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Kant, Confucianism, and "Global Rooted Philosophy" in Taiwan

From Mou Zongsan to Lee Ming-huei

Abstract

In Taiwan, the Confucian revival was always defined by the search for a synthesis between Western and traditional Confucian thought. Taiwanese Modern Confucians aimed to create a system of ideas and values capable of resolving modern, globalised societies' social and political problems. Mou Zongsan, the best-known member of the second generation of Modern New Confucianism, aimed to revive the Chinese philosophical tradition through a dialogue with Modern European philosophy, especially with the works of Immanuel Kant. His follower Lee Ming-huei is arguably the most renowned expert on Kantian philosophy in the entire Sinitic region. The present paper aims to compare their respective approaches and evaluate them in a broader context of modern Chinese thought. I will first introduce Mou Zongsan's elaborations on Kant. In the following, I will present the main aspects of Lee Ming-huei's development of Mou's theories and provide in later sections a critical assessment of Lee's philosophical innovation, focusing upon the evaluation of his conceptualisation of immanent transcendence and Confucian deontology.

Keywords

Taiwanese modern Confucianism, contemporary Taiwanese philosophy, Immanuel Kant, Mou Zongsan, Lee Ming-huei

Introduction

From the second half of the 20th century and up until present times, the Modern Confucian revival has been very strong in Taiwan. While many of the members of the so-called second generation of Modern Confucianism, who lived and worked in Taiwan in the second half of the previous century, are quite well-known in international academia, this cannot be claimed for the representatives of contemporary Confucian scholars, who are active in the present moment.

In order to expose the continuity of their work, which is of utmost importance for the further development of Sinophone philosophy, this article will focus upon the two best-known representatives of the Taiwanese Modern Confucian movement, both aiming to create a synthesis between Kant's and Confucian philosophies. The first, Mou Zongsan, belongs to the second generation of Modern Confucianism and is probably the most famous Taiwanese philosopher, while the second one, Lee Ming-huei, is beyond doubt the most influential East Asian expert on Kant's and Confucian philosophy at the present time.

That which connects the two scholars is a common thread or the basic foundations shared by all representatives of the so-called Confucian revival. Modern Confucianism (*Xin rujia* 新儒家) is a philosophical current, defined as the search for a synthesis between Western and traditional Chinese (mainly Con-

fucian) thought, in order to elaborate a system of ideas and values capable of resolving the social and political problems of the modern, globalised world. The philosophers belonging to this stream of thought have attempted to reconcile "Western" and "traditional Chinese" values, in order to create a theoretical model of modernisation that would not be confused or equated with "Westernisation". In other words, they were searching for a type or model of modernisation that could be developed in accordance with the specifically Chinese ideational tradition. While the current was shaped on the threshold of the 20th century with the works of Xiong Shili, Feng Youlan, Liang Shuming, Zhang Junmai and He Lin, who mainly worked in Peking and belonged to the so-called *first generation*, the members of the *second generation* (which beside Mou Zongsan also included Xu Fuguan, Tang Junyi and Fang Dongmei) predominantly migrated to Taiwan after the establishment of the PR China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.[1] They were most active in the second half of the 20th century. Most scholars believe that despite the overall relevance of this stream of thought, the only two members of this group who managed to establish an independent and coherent philosophical system were Mou and Tang. In the present study, we will concentrate upon the work of the former, because he was by far more important regarding the elaboration on the syntheses between Western (especially Kantian) and Confucian philosophy.

The contemporary Taiwanese philosopher Lee Ming-huei can doubtless be considered as one of Mou's most prominent followers, although he does not belong to the third generation.[2] Some scholars regard him as a disciple of Mou Zongsan (see for instance, Huang 2003, 156); however, Mou was never Lee's formal supervisor, and Lee never formally attended any of Mou's classes, although he audited some of them. While he was a teaching assistant at National Taiwan University, in which Mou also concurrently taught as a professor, they both lived and worked on the same campus. However, their contacts were mainly informal, even though Lee feels Mou may have considered him as his student due to that association (see Elstein 2015a, 90).

Be that as it may, this paper deals with their common threads, which consist of the fact that they are both Modern Confucians and at the same time – each in his own way – also experts in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant.[3] This study focuses on three crucial aspects that have played a predominant role in the transcultural philosophical analyses and interpretations of both scholars, namely the questions of autonomy, immanent transcendence and the problem of the religiousness of Confucianism. All these issues are of crucial importance for the illumination of the ideational foundations of specifically Chinese modernity and for the general elaborations on intercultural philosophical syntheses in the field of Chinese and European moral philosophies, respectively.

Although in this respect we could say that Lee was "standing on the shoulders of giants", his own work doubtless goes beyond Mou's agenda, particularly since he was also working in several fields that did not belong to Mou's main research area.[4] Therefore, Lee's theory was also inspired by theories and authors whom Mou Zongsan did not treat, and his system differs from Mou's in many regards.

1. Ontological Groundworks:
   The Problem of Immanent Transcendence

Mou Zongsan certainly belonged to the first Asian philosophers who exposed and elaborated upon the notion of a "Confucian" type of immanent transcendence (*neizai chaoyue*). Like most other Modern Confucians, he also regarded ontological questions as of utmost importance for the revival and modernisation of traditional Chinese philosophy. Addressing ontological issues meant reacting constructively to the evolving trends of the issues arising in Chinese modernisation with the aid of certain basic aspects of traditional Chinese philosophy.

Based on the Buddhism inspired "ontology of two levels" (*liang ceng cunyoulun*), Mou constructed a new double approach to reality, in the centre of which was the human subject. This schema was grounded in the *Huayan* Buddhist notion of "one heart-mind opening two doors" (*yi xin kai er men*), which he "considered methodologically relevant even beyond Buddhism" (Billioud 2012, 18). On the other hand, it was inspired by Kant's rigid division between the two separate worlds of *noumena* and *phenomena*. While in Kant's view, humans were never able to comprehend the former and always remained confined to the recognition of the latter, Mou believed that a subject of comprehension could gain insight into both levels of reality. While Kant reserved the potential of experiencing *noumena* through intellectual intuition exclusively for the transcendent God, Mou was convinced that human beings possess this kind of transcendent intuition as well. Despite the immanent nature of our concrete life and our embeddedness into it, we are thus – according to Mou – able to transcend all limitations of our physical conditions and enter the world of *noumena*. He named the first, immanent realm as one belonging to the attached (*youzhi*), and the second, transcendent one, as belonging to the intangible ontology (*wuzhide cunyoulun*). Since both realms were connected to the subject of comprehension, the subject herself had access to both spheres and dwelled, in a certain sense, in the double world of immanent transcend-

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The only exception was Tang Junyi. In 1949, he did not migrate to Taiwan along with all the other representatives of the Modern Confucian movement, but to Hong Kong, where he stayed for most of his life.

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Most of the scholars that are generally counted to the third generation, i.e. Liu Shu-hsien (Liu Shuxian, 1934 – 2016), Yu Ying-shih (Yu Yingshi, 1930), Cheng Chung-ying (Cheng Zhongying, 1935) and Tu Wei-ming (Du Weiming, 1940), are still active, with the exception of Liu Shu-hsien, who passed away in 2016. The latter is also the only one who was for the most of his life based in Taiwan, whereas the others live and work in the USA. Due to his relatively young age (he was born in 1953), Lee Ming-huei cannot be counted among the third, but at the most the fourth generation, which, however, is still being gradually shaped.

