is best cultivated within the family web and then extended towards one’s community, one’s country, and eventually to all of humanity and the myriad things. Thus, the family is actually the realm where the person takes the first steps in a lifelong journey of self-cultivation and not where the journey abruptly ends, as it would in the case of narrow-minded nepotism. The point is simply that, in a Confucian sensibility, someone incapable of caring for those close to him or her can hardly extend a sense of genuine concern and love to others.

Furthermore, Tu Wei-ming particularly stresses the importance attributed to self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身), to which he also refers as “becoming a profound person” or “engaging in creative transformation of the self.” Here too, the family enjoys utmost importance. The *Zhongyong* makes amply clear that to be genuinely committed to self-cultivation implies to care for one’s family (*si xiushen, bu ke yi bu shi qin* 思修身, 不可以不事亲).<sup>9</sup> Yet, and Tu Wei-ming states this explicitly, Confucianism’s priority is on the person. He argues against the sometimes still prevailing view that Confucianism is merely a kind of

<sup>8</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, 48.

<sup>9</sup> *Zhongyong*, Chapter 20.

social or group ethics that utterly disregards the individual. To him, “self-cultivation is a precondition for harmonising human relations.”<sup>10</sup>

A possible answer to the puzzling question of who it is that enjoys priority in Confucianism, the person, the family, or the community at large, might be that these spheres are not seen as separate entities, but rather as mutually constitutive. Thus, the priority question would perhaps not be a question that a Confucian posed, for there is no dominating tension between the person and society where one needs to be protected from the other. This stands in outright opposition to the dominant narrative of “Western” political philosophy, where such a tension lies *exempli gratia* at the bottom of liberty rights on the one side, or the division of powers on the other side. Tu Wei-ming seems to stress the personal side mainly to counterbalance the one-sided overemphasis of the collective. The intimate relationship between the person and the community is further underscored by investigating into the sense of the term “self” in self-cultivation. Far from constituting a substantialist account (the Self), so familiar in the history of metaphysics, the self, as Tu Wei-ming perceives it, is but a “centre of relationships,” unceasingly in process, since the context in which a person lives shapes and establishes the self so conceived, and *vice versa*. This suggests that our daily activities actually have an effect on what is around us, and the focus of self-cultivation lies precisely in ordinary life. The notion of self-cultivation is indeed a centrepiece of Confucianism.

Of course, the ruler too must embark on self-cultivation within a web of relationships and expand the concern beyond what is near at hand. In fact, the personal character of the ruler stands at the centre of what Tu Wei-ming labels the “Confucian concept of politics as rectification.”<sup>11</sup> This sense of politics is captured in the *Analects* XII:17, where Confucius is asked about *zheng* 政, a term which is rendered by Tu Wei-ming as “politics,” but also gets translated for example by D.C. Lau as “government”<sup>12</sup> or by David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames as “effecting sociopolitical order”<sup>13</sup> or “proper governing.”<sup>14</sup> Confucius’ answer to the question is simply *zheng zhe, zheng ye* (政者, 正也): politics means rectification. The second *zheng* 正, which explains the first *zheng* 政, is not only its homophone, but also its cognate, and stands for “rectification” or “ordering.” The same explanation is found in the *Book of Rites*, when Duke Ai asks Confucius about *zheng* 政, as well as in the Han dynasty lexical dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字.

This view of “politics as rectification” goes much beyond simply attaining law and order in a society. It points to a holistic perception of politics that displays an ethico-religious

<sup>10</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “A Confucian Perspective on Learning to be Human,” in Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985, 55–57.

<sup>11</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> D. C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, London: Penguin Books, 1979.

<sup>13</sup> David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987, 156–168.

<sup>14</sup> Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001, 99–101.

dimension and that is much broader than its equivalent of academic political philosophy, since it is not reduced to being merely a “science” or “art” of government. In the fiduciary community, a rectified moral character of the ruler is, in Tu Wei-ming’s words, a “precondition for good government,” and “the governing process is not a control mechanism based upon impersonal factors but a manifestation of the art of moral persuasion.”<sup>15</sup> The ruler who is exemplary in behaviour and thus truly committed to self-cultivation is able to provide efficient leadership and good government to the people. Hence, again, politics is inseparable from morality.

Tu Wei-ming asserts further that the “project of rectification” is primarily aimed at the ruler. Yet, how does rectification work in practice? The *Zhongyong* explains personal cultivation by drawing on three characters that pervade the Confucian literature: *ren* 仁, *yi* 义, and *li* 礼.<sup>16</sup> It is by means of this set of terms that Tu Wei-ming elucidates the practical entailments of rectification. He interprets the cultivation of the person as to refer “to the process of embodying humanity in one’s conduct.”<sup>17</sup> *Ren* 仁 or humanity, as Tu Wei-ming translates it, represents a concern for humanity, which starts, as I have discussed a moment ago, with oneself and the family and is expanded to others. *Yi* 义 is often rendered as “righteousness,” but Tu Wei-ming prefers “fitness,” or “appropriateness.” *Yi* 义, so understood, means the application of this universal concern for humanity to particular situations, according to what is suitable or appropriate. It is an emphasis on contextuality and defies legal inflexibility. Finally, a “principle of differentiation” for the application of *yi* 义 is required. Such a principle is found in *li* 礼, in ritual propriety, in the rites, in the good custom, and in the habits lived within one’s surroundings. However, *li* 礼 is not a static principle, and the term “principle” might indeed be misleading, but a body of handed-down practices and guidelines, which is constantly renegotiated by the current generation. *Ren* 仁 and *yi* 义 are realised in the context of human relations by means of *li* 礼. And, as Tu Wei-ming underlines, “[the] emphasis is on its dynamic process rather than its static structure.”<sup>18</sup> It is in this sense that Confucius claimed in the *Analects* IV:13 that a ruler governing the state by observing *li* 礼 will steer clear of difficulties.

