ABSTRACT

The present essay first of all offers the author’s critique and reconstruction of the discourse of globalization. To the author, globalization, with its practice in China, may be observed in seven aspects: (1) as a way of global economic operation and development; (2) as a historical process; (3) as a process of financial marketization and political democratization; (4) as a critical concept; (5) as a narrative category; (6) as a cultural construction; (7) as a theoretical discourse. The author also holds that doing literary and cultural studies in the age of globalization should have a horizon of transnationalism. In bringing as many Western cultural trends and theories in China, Chinese intellectuals should also contribute to the world. In this sense, to reconstruct the Neo-Confucianist doctrines from a postmodern perspective might well be a positive cultural strategy.

Key Words: globalization, reconstruction, cultural identity, transnationalism, Neo-Confucianism
In contemporary China, talking and debating about the issue of globalization has become an academic fashion, with most of the major humanities scholars and intellectuals involved in the debate. It is true that for scholars and intellectuals from the Orient and Asian countries, including those from China, what they are most anxious about is how to (re)locate their national culture in such an age of globalization when cultures from different countries or nations are more and more homogenizing with the identity of weak cultures more and more obscuring. In the circles of literary and cultural studies, associating this phenomenon with the crisis of national identity and (re)construction of cultural identity has also attracted the attention of both comparatists and Cultural Studies scholars. Since the term identity (translated as “rentong”, or “shenfen”) frequently appears in the Chinese context, I will, in this essay, first of all offer my further discussion and critique of globalization from a cultural and intellectual perspective by providing my own reconstruction of the discourse of globalization based on the constructions made by my international counterparts. I want to emphasize that since cultural globalization as a direct consequence of economic globalization has appeared beyond one’s resistance, constructing or reconstructing Chinese national and cultural identity has been of vital significance to scholars of both comparative literature and cultural studies. To my mind, dealing with the Chinese national and cultural identity also has much to do with the construction or reconstruction of a unique Chinese theoretical discourse. In this respect, globalization has certainly provided us with a rare opportunity to reconstruct the Neo-Confucianist discourse, which was born in China and has been developing largely in the Chinese context.

GLOBALIZATION IN THEORY AND GLOCALIZATION IN PRACTICE

No doubt, we now live in an age of globalization as so many intellectuals have already realized. Despite the fact that globalization, especially in culture and the humanities, is stubbornly resisted by the other force: localization, we have to recognize that globalization is an objective phenomenon although it does appear as a ghost-like specter haunting our memory every now and then and then and influencing our cultural and intellectual life as well as our literary and cultural studies. According to the ready-made researches (Robertson 1992; Robertson and White 2003),
globalization is not anything created by any scholars, but rather an existing phenomenon in our daily life. Under the impact of globalization, cultural and literary market has been more and more shrinking. Traditional disciplines of the humanities are severely challenged by the over-inflation of knowledge and information. Transnational corporations have largely transgressed the boundaries of nations, countries and even continents, whose employees from different countries both work in the interests of their own countries as well as those of their corporations. Since these corporations both exploit their own countries as well as other countries, their employees’ identity is obviously uncertain and even obscure. In the age of globalization, all the artificial demarcation of center and periphery has been blurred, and the new division of international labor has come into being. Along with the large-scale immigration, a new identity crisis has appeared in national cultures with the traveling of the (imperial and global) Western culture to the (peripheral and local) Oriental and Third World countries.

Although the term globalization is a recently used one, it is by no means a contemporary event, nor is the process of globalization in economy and finance a 20th century occurrence. In this aspect, Marx and Engels were two of the earliest Western thinkers and scholars dealing with this issue. Just as they pointed out about one hundred and sixty years ago in their significant *Communist Manifesto* when world capitalism was rising as a very energetic and dynamic force:

> The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the productions of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature (68-9).

We can find in the above quotation how globalization starts to travel from the West in economy and finance in the late 15th century to the East and swiftly swept world
economy and cultural and intellectual production and finally helped form a sort of world literature in the latter part of the 19th century. In this sense, the birth of comparative literature is such a consequence in the process of globalization. The earliest stage of comparative literature is that of world literature, and after over one hundred years, the culminate stage of comparative literature should also be that of world literature. But this sort of world literature is far beyond the utopian construction made by Goethe and developed by Marx and Engels. Just as Marx and Engels describe, capitalism has triumphed over feudalism as a progressive force at its rising time, but now, it has completed its last stage of globalization and entered the period of late capitalism (Jameson 1991). Postmodernism as a consequence of globalization in culture is characterized by the various symptoms of late capitalism.