[3]
While Lee, who obtained his PhD on Kant's moral philosophy in Germany, is beyond any doubt one of the most prominent experts on Immanuel Kant's ethics, Mou has written an annotated translation of Kant's three *Critiques* and his *Groundworks of the Metaphysics of Morality* in Chinese. However, since they were translated from English and not from the German original, Lee believes that Mou cannot be fully counted as a thorough expert on Kant's thought: "Strictly speaking, Mou may be considered unqualified to be a Kant specialist because of his lack of acquaintance with the German language." (Lee 2017, 14)

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Here, we should particularly mention Lee's wide-ranging research on contemporary political Confucianism and Korean Confucianism. On the other hand, he never delved into research on certain aspects that belonged to crucial bases of Mou's theory, such as Buddhist philosophy.

ence (*neizai chaoyue*), which Mou saw as being one of the typical features of Chinese philosophy. Mou Zongsan explained this double ontological nature of the Confucian worldview in the following way:

"The Way of Heaven, as something 'high above', connotes transcendence. When the Way of Heaven is invested in the individual and resides within them in the form of human nature, it is then immanent." (Mou 1990, 26)

This idea of a world that can be both immanent and transcendental at the same time is still somehow controversial, especially among scholars trained in Western philosophy, who are seldom accustomed to view reality as processual, continuous change. In the static worldview of unchangeable being, these two notions are necessarily posited in a mutual contradiction, for they mutually exclude one another.

David Hall and Roger Ames have questioned Mou Zongsan's concept of immanent transcendence,[5] exposing that, on the one hand, he highlights the non-divisibility of Heaven and humankind and proposes an immanent characterisation of the entity in question, while simultaneously claiming that it is transcendent, on the other. In their view, Mou's understanding of transcendence suggests independence, which is, of course, in contradiction with such an inseparability (Hall & Ames 1987, 205). They explained that the very idea of transcendence could not imply such mutual correlativity with the idea of immanence, and noted:

"A principle A is transcendent in respect to that B which it serves as principle if the meaning or import of B cannot be fully analysed and explained without recourse to A, but the reverse is not true." (Hall & Ames 1987, 13)

They criticised the notion of immanent transcendence because they feared that its usage might lead to still further misunderstandings in the dialogue between Western and Chinese philosophies, which was (and remain) difficult enough already.

For Lee Ming-huei, who also studied Western philosophy in the West, and who was, therefore, most familiar with the meaning of Western philosophical concepts on their most profound level, their disapproval was itself the fruit of a "misunderstanding" (Lee 2002, 204). In order to explain the origins of such a misunderstanding, he wrote:

"When Modern Confucians apply the concept of 'immanent transcendence', they are adhering to the basic premise that 'immanence' and 'transcendence' are not in logical contradiction. This means that they never apply the concept of 'transcendence' in the strict sense as understood by Hall and Ames. Their critique is thus clearly based on a misunderstanding." (Lee 2002, 226–227)

Lee further explained that abstract ideas often attain several different semantic connotations, and the term transcendence is no exception to this. These differences are not even limited to intercultural communications, for transcendence has several different meanings in the very scope of Western philosophy as well. In this context, he also pointed out that the concept of "immanent transcendence" merely pertains to a certain type of transcendence; it definitely does not include all possible semantic connotations of this word, especially not those associated with "independence" or the "separation between creator and creation". He also emphasised that in Confucianism, "religion and humanism or the transcendent and the immanent are not opposed to each other, even though there are certain tensions between them" (Lee 2017, 36).

Besides, Mou never interpreted these notions in the sense of a "strict transcendence" because the difference between "pure" (or "strict") and "immanent" transcendence can be clarified based on discursive differences defining different semantic realms of Christianity and Confucianism, respectively.

For some scholars, Lee's argumentation might seem like a mere definitional retreat. Even though I believe that, at the base, this misunderstanding is indeed rooted in different semantic connotations (and is therefore linked to different possibilities of comprehension) of the same notions, I think it is important in this context to complete the deficiencies of his explanation and clarify the issue proceeding from more profound levels of transcultural comparative philosophy. I will do that in later parts of this paper (see Section 5), in which I will critically evaluate Lee's work. However, first, let examine more closely his development of the Modern Confucian religious and humanistic thought.

2. Religion and Autonomy

Regarding the question of the nature of Confucian transcendence, Modern Confucians have different opinions. Tu Weiming (2000: 212), for instance, identifies it as a religion (Tu 2000, 212), but many other Modern Confucian scholars rather see it as an ethically permeated philosophical system (see Lee 2001, 118).

In Mou Zongsan's view, Confucian philosophy certainly represented a discourse of a transcendent, religious nature. However, according to him, these religious elements belonged to "atheistic religions", i.e. religions without God. Mou developed his critique of an external God precisely through his analyses of Kant's philosophical system. He emphasised that the classical Confucian concept of the individual moral Self, based on the inherent moral substance (*zhuti* 性體) of every individual, bonds all three basic postulates of Kant's practical reason – free will, the immortal soul and the existence of God. Since each of these postulates are infinite and absolute, and since the simultaneous existence of different infinite and absolute entities is impossible, such divisions must necessarily be false. Therefore, Mou pointed out that the moral Self, and the original heart-mind on which it was based, offered the only possible groundwork for the transcendent unity of goodness and happiness. Hence, in his philosophy, the very notion of God as conveyed in Kant's system is disturbing and completely redundant. Besides, Mou Zongsan argued that Kant perceived our inimitable world as a static and binding line of time and space; in such a view, this world that has been "created" by God could not be changed or improved. However, human beings are autonomous subjects, possessing the possibility and the need for moral development. For him, all this pointed to an inconsistency in Kant's philosophy, which was a result of intellectual intuition being credited only to God and divine wisdom (*shende zhixing* 神的智性, Mou 1971, 51).

In Mou's view, Kant did not recognise that in his own system, human consciousness needed to be infinite because, otherwise, it could not be connected to the – equally infinite – moral imperative. In such a case, the categorical

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For the entire debate between Hall and Ames on the one, and Lee Ming-huei on the other side regarding Mou's philosophy and the problem of immanent transcendence, see Rošker 2015, 131–137.

imperative could not have functioned as the foundation of morality (Tang 2002, 333).

