Selfhood and Fiduciary Community: A Smithian Reading of Tu Weiming's Confucian Humanism

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Abstract Tu Weiming, as a leading spokesman for contemporary New Confucianism, has been reinterpreting the Confucian tradition in the face of the challenges of modernity. Tu takes selfhood as his starting point, emphasizing the importance of cultivating the human mind-and-heart as a deepening and broadening process to realize the anthropocosmic *dao*. He highlights the concept of a "fiduciary community" and advocates that, because of it, Confucianism remains a dynamic "inclusive humanism." Tu's mode of thinking tallies well with Wilfred C. Smith's vision of religion, specifically the latter's exposition of faith as a universal human quality and proposal of "corporate critical self-consciousness." This article details the theories of both scholars, highlights their similarities, and contrasts their differences. It argues that Smith's world theology provides a heuristic framework through which one understands how Tu has advanced his Confucian humanism from a Chinese philosophical or cultural tradition to the midst of world religions.

Keywords Enlightenment · Faith · Mind-and-heart · Community · Transcendence

1 Introduction

"A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture," jointly signed and published by Carsun Chang (Zhang Junmai 張君勱), Tang Chun-i (Tang Junyi 唐君毅), Mou Tsung-san (Mou Zongsan 牟宗三), and Hsu Fo-kuan (Xu Fuguan 徐復觀) in 1958, is considered a landmark in the rise of contemporary Neo-Confucianism or New Confucianism.[1] In it, the signatories strongly assert the continued existence of Chinese culture as a living tradition and affirm the perennial value of the Confucian learning of mind-and-heart. They earnestly plea with the Western intellectual community to learn from Chinese

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[1]For the original text, see Tang 1975: 865–929. Its English translation can be found in Carsun Chang 1962: 455–483. For a discussion of the content and significance of this manifesto, see Chang Hao 1976, Tu 1991a, and Liu 2003: 21–40.

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culture features such as intuitive knowledge, modes of all-around understanding, commis-eration, the wisdom of cultural perpetuation, and the treatment of the whole world as one family. In a time of political upheaval and spiritual crisis, they reveal their devotion to the centuries-old Confucian tradition and its transmission, on the one hand, and their genuine desire to seek dialogue with equal partners in the West, on the other.

The last mentioned motivation—to advance Confucianism into the realm of world cultures and religions for mutual understanding—is particularly noteworthy. It marks the New Confucians' understanding of their own culture not as a local, parochial product but as a universal, dynamic resource, which can contribute significantly to the world community. Indeed, many of these New Confucians devoted their lifelong effort to the realization of this goal. Tang Junyi, for example, adopted Hegelian idealism to interpret the Neo-Confucian concept of mind-and-heart. Mou Zongsan, too, endeavored to present Confucian moral metaphysics to a contemporary audience by synthesizing it with Kant's philosophy of religion. They thus exhibited a common concern and have characteristically charted New Confucianism's route of intellectual expansion in recent decades.

As a leading spokesman for the third generation of New Confucianism,[2] Tu Weiming inherited his predecessors' vision and carried it further, in the face of rising global consciousness. To better define the Confucian community which would assume the task of actualizing this vision, he formulated the idea of a "cultural China" which would include the geopolitical entities of China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore as the first group, Diaspora Chinese as the second, and non-Chinese "who try to understand China intellectually and bring their conceptions of China to their own linguistic communities" as the third (Tu 1991b: 13). These three groups combined, sharing a "common creed" and historically operating in the "third epoch" of the Confucian tradition, are expected to engage in dialogue with other world religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as well as with secular ideologies like Marxism and Freudianism (Tu 1986). For this reason, Tu, with his subtle interpretation of Confucian humanism, takes selfhood as his starting point and then emphasizes the importance of cultivating human subjectivity as a deepening and broadening process in order to realize the anthropocosmic *dao*. At the same time, he highlights the concept of "fiduciary community" and contends that, because of it, Confucianism remains a dynamic "inclusive humanism."