Obviously, just as globalization did at its very beginning, its law is very cruel and forceful. It has marginalized the majority of people with the ever-striking difference between the rich and the poor. Economic globalization has given risen to cultural globalization in the process of which Western, or more specifically, American culture is imposing its value notion upon Third World culture. So in today’s China, many people simply hold that globalization means Westernization, and Westernization is nothing but Americanization, which find particular embodiment in the world-wide popularization of McDonald, Hollywood and the English language in the Oriental and Asian countries. Some non-English-speaking intellectuals are thus very much worried about the possible “colonization” of their own cultures and languages. What they could do is to stubbornly seek a new national and cultural “identity” in such a “homogenizing” atmosphere by highlighting their national and cultural spirit.

Dialectically speaking, we should recognize that globalization gives rise to the interpenetrating processes of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism (Robertson 1992: 100). That is, the impact of globalization is embodied at two poles: its effect travels from the West to the East, and at the same time, from the East to the West. To Jameson, “globalization is a communicational concept, which alternately masks and transmits cultural or economic meanings…. there are both denser and more extensive communicational networks all over the world today, networks that are on the one hand the result of remarkable
innovations in communicational technologies of all kinds, and on the other have as their foundation the tendentially greater degree of modernization in all the countries of the world, or at least in their big cities, which includes the implantation of such technologies” (1998: 55). So in the age of globalization, communication between different societies, cultures and nations is more and more frequent with the exchange of personnel and traveling of theory and culture chiefly from the West to the East.

Obviously, in the Chinese context, globalization is an “imported” concept from the West. Like any of the Western theories or cultural trends, once entering into the Chinese context, it will be subject to certain metamorphosis and finally generate some new and different versions. That is, globalization cannot be realized until it is localized in the Chinese context, or becomes “glocalized”. The study of globalization in China’s mainland was an event in the early 1990s with American scholar Arif Dirlik’s lecture tour in Beijing as its beginning. ¹But at that time, China’s mainland was only at an unconscious stage of involving itself in the process of globalization. Scholars of the humanities and social sciences seemed to pay more attention to the debate on the decline of modernity and the rise of postmodernity in the Chinese context. As a political and cultural construction, globalization has certainly taken the place of modernity and is more characteristic of postmodernity than modernity. But no sooner had the mainland scholars realized the importance of globalization before they started their comprehensive study of this hot topic. Since 1998, there have been at over ten national and international conferences on globalization held in Beijing with five exclusively dealing with globalization and its relations with culture and literature. ²Now almost all the Chinese scholars of the humanities and social sciences have realized that globalization is no longer a deliberately constructed cultural myth.

¹ In spring 1990, Professor Arif Dirlik who worked at Duke University at the time was invited by China’s Central Compilation and Translation Bureau to give a lecture on globalization and contemporary capitalism, which was very fresh to the audience although it did not attract the broad attention from the academic circles.
² I here just mention the following five influential conferences on globalization and culture and literature held in Beijing since 1998: The International Conference on Globalization and the Future of the Humanities in August 1998; The International Conference on the Future of Literary Theory: China and the World in August 2000; The International Conference on Economic Globalization and the Orientation of Chinese Culture in November 2000; The International Conference on Literature, Culture and Humanity in the Context of Globalization in August 2001; and Third Sino-American Symposium on Comparative Literature: Globalizing Comparative Literature in August 2001. I was very pleased to function as the general organizer of the first two and the last conferences. Since then, there have been more international conferences dealing with the issue of globalization among other cutting edge theoretic issues.
It has largely been “localized” in the Chinese context with different practices in China. But what they are still worried about most is how to preserve or reconstruct a new Chinese national and cultural identity in face of the threatening challenge raised by globalization. This is also true of the intellectuals of other Asian countries or regions.

Since globalization is an “imported” theoretic concept from the West, it must be subject to various constructions and reconstructions in different cultural contexts. Here I would like to offer my own reconstruction of this controversial concept based on the researches made by my Western and international counterparts. To me, according to what is practiced in the Chinese context, globalization could be observed in the following seven aspects.