This assumption reflects the Neo-Confucian tradition of Modern Confucianism, for both reformed forms of Confucianism were based upon Mencius' presumption of the *a priori* goodness of innate human qualities or "humanness" (*ren xing*). Accordingly, Mou Zongsan's understanding is based on the observation that freedom is a cause rather than effect (Tang 2002, 333). While freedom can limit other principles, it cannot be limited by them. And since the divine consciousness is the cause of everything, free will (or infinite heartmind) has to be a part of God or the Divine and is thus absolute and infinite. Hence, humans necessarily possessed Divine nature. As such, Mou understood Confucianism as a kind of an atheistic religion despite negating the possibility of an external God as a higher, supernatural force detached from humankind.[6]

With such a view, Mou aimed to disprove the prevalent prejudgment that Confucianism could be limited to a mere code of normative regulations prescribing proper behaviour. While this code undoubtedly included the components of "primitive" religions, which were rooted in superstition and the worship of idols, it did not possess any inner spiritual foundation (Han & Zhao 1994, 165). Mou explained that:

"This mistaken view was a result of the influence of Western missionaries and state missions, who saw only the external forms of life of the common Chinese people. Therefore, they never understood that at its spiritual core, the Chinese moral ethic also implies religious feelings. Confucian transcendent religious feelings must not be confused with superstition, which is widespread among the common people." (Mou 1971, 51)

Mou highlighted another inconsistency of Kant's view:

"The reason for God's ability to create nature is his infinite consciousness. Hence, it is precisely this attribute that is responsible for existence, while existence also necessarily includes infinite consciousness. However, infinite consciousness is not necessarily conditioned by individual (or particular) existence. Thus, the anthropomorphisation of infinite consciousness (and its transformation) into individual existence is merely a projection of human consciousness and, as such, is necessarily illusory." (Mou 1975, 243)

For Mou, the supposition that "infinite existence" is responsible for existence was not necessarily wrong. He explicitly pointed out that the problem arose with the personalisation of infinite existence and its transformation into individual existence (Mou 1985, 243).

The collection of Mou's lectures which were published under the title *The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy* (*Zhongguo zhexuede tezhe* 中國哲學的特質), closes with a chapter on Confucianism as a religion, in which he highlighted its religious character. Later, in his last important work *On Summum Bonum*, Mou reexamined the issue of "the highest good" advocated by Kant by including it into the Buddhist "perfect teaching" (*yuanjiao* 圓教). In this work, Mou elaborated upon the "perfect teachings" of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, respectively, and in conclusion identified himself with the perfect teaching of the first because, according to him, it is the highest type of religion.

Lee Ming-huei interprets Mou's view as one that sees Confucianism as a "humanistic religion", implying the oneness or conflation of humanism and religion. He explains that according to Mou, "the humanistic focus of Confucianism has a religious dimension as its essence" (Lee 2017, 26). Lee also observes that Mou's basic view of the oneness of morality and religion could

be traced to the Modern Confucian *Manifesto Regarding Chinese Culture to People All over the World* (為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言).[7] The authors of this *Manifesto* acknowledge that institutionalised religions are absent in Chinese culture, but they also emphasise that this does not mean that Chinese people only pay attention to the ethics and morals of everyday life and lack any religious spirituality. They also highlighted the fact that "the religious transcendent feelings of Chinese people and the religious spirit they value have the same cultural roots as the ethics and morality the people cherish" (Lee 2017, 29). Therefore, Chinese culture, and especially Confucianism, has unified the religious spirit with the moral one (Lee 2017, 29). In this light, Mou Zongsan views Confucianism as a "humanistic" or "moral religion".

In Lee's view, the ontological basis of such a religion lies in Mou's reinterpretation of Kant's "thing-in-itself" because, in contrast to Kant who never explicitly elaborated on the axiological nature of *noumenon*, Mou understood it as something permeated with value-connotations.

> "In Mou's view, an epistemological concept of 'thing-in-itself' is not sufficient to support Kant's transcendental distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, since the 'thing-in-itself' in this sense lies always beyond human knowledge." (Lee 2017, 14)

To solve this problem, Mou appealed to the thesis that even though human beings are finite, they must have access to the infinite. In this context, Lee also links Mou Zongsan's view on such a Confucian "moral religion" to his concept of immanent transcendence, noted that for Mou Zongsan, "religion and humanism as well as transcendence and immanence are two sides of the same coin in Confucian thought" (Lee 2017, 29). In such a view, the tension between religion and humanism as well as between transcendence and immanence constitutes the essence of Confucianism. For Lee Ming-huei, the fact that Mou Zongsan prescribed the intellectual intuition not only to God but also to human beings,[8] is the key to the comparison between Kantian and Chinese philosophy (Lee 2017, 15). Kant's denial of human access to this kind of intuition led Mou to believe that the whole meaning of Kant's insight in

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Here, we have to mention that Confucianism actually acknowledges the idea of a creator even though it does not include religious deities. This creator manifests itself in the Way of Heaven/Nature (*tian dao* 天道), which is essentially pure creativity, similar to the theological God. However, even though Confucianism acknowledges the idea of creation or creativity, Confucian creativity is not personalised. In the times of the Shang (Yin) and Zhou Dynasties the Chinese had anthropomorphic deities, however Confucius and Mencius transformed this anthropomorphic form of Heaven (*tian* 天) into the concept of the Heavenly Mandate (*tian ming* 天命), which was a moral or ideal concept. The Confucians were thus neither interested in the personification of the Way of Heaven, nor in its transformation into an external, anthropomorphic God. Rather than seeking to establish a symbolic form of creativity, they searched for methods for its internalization by the individual (Rošker 2017, 3–4).

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This *Manifesto* was mainly drafted by Tang Junyi (1909 – 1978), but completed and signed by Mou Zongsan (1909 – 1995), as well as his colleagues Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang, 1887 – 1969), and Xu Fuguan (1903 – 1982). These scholars are still regarded as the founders of Modern Confucianism as a system that aimed at a more systematic re-interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy and culture, based on a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of Western philosophy, especially the thought of Plato, Kant and Hegel (Bunnin 2002, 11).

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In this context, Lee also explains the foundation of the "Confucian version" of intellectual intuition, noting that according to Mou Confucian metaphysics is rooted in the concepts of original knowledge (*liang zhi* 良知) and original mind (*ben xin* 本心). These notions can be seen as a kind of intellectual intuition of the moral and therefore free and autonomous subject.

this respect "cannot be fully developed within the framework of his own moral philosophy" (Lee 2017, 15). In this context, Lee brilliantly explains Mou Zongsan's critique of Kant's inconsistent view of the autonomous subject:

"The reason for this is that Kant presupposes a dualist standpoint between the rational and the emotional deportment in the moral agent. Kant's strict separation of the rational from the emotional means the moral subject can function only as a *principium dijudicationis* (the principle of the appraisal of the action) and not at the same time as a *principium executionis* (the principle of its performance). In other words, the moral subject in Kant lacks the power of self-realisation, which means there is a narrowing of the 'autonomy' of the moral subject as its moral self-legislation. For Mou, it is because of this narrowing and the deprivation of intellectual intuition in humans that Kant is not in a position to establish a moral metaphysics. In its place Mou saw the prototype of moral metaphysics in Confucianism." (Lee 2017, 15)[9]

For Mou, the crucial conceptualisation of a moral subject needed to be based upon an *a priori* universalism and a unity of ratio and emotions. Such a basis could be found in the Confucian concept of the heart-mind (*xin* 心), which can be seen as a core notion of the Confucian fusion of religion and autonomous morality.

3. Lee Ming-huei's Development: From Apriorism of the Moral Self to Confucian Democracy

In evaluating Mou's synthesis of Kant and Confucius, Lee Ming-huei analyses different critiques presented by various contemporary scholars. Being deeply aware of the problems inevitably arising in any intercultural comparisons of different philosophical systems, he sees all such critiques as amounting to (and also resulting from) different philosophical traditions written in different languages and proposing different conceptual schemes. To illuminate this issue, Lee applies Feng Yaoming's idea of conceptual relativism to the inter-translation of different philosophical systems, summarising its core meaning that we cannot find two absolutely corresponding concepts in any two philosophical systems, and therefore some conceptual adjustments become inevitable. Hence, in his view, Feng's conceptual relativism – and thus all such criticism – is more rhetorical than substantial (Lee 2017, 19).