It is interesting to observe that Wilfred C. Smith, a historian of world religions and stout advocate of religious pluralism, although approaching religion from a different perspective, shares many ideas that Tu and his like-minded forebears proposed. Specifically, Smith bases his understanding of religion upon faith as a universal human quality, from which different "cumulative traditions" are generated. He broaches the concept of "corporate critical self-consciousness" and argues that one should take it seriously if a world community is to be established and sustained. Both Tu and Smith are programmatic in their respective agendas; they begin with what is fundamentally personal and expand to what is necessarily worldwide and communal. In this connection, I find it significant to compare Tu's "inclusive humanism" with Smith's "humane knowledge," as the latter named his world theology. My intent is not only to interpret their respective meanings in their own terms, but, by using Smith's theology of religion as a heuristic framework, to elucidate how Confucianism has, through Tu's effort, creatively progressed from a Chinese philosophy or cultural tradition and arrived in the midst of world religions.

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[2] For an introduction to New Confucian figures and their generational classifications, see Liu 2003: 24–25.

2 Wilfred C. Smith's Theology of Religion

Wilfred C. Smith's central intellectual concern is to explore the "meaning and end of religion."[3] He began his academic career as an Islamicist, working in religiously pluralistic India, where Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims lived and interacted together closely. Traditional Christian theology aimed to convert non-Christians and upheld an exclusivist stance, while repudiating non-Christian religions. Smith found this inadequate and distorting. He was then searching for an interreligious hermeneutics which could best interpret and understand a community composed of people of different religious persuasions. The artificial, political partition of India and Pakistan after the Second World War, orchestrated by Western superpowers, ripped people and their shared identities apart and escalated internecine conflict. This prompted him to reflect upon the issue of communal solidarity and, at the same time, critically reexamine the general Christian attitude toward other world religions.[4]

Smith finds that the ushering in of a cosmopolitan environment after the mid-twentieth century rendered traditional Christian theology parochial. Hendrik Kraemer, representative of modern conservative Catholicism, was unable to justify his missionology, just as Paul Tillich would find his liberal Protestant theology isolationist (Smith 1963a: 118–122). To Smith's mind, the evolving history of "religion" as a term and concept in the West most tellingly reflects this Christian parochialism. *Religio*, in Latin, originally referred to "a power outside man (*sic*) obligating him (*sic*) to certain behavior under pain of threatened awesome retribution, a kind of tabu, or the feeling in man (*sic*) vis-à-via such powers" (Smith 1963b/1978: 20).[5] In this sense, it expressed subjective human feelings, a human response to what was supposed to be divine or supernatural. A great amount of Western literature shows that before the seventeenth century, "religion" was primarily used to convey such human emotions as piety, obedience, worship, or faith, descriptions associated with the psychological state of the followers of faith (Smith 1963b/1978: 23–37). The term gradually lost its inner human dimension during the Enlightenment. Compounded by Western colonial expansion and wider contacts with the non-Christian world, "religion" started to designate a distinguishable belief tradition or system, often carrying with it an apologetic connotation. What used to be "religion" in the singular became "religions" in the plural. Hence this term, initially meaning a universal human quality, denotes observable or quantifiable entities in its modern ramifications. The resort to and emphasis upon cognitive knowledge was clear in this externalization process (Smith 1963b/1978: 37–44).

The process during which "religion" was transformed into its modern usage also betrays Western misunderstanding and misrepresentation of "the faith of other men (*sic*)."[6] When dealing with Christianity, Westerners, as insiders, expressed what is most sacred and sublime in their own tradition, obviously an internal, qualitative approach. However, when referring to non-Christian "religions," following the legacy of nineteenth century Comparative Religion, they applied "isms" to different traditions of faith. Thus one sees

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[3] The phrase is taken from the title of Smith's *magnum opus, The Meaning and End of Religion*; see Smith 1963b/1978.