1. **Globalization as a way of global economic operation and development.** Undoubtedly, Global capital expansion has certainly caused the formation of new international division of labor. To avoid unnecessary repetition in production, some widely known commodities could be sold world wide under the cruel law of “survival of the fittest”. In this way, it is not surprising that China has in the past decades been greatly benefited from the process of economic globalization.

2. **Globalization as a historical process.** According to Marx and Engels, this process started with Columbus’ discovery of the Americas and the consequent global capital expansion, and culminated in the stage of transnational capitalization in the 1980s. But it does not mean that capitalism has come to an end, but rather, it is developing in two orientations: either coming to its natural end to its internal logic, or reviving itself after readjusting its internal mechanism. The current Chinese practice in the construction of a harmonious and well-off society is largely affected by the practice in some European countries. Since China did not officially experience the phase of capitalism, it is actually in the age of post-socialism, or a stage of socio-capitalization of Chinese characteristics.

3. **Globalization as a process of financial marketization and political democratization.** Along with the appearance of globalization, the flow of capital has a free outlet, with the free trade largely replacing the old way of government intervention in foreign trade. Unlike the aggression made by old imperialism, the new economic imperialism and cultural imperialism usually intervene in other countries by gradual penetration, in the process of which political democracy is naturally realized when economy has fully developed onto a certain stage. The slow but increasingly
progressing democracy in contemporary China has more or less proved the validity of this gradual process. But democracy will finally be realized in China although in a “glocalized” manner.

(4) **Globalization as a critical concept.** The issue of globalization heatedly discussed in the international humanities and social sciences is also viewed as a critical concept, with which theorists try to deconstruct the old-fashioned concepts of modernity/postmodernity. That is, globalization has deconstructed the artificial opposition between modernity and postmodernity by overlapping the two, thereby breaking through the Eurocentric mode of thinking.

(5) **Globalization as a narrative category.** Just as Homi Bhabha points out that nation is in a sense a sort of “narration”(1990: 1), globalization is therefore a grand narrative, but a “fragmentary” grand narrative, generalized by different theorists. National and cultural identity is becoming more and more obscured, with single identity replaced by “splitting” and even multiple identities. People in the age of globalization are suffering from a sort of identity crisis, which finds particular embodiment in the “returned overseas talents” (hai gui pai) in China who do not necessarily have a single identity of their own as they are always in a diasporic and movable state.

(6) **Globalization as a cultural construction.** Globalization in culture undoubtedly demonstrates that it is also a cultural construction and reconstruction like modernism and postmodernism. In this way, it is the goal for theorists to construct a culture of globalization. For us Chinese scholars of literary and cultural studies, observing our research objects in a broader global context and communicate with our international counterparts on the same level will certainly broaden our horizon and endow our theoretical debate with more liveliness so as to make theoretical and constructive innovation on the international level.

(7) **Globalization as a theoretical discourse.** Now that more and more scholars of the humanities are involved in the discussion on this issue, globalization has gradually become a polemic and theoretical discourse with which scholars from different disciplines could communicate or debate on some theoretical issues. I thus agree with Roland Robertson (2002) that in theorizing cultural phenomena, we could rather use the concept of globality in stead of globalization, for the former appeared much earlier than the latter, and the former more appropriate for describing the orientation and development of cultural and literary production and communication.
Although we can still offer some more descriptions about globalization, I should limit it to the fields of literary and cultural studies. It is true that China is one of the few countries greatly benefited from globalization in an overall way: not only Chinese economy is booming in a global capitalization, but also is the Chinese language expanding its boundary and becoming a major world language, which has certainly promoted the popularization of Chinese culture world wide. In this aspect, China is undergoing an unprecedented process of “depovertization” and “de-Third-Worldization”. In this situation, how shall we Chinese intellectuals construct or reconstruct our national and cultural identity or identities? That is what I am going to discuss in such a glocalized context.