In developing his own philosophical stance, Lee has also proceeded from his own evaluation and development of Mou's implementation of the traditional category of inner sage and outer king (*neisheng waiwang* 内聖外王), which was also posited in his aforementioned double ontological structure of immanent transcendence. Mou saw this category as a tool for distinguishing between the empirical Self and the transcendental subject. Lee Ming-huei widens and re-interprets this distinction by developing it within the Hegelian framework of differentiating between *Sittlichkeit* and *Moralität*. While the latter pertains to inner values, the former is an expression of interpersonal ethical relations.

"In this sense, the areas touched upon by Confucianism's 'outer kingliness' are largely the same as those of the *Sittlichkeit* in a Hegelian sense. For Hegel, *Moralität* cannot stop at the self, but must necessarily extend to *Sittlichkeit*, just as Confucianism's 'inner sagehood' must be extended to 'outer kingliness'." (Lee 2010, 244)

In pointing out the significance of the latter, Lee shapes a new alternative model of modernised Confucian political thought by reviving and upgrading the theory of "developing democracy from Confucianism" (Lee 2014, 7). He constructively questions the prevalent notion, according to which the Western

type of liberalism represented the central theoretical foundation of democracy. In his view, a transculturally enriched communitarian criticism of such a liberal paradigm can also point to new possibilities of Confucian democracy.

"In this sense, intellectualised 'academic Confucianism' becoming another development of traditional Confucianism can also be seen as a display of Confucianism's 'outer kingliness'." (Lee 2010, 246)

For him, the Confucian spirit is not something that can fit only traditional Chinese political institutions, and the latter cannot fully exhibit the former. In such a view, "inner sagehood and outer kingliness" might truly be seen as one of the most important, if not the most important, features of Confucianism:

"Obviously, in Li's view, democracy (and science) can better embody inner sagehood than the traditional Chinese political system can. Li even claims that to establish a democratic political system is the inner demand of China's cultural development, and this backs up his claim that the transformation contemporary Confucians are undertaking is a self-transformation." (Huang 2003, 157)

All this shows that Lee not only follows the essentials of Mou's philosophy, but goes beyond it: he does much more than just defending Mou. Therefore, it would be "inaccurate to pigeonhole Lee as simply the bearer of Mou's mantle in the 21st century" (Elstein 2015b, 91). On the contrary, it is apparent that he continues the Modern Confucian project of constructing a theoretical foundation for Chinese Confucian modernity. Regarding the agenda of political philosophy, David Elstein clearly shows how Lee's theoretical work builds on Mou's system, while developing and modernising Confucianism in innovative ways (Elstein 2015b).

Lee Ming-huei bases his political philosophy on the Confucian notion of personhood, which is rooted in a metaphysical understanding of the human subject. Thereby, Lee advances Kant and simultaneously questions both communitarian and liberal conceptions of democracy. Among other issues, this questioning is thoroughly and firmly founded on the notion of Confucianism as an important segment of Sinitic cultural identity. In his view, democracy is not necessarily implanted in Confucianism but is, in fact, implied by it and, more importantly, it is necessary for a full realisation of Confucian ideals.[10] In this sense, Lee's development of Kant's ethics is clearer and more transparent than Mou Zongsan's:

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Here, it is important to highlight that all in all, Mou certainly fully appreciated Kant's moral philosophy; he believed that Kant was immensely important because he was the first European philosopher who managed to understand the true nature of morality. In Mou's view, he was the first to see that being moral was necessarily defined by moral rules and not by any kind of external objects. But on the other hand, he negated the validity of Kant's assertion that the existence of God was a vital requirement for the reality of *summum bonum* (Mou 1985, 239–240). Therefore, he tried to complete, and to "upgrade" Kant's philosophy; along this stream of reasoning, he aimed to create a system of a valid moral metaphysics, a task in which Kant – in Mou's view –

could not fully succeed (Mou 1975, 39). Mou saw his own system as one that supersedes mere "metaphysics of morality". For him, "moral metaphysics" implies the existence of entities permeated with moral substance and reflected in human moral consciousness. He saw such a consciousness as the "moral substance, and, at the same time ontological substance" (Mou 1975, 40).

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Indeed, as David Elstein (2015a, 92) reveals, a historical view shows that in reality non-democratic governments always proved to be an obstacle for realizing Confucian morality, in the rulers as much as in the subjects.

"Lee provides a better, and certainly more easily understandable, version of this argument than Mou himself." (Elstein 2015b, 93)

However, Lee also emphasises the trans-historical nature of the moral Self, while still distinguishing it from the Western notion of an isolated, atomic Self. In this context, Lee exposes the importance of the Confucian humaneness (*ren* 仁), which he mostly analyses in the context of its embeddedness into the Mencian[11] theory of inherent morality (*renyi neizai* 仁義內在), which is comparable to Kant's apriorism (e.g. Lee 1994, 109; Lee 2018, 37–38). He highlights that in Confucianism the foundation of interpersonal relationships is always moral subjectivity, which includes the significance of personal independence (Lee 1991, 52).

Moreover, Lee Ming-huei points out that both Mencius and Kant equally questioned the limitation of ethical premises to mere theoretical reason because it can only substantiate instrumental rationality, without being able to include the significance of the axiological rationality of values. Lee explains the reasons for his synthesis of Kant and Mencius by emphasising the significance of the moral Self:

"If we do not determine norms and values through the moral Self as the ultimate criterion, and merely appeal to the theoretical reason, we easily become guided by our inclinations or prejudices, of which we might not even be aware. This is the basis of all ideological doctrines." (Lee 1995, 16)

On this basis, he also connects the Mencian supposition of the tendencies of goodness inherent in humanness (*ren xing xiang shan*)[12] with Kant's concept of a good will, in which he sees the main connection between Confucianism and German idealism (Elstein 2015b, 98).[13] Analogously, the Confucian notion of the original heart-mind (*ben xin*) can well be compared with Kant's practical reason. In Lee's view, both philosophies imply a system of moral principles which can serve as a foundation for a certain kind of democracy, namely one that connects the moral and political spheres, without assimilating one to the other. Lee describes their mutual relationship with a Buddhist phrase, implying that they are "not identical, but also not separated"[14] (Lee 2005, 60).

However, according to Lee, there are also differences between Mencius and Kant. In his view, Mencian ethics surpassed Kant's practical philosophy regarding the question of what is required for autonomy. While Kant strictly differentiated between reason and emotion, Mencius believed that both can represent a basis for autonomous action. In this regard, Lee points out that Mencian ethics was also autonomous, even though it also included emotions. What makes an ethics autonomous is thus not connected to whether its actions arise from rational or emotional motivations. What is important is that it has to be determined *a priori*, by universal intentions and without any external influences.