Moreover, chapter 20 of the *Zhongyong* provides a list of nine guidelines (*jing* 经), slightly more specific in character and cited by Tu Wei-ming who calls them “continuous steps toward the formation of a fiduciary community”:<sup>19</sup>

1. Cultivating the personal life
2. Honouring the worthy
3. Being affectionate to relatives

<sup>15</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, 49.

<sup>16</sup> *Zhongyong*, Chapter 20.

<sup>17</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, 51.

<sup>18</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “Li as Process of Humanization,” in Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation*, Boston: Cheng&Tsui Company, 1998, 25.

<sup>19</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, 58–59.



4. Being respectful toward the great ministers
5. Identifying oneself with the welfare of the whole body of officers
6. Treating the common people as one's own children
7. Attracting various artisans
8. Showing tenderness to strangers from far countries
9. Extending kind and awesome influence on the feudal lords.

All of these nine guidelines represent the spirit of this view of politics as rectification, which is directed towards a harmonisation of human relationships. This harmony can be accomplished if there is a sense of mutual trust throughout the community and especially between the ruler and the people. In the *Analects* XII:7, the following is recorded:

子贡问政。  
 子曰：“足食，足兵，民信之矣。”  
 子贡曰：“必不得已而走，于斯三者何先？”  
 曰：“走兵。”  
 子贡曰：“必不得已而走，于斯二者何先？”  
 曰：“走食。自古皆有死，民无信不立。”

Tzu-kung [*Zigong* 子贡] asked about government. The Master said: 'Give them enough food, give them enough arms, and the common people will have trust in you.'  
 Tzu-kung said, 'If one had to give up one of these three, which should one give up first?'  
 'Give up arms.'  
 Tzu-kung said, 'If one had to give up one of the remaining two, which should one give up first?'  
 'Give up food. Death has always been with us since the beginning of time, but when there is no trust, the common people will have nothing to stand on.'<sup>20</sup>

Given this statement by Confucius, Tu Wei-ming's choice to describe the Confucian sense of community with the term "fiduciary" seems indeed appropriate.

### **New Traditionalism? – Or How to Marry Tradition with Modernity**

Returning to the preliminary remarks of this paper, one question must be addressed: how does Tu Wei-ming's fiduciary community contribute to political philosophy? Does it at all? Is it just an illusory invitation to return to a tradition that has long been abandoned by China to join the "modern" age? Note that New Confucianism on the Chinese mainland is sometimes referred to as New Traditionalism (*xin chuantongzhuyi* 新传统主义).<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> D. C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, London: Penguin Books, 1979, 113.

<sup>21</sup> In fact a whole series of books has appeared under this title of New Traditionalism by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press and edited by Zheng Jiadong 郑家栋.

Tu Wei-ming has made the question of how to marry tradition with modernity – a question that dominated much of 20<sup>th</sup> century New Confucianism – one of his most central concerns, and he has written a great deal about it. In short, Tu Wei-ming opposes a view of tradition and modernity perceived as an exclusive dichotomy, and holds that: “As a norm, traditions continue to make their presence in modernity, and indeed the modernizing process itself is constantly shaped by a variety of cultural forms rooted in distinct traditions.”<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he disagrees with the opinion that there is only one modernity, especially when this modernity is held to be identical with the Enlightenment project. Tu Wei-ming has criticised the Enlightenment mentality repeatedly, yet without rejecting its instructive aspects that he judges undoubtedly worthy of adoption. However, the Enlightenment mentality remains just one expression among many cultural forms. In Tu Wei-ming’s view, therefore, the Chinese culture and the Confucian tradition can surely be enriched by the Enlightenment achievements, but Confucian resources could as surely enrich the latter. And this, of course, holds for other traditions too, such as the Islamic Middle East, Hindu India, or Buddhist Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, this envisaged mutual enrichment is not to result in one common and uniform modernity, but rather in a vision that Tu Wei-ming calls “multiple modernities.”

Yet, how to go about this mutual enrichment? It is obvious that a strategy of picking the best of each will not succeed. Tu Wei-ming seems to follow Xiong Shili who advocated drilling deeply into the bedrock of the Chinese mind. In order to arrive at a sufficient understanding of the other, one has to genuinely understand oneself. In Tu Wei-ming’s opinion, Xiong seems “to argue that without sophisticated understanding of the difference, the possibility for a new synthesis at a higher level is quite slim.”<sup>23</sup> Now, to seriously investigate into the differences involves efforts such as the one undertaken by Tu Wei-ming.