**TOWARD A TRANSNATIONAL (RE)CONSTRUCTION OF CHINESE IDENTIT(IES)**

It is true that in the past ten years, globalization has been sweeping the whole world, directly influencing China’s politics, economy, society and culture. If we recognize that globalization has indeed exerted great influence on cultural and literary studies, then we could further affirm that the advent of globalization has not only obscured the boundary of nation-states, but also obscured that of disciplines making literary studies in a broader context of cultural studies. Actually, literary studies should not be opposed to cultural studies since the domain of literary studies now has largely been expanded, nor should national literature studies be opposed to comparative literature studies. If we recognize that globalization has impacted more or less studies of an individual national literature, then it has on the contrary promoted studies of comparative literature and world literature: it makes traditional elite literary studies largely expand its domain and comparative literature studies merge into cultural studies. No doubt, in the current Western literary and cultural studies circles, quite a few scholars are doing both literary and cultural studies. To these scholars, to observe literary phenomena cannot overlook cultural factors. If we overemphasize literary form by sticking to the old-fashioned formalist and structuralist principle we will most probably neglect the cultural significance of literary phenomena. That is, it is possible to put literary studies in a broader context of cultural studies in an attempt to transcend literature proper.
Let us come back to the issue of globalization. Dialectically speaking, globalization has brought about two aspects of influence to China’s literary and cultural studies: its positive aspect lies in that it brings cultural and intellectual production closer to the governance of market economy rather than the past socialist plan economy. But on the other hand, it makes elite cultural production more and more difficult, thus enlarging the gap between elite culture and popular culture. In the current era, traditionally formalistically oriented literary theory has been replaced by more inclusive cultural theory or just theory, offering us Chinese theorists rare opportunities to change our status: from a “theory consuming country” into a “theory producing country”. For any theory produced in the Western context, if it intends to become universal, should be appropriate to interpret non-Western literary and cultural phenomena. Similarly, any theory produced in a non-Western context, if it intends to move from “periphery” to “center”, must be first of all “discovered” by Western academia. Thus a sort of “regional” theory will gradually develop into a “global” or “universal” theory. The prevalence of postcolonial theory initiated by those of the third world background serves as such a fine example. Similarly, the rise of Neo-Confucianism constructed and developed by some overseas Chinese intellectuals has also undergone a sort of “de-marginalization” and “re-centralization”, as a result of which, the postmodernized and reconstructed Confucianism will at least manifest itself as a forceful theoretic discourse in the “post-theoretic era”. As for this, I will discuss it later on.

Confronted with the impact of globalization, I here just propose one cultural strategy for us Chinese intellectuals, that is, we should first of all realize that we are now in the age of globalization which is beyond any expectation or resistance. But on the other hand, we cannot be dragged by these strong waves without distinction and any critique. So the correct attitude might be like this: we might well make full use of globalization to develop Chinese culture without having its cultural spirit colonized in an attempt to popularize Chinese culture world wide. In this sense, sticking to the old-fashioned nationalism will prevent us from giving full play to our cultural and literary imagination, and we will lose more opportunities to develop ourselves in an overall way. We could draw some lessons in this respect from the history of modern Chinese culture and literature. As a matter of fact, resisting to or transcending over the old-fashioned nationalism has at least in the Chinese context had a long period of time, even before the May Fourth period.
In the past century, Chinese literature, under the Western influence, has been moving toward the world. To those conservative intellectuals, this opening up to the outside world and modernity is a sort of historical process of colonizing Chinese culture and literature. In this way, the May Fourth Movement started the process of Chinese modernity, in which Western cultural trends and academic thoughts flooded into China, destroying the mechanism of China’s long-lasting nationalism. What is even worse is, to many people, that the Chinese language was also largely “Europeanized” or “Westernized”. But to my mind, this is undoubtedly the direct result of China’s modernity which is different from the Western modernity and which is able to carry on dialogues with both traditional Chinese culture and literature as well as with modern Western culture and literature. One of the conspicuous phenomena is that numerous foreign literary works and theoretic works were translated into Chinese, thus strongly stimulating Chinese writers’ creative imagination. Even Lu Xun, a pioneering figure of modern Chinese culture and literature, in talking about his literary inspiration, rather frankly admitted:

But when I began to write novels, I did not realize that I have the talent of writing fiction. For at the time, I stayed in a guest house in Beijing, where I could not write research papers as I did not have any references, nor could I do translation as I did not even have the original texts at hand. In this way, what I could do is to write something like fiction. Hence The Diary of a Mad Man came out. When I wrote this piece, I only depended on some hundred foreign literary works I had read and some knowledge of medicine I had obtained. As for other preparations, just no more (512, translations are mine).