According to Kant, the categorical imperative does not pertain to any purpose, for it is pure law and hence absolutely formal (Kant 2002, 31 [Ak4:414]). In Kant's system, virtues are derivative of the categorical imperative (Kant 2002, 53 [Ak 4:436]). In *Mengzi,* however, there is no law in the sense of a categorical imperative. Instead, the work proposes practical actions in accordance with humaneness and appropriateness. Hence, Mencius' ethics seems to lack formal laws. It is clear, on the other hand, that autonomous ethics has to be formal. Therefore, Lee Ming-huei demonstrates (Lee 2018, 56) that

even though Mencius never clearly formulated a categorical imperative in a strict Kantian sense, his ethics is not based upon hypothetical imperatives, for it is neither guided by purposes nor by concrete goals. The Mencian goodness is always based upon moral principles; external issues never define it.

Lee argues that even though the formal principles of Mencius differ from those of Kant, they still represent a type of formally based ethics of autonomy. For Lee, the main difference between the two types of formal ethics lies in the fact that, according to Kant, the moral subject had to be strictly free of any emotions or sentiments, whereas Mencius does not propose such a separation between reason and sentiment. Lee Ming-huei has convincingly argued that autonomy-based ethics does not necessarily require an absolute elimination of emotion, for its crucial requirement is that the moral subject has to be the only and sole determiner of a person's actions, without being dependent on any kind of external influences (Lee 2013, 39). In order to prove this supposition, Lee cites and analyses (Lee 2018, 50–51) the famous passage in *Mengzi* (s.d. Gongsun Chou I, 6), which describes the unconditioned urge to save a child who falls into a well, an impulse that is necessarily felt by every human being who witnesses such a situation. On such grounds, no condition would allow one to formulate a hypothetical imperative. Lee concludes:

"Only a categorical imperative can express this moral demand." (Lee 2018, 52)

Hence, he determines that even though Kant and Mencius perceived the moral subject in different ways, both of them constructed a system of autonomous ethics. Such an ethical conception is the basis for democratic politics (Elstein 2015b, 104).

4. Confucian Humanism

Lee Ming-huei believes that Mou Zongsan is a member of the second generation of the Modern Confucian stream of thought who certainly and absolutely deserves special philosophical attention, particularly concerning his hermeneutical reconstruction of classical Confucianism (Lee 2017, 14). In Lee's view, he was one of the pioneers of intercultural comparative philosophy. In contrast to the usual way of comparing philosophies from different traditions, where the process begins in the West and then moves to China, Mou started with Confucianism and then compared it to Kant (Lee 2017, 14). This feature also bears significance regarding the nature of humanism, which lies at the centre of Confucian philosophical discourses (Lee 2013, 14).

11
In their basic agenda, the members of the Modern Confucian stream of thought (*Xin rujia*) are mainly following the philosophies of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming Dynasties, which have primarily interpreted original Confucianism through the work *Mengzi*. Lee Ming-huei is no exception in this regard, for most of his comparisons of Kant and Confucianism are based upon his analyses of Mencian thought.

12
According to Lee Ming-huei, Mencius' concept of *xing* 性 cannot be understood as

human nature; it does not necessarily include everything that is typically human; for Lee, it is rather something that could be understood as a kind of "rational" or "ideal nature" (Lee 2005, 46–47)

13
Here, Lee was developing and elaborating upon Mou Zongsan's view on the importance of basing democracy on a system of moral principles (Elstein 2015a, 98).

14
Bu ji bu li 不即不離.

In his German book *Konfuzianischer Humanismus – Transkulturelle Kontexte* (*Confucian Humanism – Transcultural Contexts*), Lee deals with the question of differences and similarities between the European and Chinese types of humanism. When dealing with prospects and possibilities of establishing new global ethics for the 3rd millennia – an issue, which, among others, doubtless belongs to the main Modern Confucian endeavours – it is extremely important to analyse and compare the ontological and axiological positions prescribed by the different ideational traditions and intellectual histories of different cultures. Already at the beginning of the "Foreword", Lee observes that a discursive translation of the very term "humanism" is anything but an easy task. As he writes:

"The same as the terms 'Philosophy' and 'Religion', the term humanism has been perceived in China in the course of its confrontation with the West. However, even in the West, the notion appears relatively late, namely in a book by Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, which was published in 1808." (Lee 2013, 9)

He also discusses the Chinese notions of *renwenzhuyi* 人文主義, which gradually prevailed as the most common translation of the Western term humanism, pointing out that in the Chinese tradition, it was primarily used in the function of one part of a binary category,[15] originally possessing the connotation of a complementary opposition to the term *tianwenzhuyi* 天文主義. This binary category originally implied the mutually complementary interaction between the cosmic (*tianwen* 天文) and the human (*renwen* 人文) order.[16]

As already mentioned, Mou regarded Confucianism as a "humanistic religion", in contrast to his colleague Xu Fuguan, for whom it was without any religious dimensions but still possessed a humanistic spirit. Xu thus constructed the development of the entire pre-Qin intellectual history as a process of the gradual "humanisation" of primitive religious consciousness that originated in the Shang Dynasty (Lee 2013, 9). He even emphasised that "the essence of Confucianism lies in its substituting humanistic spirit for religious consciousness" (Lee 2017, 36). In principle, Lee agrees with Mou Zongsan's implicit critique of such a "headless humanism" (Lee 2017, 37). Lee Minghuei points out that the explanatory power of Xu's model is fairly limited, for it does not offer any clarification of the world and its origin as such.[17] This would imply that in Lee's view, Xu has only dealt with humanism on the level of intellectual history, without considering the philosophical dimension of the problem under research. In this context, Lee reproaches Xu overlooking the fact that throughout the later developmental history of Confucianism the relation between Heaven and humanity was at the centre of interest, not only as a kind of moral psychology but also as a philosophical system, which offered a coherent explanation of the ultimate reality of the cosmos. He thus emphasises that such an explanation "goes beyond the scope of any 'headless humanism'" (Lee 2017, 37).

As already mentioned, Lee proceeded from a comparison of such a view of Confucian humanism with the Western notion, understanding the latter not as a particular school of thought but rather as a spiritual orientation that follows human awareness and places the human being at the forefront (Lee 2013, 10). He points out that in European history it arose twice into the centre of cultural, political and ideational concerns: the first time during the Renaissance, and the second during the epoch of German Humanism, i.e. in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Both times it was connected with a certain revival of Ancient Greek philosophy that, on the other hand, was seen as a negation of

Christianity, which dominated and prevailed in European thought throughout the entire medieval period (Lee 2013, 11). Despite this important ideational aspect, Lee points out that "from a historical view, humanism and Christianity were not entirely contradicting one another" (Lee 2013, 11).

Being a representative and simultaneously a surmounter of the European Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant could, in Lee's view, not be counted among representatives of this type of "classical" humanism. However, due to his ideas of moral autonomy, of human beings as ends in themselves, and of moral religion (Lee 2013, 10), he must be seen as a predecessor of the new, second wave of this ideational current. Moreover, since in the West, as well as in China itself, Confucianism has often been seen as a certain type of humanism (see Huang 2010, 9, 11–12), Lee agrees with his precursor Mou Zongsan that it is precisely Kant's philosophy which can provide a solid link between Chinese and European humanism (Huang 2010, 19).