Describing what characteristics a Confucian-influenced form of modernity could display, Tu Wei-ming lists the following: distributive justice, sympathy, duty consciousness, ritual, as well as public spiritedness.<sup>24</sup> This is notably a Confucian modernity, which is inclusive of some Enlightenment ideas such as liberty rights consciousness or due process of law. Tu Wei-ming presents further six assumptions on important features of an East Asian modernity. In summary, these six assumptions include:<sup>25</sup>

1. Government leadership in a market economy is not only necessary but also desirable.
2. Beyond law as a minimum requirement for social stability, organic solidarity can only be achieved by humane rights of interaction, thus the idea of civility.

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<sup>22</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian World,” speech delivered at Colorado College on February 5, 1999 at the Colorado College’s 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium, entitled *Cultures in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Conflict and Convergences*, [online; cited 20/04/04]. Available from: <<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/Academics/Anniversary/Transcripts/TuTXT.html>>.

<sup>23</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “Hsiung Shih-li’s Quest for Authentic Existence,” in Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation*, FN 36, 253.

<sup>24</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian World”.

<sup>25</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “The Confucian World”.

3. The family as the basic entity and the locus from which the core values are transmitted.
4. Civil society as a dynamic interplay between family and state.
5. Education, broadly perceived as character building, ought to be the civil religion of society.
6. Self-cultivation as the root for the regulation of family, governance of state, and global peace.

These assumptions, which according to Tu Wei-ming are highly idealised, may function as some first tentative steps towards a genuine global dialogue. It is to be hoped for that Tu Wei-ming and others will continue to specify these ideas. This is necessary because some hot spots of contemporary political philosophy, such as the postmodern emphasis on conflict and disruption, coupled with a suspicion of any account stressing harmony or unity, or the prominence of the notion of power, as well as the problem of outsiders or the non-willing, seem at first sight to be missing in Confucianism.

However, all of this presupposes that academic political philosophy lends an ear to voices raised from beyond its leading inner discourses. That, at least, some political philosophers are moving into such a direction may be exemplified by the prominent scholar John Gray<sup>26</sup>, who acknowledges that the main current in political philosophy “remains wedded to the Enlightenment project;” a project that he sees expressed “by the hope that human beings will shed their traditional allegiances and their local identities and unite in a universal civilization grounded in generic humanity and a rational morality.”<sup>27</sup> Predicting such a project to be utopian and in fact undesirable, John Gray judges a *Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*<sup>28</sup>, published in 1993, with the following comment:

It is to comment on the oddity, at this point in human history, of an account of contemporary political philosophy that is so Europocentric in its perspective that Confucian ideas, which animate thought and practice in the extraordinary East Asian experiments, underway in Japan, in Singapore, in China and in Korea, of harnessing the dynamism of market institutions to the needs of stable and enduring communities, are not even mentioned in the index.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> John Gray is Professor of European Thought at the London School of Economics. Prior to that he was Professor of Politics at Oxford University and Fellow of Jesus College.

<sup>27</sup> John Gray, “Against the new liberalism,” in John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, 2.

<sup>28</sup> The companion in question is: Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (eds.), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> John Gray, “Notes toward a definition of the political thought of Tlön,” in John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake*, 16.

**NAUJOJO KONFUCIANIZMO POLITINĖ FILOSOFIJA:  
TU WEI-MINGO PASITIKĖJIMU GRĮSTA BENDRUOMENĖ**

**Ralph Weber**

**S a n t r a u k a**

Šiame straipsnyje bus aptariamos Naujojo konfucianizmo atstovo, Harvardo universiteto profesoriaus Tu Wei-mingo filosofinės idėjos, konkrečiau tariant, vadinamoji “Naujojo konfucianizmo politinė filosofija”. Vis dėlto ar yra teisinga kalbėti apie atskirą politinės filosofijos kryptį, išvelgiamą konfucianizme, o tiksliau, vieno iš XX a. Naujojo konfucianizmo sekėjų darbuose? Ar analizuojant Naująjį konfucianizmą tinka vartoti tokias politinės filosofijos sąvokas kaip liberalumas ir bendruomeniškumas, individas ir visuomenė arba demokratiškumas ir autoritariškumas? Atsižvelgiant į šiuos klausimus, šio straipsnio pradžioje bus gvildenamos kai kurios svarbios metodologinės problemos, o tik paskui bus apsisota prie Tu Wei-mingo idėjos apie pasitikėjimu grįstą bendruomenę. Be kita ko, čia bus aptariamos ir konfucianistinės šeimos, saviugdos, politikos kaip „taisymo“ sampratos. Straipsnio pabaigoje bus svarstoma, kaip Tu Wei-mingo konfucianistinės politikos ir bendruomenės sampratos gali būti pritaikytos šiuolaikinei politinei filosofijai.

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