Although, as we all know, Lu Xun had profound Chinese cultural and literary attainment, he still tried to deny his being influenced by traditional Chinese literature largely due to his strong motivation of modernizing Chinese literature and culture. Actually, to Lu Xun, a man of letters with a profound knowledge of both Chinese and Western learning, proposing an overall “Westernization” is nothing but a cultural and intellectual strategy. He does not want to destroy traditional Chinese nationalist spirit, but rather, he wants to highlight a sort of transnational cultural spirit in an attempt to reconstruct Chinese national and cultural identity in a broader context of global culture and world literature. His literary works, such as “The True Story of Ah Q”, express his sharp critique of this sort of narrow-minded national character embodied in the protagonist Ah Q. Other May Fourth writers, such as Hu Shi and Guo Moruo,
have also forcefully deconstructed traditional Chinese literary discourse by translating as many Western literary works into Chinese as possible. As a result of such large-scale translation, there appeared a modern Chinese literary canon, with modern Chinese literature closer to world literature becoming an unseparate part of world literature. In writing a modern Chinese literary history, translation should be regarded as to have played an important role. It is through translation that a new literature was born which has helped construct a new transnationalism.

Although the May Fourth Movement was an event about ninety years ago, it is still subject to various criticisms and controversies. Obviously, if we re-examine the positive and negative consequences of the May Fourth Movement from today’s point of view, we may well reach such a conclusion: in bringing various Western cultural trends and theories in China, the May Fourth writers and intellectuals overlooked the attempt at introducing Chinese culture and literature to the outside world. What is even worse is in destroying the Confucius temples, they also got rid of some of the positive essences in Confucianism, thereby anticipating the “crisis of belief” in contemporary China. In severely criticizing nationalism, they led China in a pit of cultural colonialism. Fortunately, in the current age of globalization, China has become one of the very few countries which have been greatly benefited from globalization economically. The recent practice of cultural globalization in the Chinese context will by no means colonize Chinese culture, but instead, it will help promote Chinese culture and literature world wide. So in this aspect, highlighting a sort of “transnationalism”, which is similar to cosmopolitanism, might well be the goal of us scholars of comparative literature and cultural studies.

It is true that whether we do literary studies or cultural studies, we cannot do it well without the intermediary of language. To a large extent, the influence of globalization on culture also finds particular embodiment in the remapping of world language system: the originally popular languages becoming more and more popular, and the originally less popular languages either extinguished or becoming weaker. In this aspect, English and Chinese are two of the major world languages which are most benefited from the globalization of culture. Due to the comprehensive power of the United States and the long-standing colonial heritage of the British Empire, the popularity and influence of English still ranks the first among all the major world
languages. Nevertheless, the popularization of English has both positive and negative factors: on the one hand, globalization has pushed the English language to the position of world linguistic hegemony. If one does not understand English, he can hardly survive the current era of information. But on the other hand, English has been undergoing a sort of splitting: from the so-called “King’s English” or “Queen’s English” into “world englishes” or “global englishes” with strong indigenous pronunciations and grammatical rules. Then, what is the consequence of globalization on Chinese, the most popular language next to English? Obviously, as we have noticed, Chinese has also undergone a sort of movement: from a national language to a regional language and finally to one of the major world languages. The popularization of Chinese world wide has undoubtedly changed the established framework of world culture. On the other hand, we should recognize the negative aspect of the popularization of Chinese: the national and cultural identity of Chinese has also been obscured: from one standard Chinese into many diversified and different chineses. To me, if Chinese could really become the second major world language next to English, it will complement with the latter more or less. The advent of globalization has blurred the boundary of nation-states as well as that of languages and cultures, with the new world language system coming into being. In this new framework of world language and culture, the transnationality of Chinese language and culture will become more and more conspicuous. In this way, we will think of rewriting a new literary history in Chinese since we have already had a huge project of *The Comparative History of Literature in European Languages* sponsored by the International Comparative Literature Association.