According to Lee Ming-huei, both systems are rooted in deontological ethics (Lee 2017, 94), and based on human autonomy and inner freedom. While Mou Zongsan has never explicitly defined Confucian ethics as one of the deontological type, Lee proves that it is a kind of deontology in several of his writings, especially in his interpretations (e.g. Lee 2013, 21–41; Lee 2017, 95) of the famous dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zai Wo (*Lunyu* 17.21). He believes this passage of the *Analects* shows that Confucius strictly advocated an ethic of conviction (*Gesinnungsethik*), which is a type of deontology (Lee 2017, 96).[18]

This leads him to the conviction that the role of Confucianism is to represent a constant way and ideals for humankind and, on the other hand, to maintain the ability to be critical of the times and society. Such a critical foundation is certainly a necessary precondition of any human mind who acts autonomously. Therefore, Lee's philosophy is always tightly linked to the question of humanism. Thus, it is thus by no means coincidental that his work often inspires

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15

Binary categories can be seen as one of the fundamental characteristics of traditional Chinese philosophy. They represent a kind of duality that seeks to attain the most real (possible) state of actuality through relativity, expressed in the relation between two oppositional notions, such as *yin-yang* 陰陽 (shadow and light), *ben-mo* 本末 (root and branches), *ti-yong* 體用 (substance and function) and so on (see Rošker 2012, 274–275). This means that every object, every phenomenon can be analysed in terms of its forms, its contents or properties through the lens of two opposing ideas or poles (also see Rošker 2019a, 337).

16

In this context, Lee also mentions two other notions that were also sporadically used to express the Western notion of humanism, i.e. *rendaozhuyi* 人道主義 and *renbenzhuyi* 人本主義. Precisely because *renwenzhuyi* 人文主義 is originally a part of a binary category, and not an independent notion, I think that these two terms would be more appropriate. However, in the Sinophone region the term

renwenzhuyi has been well-established for a long time.

17

Many contemporary Confucian scholars would not agree with such a harsh view of Xu Fuguan's work and his contribution to modern theoretical discourses. Huang Chun-chieh, for instance, often emphasizes (e.g. Huang 2011, 31) that Xu and Mou followed different methodological paths, and therefore the results of their respective works are different: however, there are mutually complementary and can certainly enrich one another.

18

This view is still controversial. It can easily be misunderstood, especially by Western readers with little knowledge of classical Chinese philosophy (see e.g. Fong 2017). But there are also some influential contemporary Chinese philosophers who advocated similar views, even though they have explained them differently (e.g. Li 1994, 469).

readers to ponder upon the question of what it really means to be human (Jones 2017, x), and how our subjectivity is linked to our past, present and future. For him, Confucian humanism is neither based on any ideology nor any state religion (Angle 2016, 218), but rather constitutes "a main resource for cultural Bildung, that is, for education, formation, and cultivation of self and society" (Lee 2017, 1).

5. The Challenges of History and Transcultural Comparisons

Notwithstanding Lee's contribution regarding his creative upgrading of Mou Zongsan's philosophy, explaining the deontological nature of Confucian ethics, and defining the specific features of Confucian humanism, we are often confronted with the problem that Confucianism – or the idea thereof – seems to oscillate between a dogmatic (ideological) and a creative (philosophical) form, which significantly complicates its identity. In this regard, it could be problematised that both Lee Ming-huei and his precursor Mou Zongsan were adherents of the Modern New Confucian stream of thought that was actually a follower of Neo-Confucianism, which has begun and spread in China during the periods of Song and Ming Dynasties. In fact, according to many different views of the development of Chinese intellectual history, the Neo-Confucian intellectual movement is but one of the three reforms of the original teachings.

The first one came into being during the Han Dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD), which has successfully defeated the Qin state and its exclusive application of the autocratic Legalist doctrine. However, since the Han empire was still a state of huge dimensions, and since during that time, governing such an immense empire required strict centralisation and a strict state doctrine, the court ideologist Dong Zhongshu created a syncretistic state ideology from original Confucian teachings with many latently incorporated legalist elements. However, these hidden elements of Legalism have deeply influenced the later historical development of Chinese history and society.[19] In this way, Dong Zhongshu created a new state doctrine, which obtained its institutional basis with the implementation of the formal official examinations; this doctrine, which was Confucian in its name, but Legalist in its very essence, prevailed as the main ideology in China until the 20th Century. Dong succeeded to combine these two originally immensely different ideational systems[20] because he interpreted original Confucian teachings through the work of Xunzi, whose work is known as being a bridge connecting Confucianism and Legalism.[21]

While Xunzi developed further the strict, rational and hierarchical elements of original Confucianism, Confucius' other well-known follower Mencius was the one who upgraded the proto-democratic and egalitarian aspects of his teachings. During the second reform, the Neo-Confucian philosophers modified Confucianism once again – but this time through the interpretations of Mencius and his "softer", more idealistic theories. The Modern New Confucian stream of thought – which can be viewed as the third reform of Confucianism – is in fact following the Neoconfucian discourses, including their focusing upon the Mencian interpretations and neglecting the role of autocratic Confucian elements that are present in the traditional state doctrine and can be followed back to Xunzi. Hence, both Mou Zongsan, and Lee Ming-huei equally neglect the existence of Legalist, i.e. autocratic elements within the Confucian state doctrine, which has dominated the development of Chinese culture throughout centuries.

A second aspect, by which we could complement Lee's theories, manifests itself in his somewhat insufficient explanation (or defence) of Mou Zongsan's notion of immanent transcendence, which has been introduced in the first section of this paper. In this regard, Lee's argumentation remains limited to semantic differentiation of the notion of *transcendence*; however, the problem of the relation between transcendence and immanence is much more complex, which means that Mou's idea of the inseparability of both concepts in Confucian philosophy has to be explained in the framework of transcultural contrastive analysis.

First, we must consider that, regarding his theory of immanent transcendence, Mou Zongsan proceeds from some basic presumptions inherent in the Confucian intellectual tradition, which denies the existence of external deities. In this context, he aimed to construct a "Chinese type" of a moral imperative based on an ontological inseparability of the human heart-mind, on the one hand, and the spiritual nature of Heaven, on the other. In such a view, the noumenon is grounded in inherent human morality, which is simultaneously the essence of cosmic nature permeated by goodness. However, Mou worked on a synthesis of Kant and Confucianism; therefore, he necessarily also assumed the Western construction of ontology, which separates the realm of noumenon from that of phenomena, and divides the godly and the worldly, the sphere of transcendence and that of concrete immanent reality. For him, both the human heart-mind (*xin*) and the humanness (*renxing*) were "transcendent". However, in the Western outline, "transcendence" inevitably means a domain that exceeds empirical knowledge and in which the transcendent (God) governs over human beings, who are restricted to the sphere of experience. In contrast to such transcendent entities, people are confined to their concrete, immanent life, and as such, cannot influence transcendent deities such as God, who is absolute, independent and implies the highest source of existence. The immanent sphere is confined to the realm of appearances, while the substance is a necessary part of a transcendent being. Thus, it is certainly questionable whether such a view can indeed be linked to the specific Chinese cosmological model of the inseparability of Heaven and human beings (*tian ren heyi*). From a formal logical viewpoint, such an idea of transcendence can in no way be validly fused with the Chinese holistic cosmology. Hence, they are necessarily in mutual contradiction.