[4] Two books on Islam (Smith 1943 and 1957) reflect Smith's scholarly engagement in this period of his life. For a brief introduction to Smith's intellectual biography, see Cracknell 2001: 1–10.

[5] I am aware that although Smith's theology is meant to be inclusive in culture, religion, race, and gender, he nevertheless cannot avoid using sexist terminology, especially in his early writings as cited here and in the following space. In this article, I use gender-neutral language, but, in order to be faithful, retain other authors' original texts when cited.

[6] This is also an application of another of Smith's books (Smith 1963a).

the existence of such nomenclatures as Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Shintoism, etc. It is as if these "religions" are abstract systems or distanced objects to be grasped by the outsider's cognitive power. In this way Westerners totally ignore what is valuable, holy, or even ultimate to other faith holders and reify what is most preciously universal and human, while creating confusion and antagonism in the global community (Smith 1963b/1978: 53–79).

Smith observes that the tendency toward reification in the Western intellectual world became evermore aggravated after the mid-twentieth century, a phenomenon most evident among linguistic analysts. Analytic philosophers, typified by A. J. Ayer, appealed to logical positivism and regarded religious statements as "meaningless, irrational, or simply false" (Smith 1998: 5). They treated religious expressions as inanimate, isolatable objects, aimed at the analysis of words detached from their syntactic, cultural, and historical contexts. They ignored the fact that language is a human construct borne of lived experience, and therefore possibly rich in symbolic meanings. Objectivity and impersonalism, cherished and upheld by modern scientism, was merely a hindrance to understanding religion. Smith argued that scholars should rather understand the ideals humans aspire to before analyzing seemingly "meaningless and irrational" religious language, otherwise they would always remain outside of the faith holder's world of thought and feeling (Smith 1998: 29–35 and 1979: 20–32).

Smith further points out that under powerful objectivist or positivist currents, crucial dimensions such as the transcendent that constitute human religiosity are excluded from modern consciousness. Nor are they considered to be legitimate categories of academic discussion. From the perspective of the long history of religion, this "anti-transcendent thinking" is actually a modern "aberration." It stands opposed to what is genuinely human and contrary to the truth. One can better name it "nihilistic positivism" or "negative secularism" (Smith 1963b/1978: 188–190 and 1979: 139). As a result, scholars of religion today have commonly lapsed into technical operations, notably dwelling upon methodologies instead of the human agents who generate religions and searching for historical points of origin rather than treating the "cumulated tradition" as a flowing process (Smith 1981: 152–156 and 1982a: 41–56).

To break through the narrow confines of the Western intellectual world, one has to be aware of its ideological baggage and seek a new way to approach religion. Smith asserts that this new way is to revert to the original understanding and meaning of "religion," with special reference to piety, obedience, reverence, and devotion—all human responses to the transcendent (Smith 1963b/1978: 125–131). The emphasis then shifts from world religions as different systems of belief to what human agents existentially feel in the dynamic processes of respective "cumulative traditions" (Smith 1963b/1978: 43 and 1979: 15). In this manner modern scholars may extricate themselves from the bondage of "schematic externalization" and directly explore the inner core of "religion" (Smith 1963b/1978: 44).

Smith grounds his insight of faith as a universal human quality in order to revolutionize traditional Christian theology and to establish a new epistemological paradigm (Smith 1963b/ 1978: 170–192). For this Christian foundational virtue, he does not present a precise definition nor explicate its ontological composition. Rather, he resorts to evocative descriptions, eulogizes its functional role, and expects his audience to feel and understand what it is:

> [Faith] is an orientation of the personality, to oneself, to one's neighbour, to the universe; a total response; a way of seeing whatever one sees and of handling whatever one handles; a capacity to live a more than mundane level; to see, to feel, to act in terms of, a transcendent dimension. (Smith 1979: 12)

> Faith, then, is a quality of human being. At its best it has taken the form of serenity and courage and loyalty and service: a quiet confidence and joy which enable one to feel at home in the universe, and to find meaning in the world and in one's own life, a meaning that is profound and ultimate, and is stable no matter what may happen to oneself at the level of immediate event. (Smith 1979: 12)