**(RE)CONSTRUCTING NEO‐CONFUCIANIST DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION**

In view of my above analyses, I think that the so-called seeking “a pure” Asian or Chinese identity is nothing but a myth in such an age of globalization. Since identity is both natural born and constructible afterwards, it could not be always pure. Similarly, in doing cross-cultural literary and cultural studies, we cannot always stick to nationalism. In this sense, a dynamic and global cultural theory could function not only at the center but also at the periphery. Globalization has also brought about
possibilities for Asian or other non-Western scholars to “globalize” their own culture and reconstruct their cultural identity as well as critical discourse. In this part I will put forward a positive strategy of globalizing Oriental and Chinese culture in an attempt to construct or reconstruct the Chinese critical discourse in the process of cultural globalization.

As is known, the Chinese government has decided to set up hundreds of Confucius Institutes (Kongzi xueyuan) world wide for the purpose of globalizing Chinese language and culture. But actually, “Confucius” here is only used as a symbolic of traditional Chinese language and culture, which has nothing to do with the Confucianist doctrines. When we talk about Confucianism or the Confucian doctrines, we simply refer to the theoretic and cultural doctrines created by Confucius and interpreted and developed by his disciples in different periods of Chinese history, especially by those in the Song and Ming dynasties. So far the Confucianist doctrines have undergone twists and turns in the history of modern Chinese culture and thought. It was severely castigated during the May 4th period and more severely criticized during the Cultural Revolution, simply because it was regarded as an oppositional force to China’s cultural modernity and to the communist belief. In the current age of globalization, Chinese economy has indeed been developing by leaps and bounds with its GDP ranking the third by the end of 2007. But what is the state of China’s cultural and intellectual production at present? Frankly speaking, it is not optimistic since most of the Chinese scholars’ theoretical discourses are either “borrowed” or translated from the West although quite a few scholars of traditional Chinese learning have always been trying to have Confucianism revived. I fully understand this attempt, but I think that traditional Confucianism or Neo-Confucianism developed by those of the Song and Ming dynasties should be reconstructed in today’s global postmodern society. The feudal aspects should be excluded while the positive are preserved. In this way, a sort of postmodern Neo-Confucianism could move from periphery to center and utter its stronger and stronger voice among world major theoretical discourses.

Fortunately, the revival of Confucianism in China today coincides with the current government policy of constructing a harmonious society as well as a harmonious world. But the Confucianism in contemporary China has also been subject to certain
metamorphosis: its ethic and humanistic doctrines should be highlighted and its conservative feudal and religious doctrines should be excluded after being criticized. For scholars of literary and cultural studies as well as other humanities intellectuals, it will be good just to “revive” or give full play to the old Confucian ethics in a selective and critical way. In this way, reconstructing a sort of Neo-Confucianism from a postmodern perspective is completely possible in the current age of globalization as it is more and more influential beyond the Chinese territories. Such overseas Chinese scholars and intellectuals like Mou Zongsan, Tu Wei-ming and Cheng Chung-ying have all made great efforts to reconstruct it and promote it world wide. Tu not only frequently visits mainland China and Taiwan and lectures in some leading Chinese universities, but also has interviews at China Central TV Station and other popular mass media to popularize his Neo-Confucianist doctrines. Due to his great effort, Neo-Confucianism could at least co-exist with the various prevalent Western cultural theories and moral standards which are largely accepted by the new generation of Chinese intellectuals. In recent years, some of my Chinese colleagues find that postmodernism and Neo-Confucianism have something in common: both have deconstructed the totalitarian singular discourse of modernity and offered us an alternative modernity of Oriental or Chinese characteristics. There was even an international conference held in October 2006 on Confucianism in the Postmodern Era in Beijing, at which Cheng Chung-ying delivered a keynote speech although Tu Wei-ming was absent. So these two different discourses may well carry on effective dialogues and complement each other.