However, we have to take into account that different cultures generate different frameworks of reference. These frameworks are linked to different methodologies applied in the process of perceiving, understanding and interpreting reality. They can be described as relational networks including ideas, terms, categories and concepts, but also values. They also consist of paradigms and perspectives that influence and determine the comprehension and evaluation

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19

Many autocratic and despotic practices that were throughout the Chinese history applied and seen as Confucian, were in fact, derived from Legalism. Here, we could mention the principle of collective responsibility or institutionalised denunciation.

20

While original Confucianism was an essentially progressive and humanistic ethics,

Legalism was a Machiavellist doctrine that was based upon the concept of severe law and punishment and worked exclusively in the best interest of an absolute ruler.

21

It is by no means coincidental that Xunzi was also the teacher of two most important Legalist politicians and scholars, namely Li Si and Han Feizi.

of particular semantic elements within this structure, as well as the structure as a whole (Rošker 2019b, 23).

The basic setting of the framework that defines the dominant currents of the pre-modern and modern European philosophy is static, while the frameworks that determine the prevalent discourses of traditional Chinese philosophy function in a dynamic and changeable way. This basic setting influences the entire theoretical system integrated into the particular framework, but also each individual part composing these systems, as well as the relations between all these parts. The same holds true for the respective fundamental paradigms of the two contrasting frames, for their central thought patterns as well as their epistemological and interpretative methods. Because of this basic difference, the first type of framework (that I will denote as framework A in the following) can presuppose a metaphysic of transcendence; in the frameworks of the latter type (i.e. framework B), however, it is not possible to distinguish between noumenon and phenomena. Although both realms are recognised as specific states of being, the demarcation line between immanence and transcendence is blurred and subjected to a dynamic process of all-embracing change. Instead, there is an omnipresent unity of culture and nature, of human beings and the cosmos and of transcendence and immanence in the Unification of Heaven and Humans (*tianren heyi* 天人合一). This distinction has much to do with different kinds of dialectical thought that were developed in the European and the Chinese ideational traditions, respectively. While categories are often applied in dual oppositions in both of the frameworks, the basic structures and modes of interaction of these binary oppositions are fundamentally different. While in framework A, the mutually opposite objects are (due to their following of the three classical laws of Western logical thought) mutually exclusive. In framework B, they appear in the form of binary categories, which function dynamically in a mutually correlative, interdependent, and complementary interaction.

The model belonging to framework A can be historically followed back to Ancient Greek philosophy and is in its modern forms rooted in dual representation models like Cartesian dualisms, in which oppositional notions (body and mind, matter and idea, substance and phenomena, subject and object, etc.) negate and exclude each other and are thus strictly and radically separated both formally and logically. Although in Hegel's theory the two oppositional concepts still form a correlative unity, they are seen as static momenta within this entirety; in the ultimate instance, this unity is nothing more than the sum of its parts, which, as momenta, condition but also contradict and hence exclude each other. In such models, the two oppositions are often denoted thesis and antithesis. The tension that results from the mutual negation and contradiction of both poles leads to the synthesis (which can be reached through *Aufhebung* or sublation in Hegel). This third stage is a qualitatively different and "higher" stage of development, in which parts of the previous opposition are preserved and others eliminated. Essentially, the dialectical thought in framework A is conceptual (i.e. containing fixedly defined contents), while in framework B it is a process based on categories (the concrete content of which is exchangeable and replaceable, not only in the semantic but also in the axiological sense). In its earliest form, this latter model goes back to the oldest Chinese proto-philosophical classic, the Book of Changes (*Yi jing*), where it appears as a model of "continuous change" or "continuity through change" (*tongbian*) (Tian 2002, 126). It functions by applying binary

categories and the principle of correlative complementarity. The oppositions it contains are interdependent and do not negate but rather complete each other. They are oppositional dualities but not dualistic contradictions. Hence, the model of their mutual relationship and interaction cannot be denoted as an abstract form of dualism, but rather as a process of a dynamic duality. Furthermore, each of them represents the very essence of the other, and none of the two can exist without the other. In contrast to the synthesis belonging to framework A, the totality or unity of both oppositions in framework B is to be found in the very process of their interaction as such; hence, it does not lead to a qualitatively new and "higher" stage or form of reality, idea, or even its understanding (which is the tendency of framework B).

Because in the framework A relation between transcendence and immanence is thus necessarily exclusive, Mou Zongsan's system of immanent transcendence appears to be in self-contradiction from the viewpoint of classical European philosophy. However, in the framework B, these two oppositional realms of existence are mutually complementary, which means that they can co-exist on the same level of being. This asymmetry is possible due to the simple fact that dynamic systems can incorporate static components, but not vice versa.

6. Conclusion

In spite of these minor inconsistencies, it is doubtlessly clear that Lee Minghuei belongs among the most important and lucid contemporary philosophical theoreticians of the Sinitic area. Although Mou Zongsan represented an important foundation and inspiration for his syntheses between Confucianism and Kant, Lee's own theory is innovative and original, for it differs from Mou's in several important aspects. He not only connected Confucian philosophies to new theories of transforming apriorism, new models of democratic political systems, and new, transculturally conditioned humanism, he also illuminated an innovative, significant facet of such syntheses by elaborating upon and developing a solid theoretical foundation for a new understanding of classical Confucian moral-philosophical discourses. In this sense, his thesis on the deontological nature of Confucian thought is of utmost importance. On such a basis, he promotes the advance of a contemporary system of ethics going hand-in-hand with modern theories of cultural, political, and social criticism (Angle 2016, 218).

The unique nature of Lee's own theories might – *inter alia* – be a result of his comprehensive knowledge of German, especially Kantian, philosophy. Furthermore, he has also thoroughly researched East Asian, especially Korean Confucianism, which enabled him to incorporate several new aspects and methods into his theory. However, the elaboration of such sources needs to be based on a deep and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of Chinese Neo-Confucian thought. Lee Ming-hui's reinterpretations of many of its sources and concepts also offers readers strong and precise arguments and methodological innovations (Angle 2016, 219), especially regarding the Neo-Confucian relation to Mencius, and the application of several central Kantian concepts and categories onto their theories, applying the innovative methods of what Stephen Angle calls "rooted global philosophy".[22] Here, we

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Angle describes Lee's philosophy as being founded on approaches which do "not spend much time on narrowly comparative questions, such as asking how two philosophers

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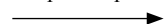
have to note Lee's important role as a promotor of European sinology, especially German, the findings of which are often unknown in the Anglophone academia of Chinese studies.[23]

Lee is also important as one of the best (if not the very best) explicators of Mou Zongsan's "Confucianization" of Kant. This characteristic is certainly connected to another important contribution of his work, for he is also well-known for developing a new methodology of hermeneutics, which is rooted in philosophical creativity (Lee 2017, 24–25) rather than in philological or historical research. As such, Lee's theory surpasses a "comparative science of philosophy" (Ogrizek 2020, 76), and is – *per se* – an independent and critical philosophy.[24]

In the last decade or so, several mainland scholars who have also been working on different forms of the Confucian revival have reproached Lee Ming-huei with focusing too exclusively on merely academic and theoretical aspects of Confucianism. However, one of his major endeavours is to open up and develop a new form of Modern Confucian theoretical research which he calls "intellectualised Confucianism", and which would proceed and evolve through a continuous dialogue with contemporary global philosophy, especially in the field of ethics. In such a new academic agenda, Confucianism could, in Lee's view, "develop a modern system of ethics as well as a theoretical basis for cultural, political, and social criticism" (Lee 2017, 8). In this sense, Lee's work also provides a strong basis and support for Western research into the critical aspects of Confucian discourses. As Geir Sigurðsson (2017, 131) points out, it is still widely unknown that practically all types of thinking regarded in the West as "critical" are also present in Confucianism. On the other hand, it developed and proposed several types of critical thinking that tend to be neglected by contemporary Western scholarship.

Therefore, Lee Ming-huei's work can certainly be regarded not only as a valuable development of Mou Zongsan's theoretical endeavours but also as a new, independently created foundation for further investigations in Confucian, Kantian and transcultural philosophies. His innovative approaches can doubtless lead us along some new paths of constructing the nowadays much needed new global philosophies.

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compare over a given topic: instead, he engages in creative philosophical interpretation and constructive philosophy, along the way making use of methods or ideas from outside the tradition which he mainly focuses. That is, Lee is doing what I call 'rooted global philosophy', with his roots in the Confucian tradition. Although he has a strong background in German philosophy, Lee has not (to my knowledge) written on German philosophy in ways that draw on Confucianism, but I am sure that Lee would be strongly supportive of such endeavors. Rooted global philosophy is in its very conception an open methodology, meant to invite new, border-crossing questions and challenges" (Angle 2016, 220).

23

In this context, we should mention his introduction on the European discourse on Confucianism as a form of virtue ethics, although he argues against its central thesis, according to which the Confucian ethics is a type of virtue ethics (Lee 2017, 92–94). Lee also criticises the typical interpretations of Confucian politics in Anglophone academia, and remains committed to the possibility of a Confucian justification for liberal political institutions while remaining quite critical of the emphasis on negative freedom in liberalism (Elstein 2015a, 91).

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However, this does not imply that Lee has completely neglected or even denied the importance of historical researchers. On the contrary, he takes it into account and applies it in many of his works, often combining in his methodology the approaches of textualism and contextualism, for he is fully aware that "we must strive to seek a dynamic balance between them in order to avoid being either illogical or impractical" (Huang 2013, 4).

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Acknowledgment

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Kant, konfucijanizam i »globalno ukorijenjena filozofija« u Tajvanu

Od Zongsana Moua do Ming-hueija Leeja

Sažetak

Konfucijsku je obnovu u Tajvanu odredila potraga za sintezom između zapadne i tradicionalne konfucijske misli. Tajvanski moderni konfucijanci smjerali su stvoriti sustav ideja i vrijednosti sposoban razriješiti socijalne i političke probleme suvremenog globalnog društva. Zongsan Mou, najpoznatiji član druge generacije suvremenog novog konfucijanizma, smjerao je oživjeti kinesku filozofijsku tradiciju kroz dijalog s modernom europskom filozofijom, naročito s radovima Immanuela Kanta. Njegov sljedbenik, Ming-huei Lee, diskutabilno je najuvaženiji stručnjak za Kantovu filozofiju u čitavoj sinitičkoj regiji. Ovaj rad smjera usporediti njihove pristupe i ocijeniti ih u širem kontekstu suvremene kineske misli. Najprije ću predstaviti Zongsanovu elaboraciju o Kantu. Zatim, predstavit ću glavne aspekte Leejeva razvoja Mouovih teorija te u kasnijim sekcijama dati kritičku ocjenu Leejevih filozofijskih inovacija, usmjeravajući se na evaluaciju njegove konceptualizacije imanentne transcendencije i konfucijske deontologije.

Ključne riječi

tajvanski moderni konfucijanizam, suvremena tajvanska filozofija, Immanuel Kant, Mou Zongsan, Lee Ming-huei

Jana S. Rošker

Kant, Konfuzianismus und die „global verwurzelte Philosophie" in Taiwan

Von Mou Zongsan bis Lee Ming-huei

Zusammenfassung

Die konfuzianische Erneuerung in Taiwan wurde durch die Suche nach einer Synthese zwischen westlichem und traditionellem konfuzianischem Gedanken determiniert. Die modernen taiwanesischen Konfuzianer hegten die Absicht, ein System von Ideen und Werten zu schaffen, das befähigt ist, die sozialen und politischen Probleme der zeitgenössischen globalen Gesellschaft zu lösen. Mou Zongsan, das prominenteste Mitglied der zweiten Generation des zeitgenössischen neuen Konfuzianismus, zielte darauf hin, die chinesische philosophische Tradition durch den Dialog mit der modernen europäischen Philosophie, vornehmlich mit den Werken Immanuel Kants, wiederzubeleben. Sein Anhänger, Lee Ming-huei, ist nachweisbar die namhafteste Fachgröße für Kants Philosophie in der gesamten sinitischen Region. Diese Arbeit setzt sich zum Ziel, ihre Herangehensweisen zu wägen, und sie im umfassenderen Kontext des zeitgenössischen chinesischen Gedankens zu bewerten. Zunächst präsentiere ich Mous Elaboration zu Kant. Im Anschluss daran stelle ich die Hauptaspekte von Lees Fortentwicklung der Theorien Mous vor und gebe in späteren Abschnitten eine kritische Einschätzung von Lees philosophischen Innovationen, indem ich mein Augenmerk auf die Evaluation seiner Konzeptualisierung der immanenten Transzendenz und der konfuzianischen Deontologie lege.

Schlüsselwörter

taiwanesischer moderner Konfuzianismus, zeitgenössische taiwanesische Philosophie, Immanuel Kant, Mou Zongsan, Lee Ming-huei

Jana S. Rošker

Kant, le confucianisme et « l'enracinement global des philosophies » à Taïwan

De Zongsan Mou à Ming-huei Lee

Résumé

Le renouvellement du confucianisme à Taïwan a été déterminé par une recherche de synthèse entre la pensée occidentale et confucéenne. Les confucéens modernes taïwanais aspiraient à la création d'un système d'idées et de valeurs capables de résoudre les problèmes sociaux et politiques de la société contemporaine globalisée. Zongsan Mou, le membre le plus connu da la seconde génération du nouveau confucianisme contemporain, souhaitait faire revivre la tradition philosophique à travers le dialogue avec la philosophie européenne moderne, particulièrement avec les travaux d'Emmanuel Kant. Son héritier, Ming-huei Lee, est indubitablement le plus éminents des experts pour la philosophie de Kant dans la région des langues sinitiques. Ce travail s'applique à comparer leurs approches et à les évaluer dans un contexte plus large de la pensée contemporaine chinoise. Je présenterai d'abord l'élaboration de Mou de la philosophie de Kant. Ensuite, je mettrai en lumière les aspects importants que Lee a développés dans les théories de Mou, et je proposerai dans les dernières sections une note critique des innovations philosophiques de Lee, en me concentrant sur l'évaluation de sa conceptualisation des transcendances immanentes et de la déontologie confucéenne.

Mots-clés

confucianisme moderne taïwanais, philosophie taïwanaise contemporaine, Emmanuel Kant, Zongsan Mou, Ming-huei Lee