In the view of Tu Wei-ming, the most important significance of Confucianism today is not the spirit of political participation, but rather its humanistic spirit, for the Confucian “calling” in the contemporary era “addresses a much more profound humanistic vision than political participation alone, no matter how broadly conceived, can accommodate. The symbolic resources that the Confucians tap for their own personal development and for the realisation of their communal idea of humanity is ethico-religious as well as political. In fact, their perception of ‘politics’ not only as managing the world in economic and social terms but also as transforming the world

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3 The International Conference on Confucianism in the Postmodern Era was, co-sponsored by Beijing Language and Culture University and the University of Hawaii, held on 28-29 October, 2006 in Beijing. I was also invited to deliver a speech based on some of my ideas from the present essay. I here just express my heartfelt thanks to the conference organizer Huang Zhuoyue.
in the educational and cultural sense impels them to root their political leadership in social conscience. Confucian intellectuals may not actively seek official positions to put their ideas into practice, but they are always engaged politically through their poetic sensitivity, social responsibility, historical consciousness and metaphysical insight” (ix-x). Obviously, Tu has here already reconstructed the traditional Confucianist doctrines by referring to Western theory, both modern and postmodern. And his efforts made to popularize his Neo-Confucianism in the past decade have proved the validity of his selective and comprising endeavor to “globalize” Neo-Confucianism. Due to the impact of globalization in culture, the imperial (Western and global) theory could move from center to periphery, and the non-Western (Oriental and local) theory could also move from periphery to center in an attempt to deconstruct the monolithic center paving the way for a pluralistic center or centers in the new framework of global culture.

Cheng Chung-ying has gone a bit further. He not only promotes Neo-Confucianism in some Chinese-speaking countries or regions, but also publishes extensively in the English-speaking world in an attempt to promote Neo-Confucianism in a global context. In one of the issues of the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* edited by himself, he not only discusses in detail about the relationship between democracy and Chinese philosophy in general, but also puts forward his own paradigm on democracy, or an alternative democracy of Chinese characteristics, from the perspective of Neo-Confucianism. To him, the purpose of democracy is “twofold”: “It aims at achieving an enduring order and harmony of a community in which individual members may enjoy self-expression and other freedoms without dominance of others; it also aims at producing and supporting free individuals whose freedoms will be the basis for building an orderly and harmonious society and community. I believe that both aims should be achieved at the same time” (152). As for the relations between political power and virtues, he has a different view from those European philosophers: “for Confucianism, once becoming a ruler or a public official, one should not thereby give up one’s virtues. Instead the inner private virtues often become a foundation and a source of inspiration for outer public social and political virtues for the individual in power. There is no reason why a Confucian philosophy of virtues could not be seen

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4 For instance, one of Cheng’s lectures in April 2007 at Tsinghua University is entitled “The Modernization and Postmodernization of Confucianism in the Age of Globalization”.

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and function as a dynamic agency of democratization that is also bidirectional: virtues
to become powers and powers become virtues” (154). Since the above ideas are close
to the Chinese government’s policy of “managing the country with ethics and virtues”
(yi de zhiguo), Cheng is more than welcome to lecture at different Chinese
universities. Here the emphasis of the humanistic and ethical aspect of Confucianism
also well coincides with the current Chinese practice of “constructing a harmonious
society” and “constructing a harmonious world”, so it will have no difficulty
developing without any intervention in contemporary China.

On the whole, Neo-Confucianism, or the “globalized” postmodern Confucianism, will
be another forceful discourse in the era of globalization with more and more people
intending to live comfortably without struggle or war. Since Neo-Confucianism is far
more complicated with different schools and factions competing one another and
manifests itself differently in different areas or periods of time, the present essay
cannot deal with it in detail. I just want to emphasize before concluding my essay that
in the past centuries, Confucianism, since its formulation by Confucius himself and
revision and reconstructions by his disciples in different historical periods, has
gradually become a powerful and influential discursive force dominating Chinese
culture and civilization. It cannot replace any dominant Western theoretical doctrines,
but it will at least utter a different voice of Oriental or Asian characteristics and
display a unique Asian or Chinese national and cultural identity or identities.
Confronted with the Western influence and globalism, to get Confucianism revived is
of great positive significance, but it is also a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it
will contribute a great deal to the promotion of Chinese culture and civilization world
wide, but on the other hand, people might raise another question: will it, as an
opposite force to the West-centered globalism, cause another “clash of civilizations”? I
think the answer to this question is negative. Along with the rapid development of
Chinese economy and the heightening of China’s comprehensive power, the forceful
position of Chinese culture and civilization should be further established. In this sense,
it will be significant to reconstruct Neo-Confucianism, from a global postmodern
perspective, as a cultural and theoretical discourse of Chinese characteristics. And it
will be one of the greatest contributions that China’s humanities intellectuals and
literary and cultural scholars could make to world culture and civilization.
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