> Faith is awakenness to transcendence accompanied by an adoring devotion to it and a permeating participation in it. (Smith 1979: 65)

> Faith is a planetary human characteristic, less or more consummate instances of which have in empirical fact characterized the whole of human history from the beginning; it involves man's (sic) capacity to perceive, to symbolize, and to live loyally and richly in terms of, a transcendent dimension to his and her life. (Smith 1979: 141)

These descriptions well illustrate faith as an encompassing element that grounds a person in his or her very being. Smith consciously avoids fixing it to any cognitive category, be it ethical, existential, or metaphysical. To his mind, this human quality orients one's behaviors and even directs one toward the transcendent. In this sense, it touches the mundane and the sacred and subsumes whatever realm modern intellectualization might conveniently devise. However, faith in Smith's presentations obviously leans toward human intuitive and affective dimensions. It appeals to its audience to think and search introspectively in order to locate its whereabouts. However, when it is activated, its many manifestations are akin to what Smith insists "religion" would originally mean, as well as to all admirable virtues Christianity has long espoused.

Lest one suspect that faith as hitherto presented may smack of being too subjective and personal, Smith develops the concept of "corporate critical self-consciousness" to further supplement and corroborate his theology of religion. He first clarifies that what he advocates is not individualism, a product of "negative secularism," but personalism. By this he means the necessity of treating a person as he or she really is, especially holding dearly this person's faith that is nourished in a community (Smith 1982b: 246). As he emphasizes, "the only knowledge that is accurate of the history of religion…is a knowledge that participates in the consciousness of those involved" (Smith 1981: 63). This new epistemology is a "personalist knowledge" or "humane knowledge," and our study based upon this understanding and substantiated by historical facts can be termed "humane sciences" (Smith 1981: 55, 56–80). These terms are coined as antidotes to modern objectivism, which Smith vehemently criticizes.

By recognizing that people of other religions also have a degree of faith similar to our own, we broaden our knowledge and deepen our spirituality. As far as the study of world religions is concerned, scholars therefore should not be content to linger over visible phenomena. A religious object is always a symbol. The only valid way to understand it is to perceive it symbolically. Because it is only the person endowed with faith who is able to create a symbolic object, scholars are required to transcend the material dimension to reach the inner recesses of those they study. The study of religion, in this sense, is the study of creative agents, not of visible or tangible objects. To be more accurate, it is not even the study of persons but the study of their faith. Once scholars realize this, obstacles between outsiders and insiders are naturally eliminated and the human community expands accordingly (Smith 1981: 86–92). Smith sees that faith, a commonly shared foundation, "is what turns a society into a community. It is the cause, and not only the result, of corporate solidarity of persons" (Smith 1998: 85). His vision to transform our "world society" into "a world community" is the extension of this understanding (Smith 1963a: 126).

Furthermore, Smith finds that "cumulative traditions" are not static or isolated from one another. From the perspective of the history of religion, they are dynamically moving forward and interconnected. Although variegated events or activities take place in different times and places, human history "is an intricate and delicate web of human relationships" (Smith 1981:42). Many common religious themes, concepts or practices, such as self-sacrifice by leaving home and the adoption of prayer beads in many religions, demonstrate shared origins. They are commonly inherited and shared by the human community as a whole (Smith 1981: 6–14). In light of "historical coherence" (Smith 1981: 19) and "global continuum" (Smith 1981: 18), one's participation in a particular community means participation in a world-wide, ongoing process of humanity. The single act of one person is thus intimately connected to that of another person, and its meaning and effect is always immensely far-reaching.

This realization brings one to consciousness on an elevated level. Smith proposes that humans, as distinct from other animals, developed consciousness in the early stage of human history. This consciousness progressed into self-consciousness and thereupon world civilizations arose and took shape. A surge of rationalism and individualism followed the Enlightenment and a spirit of critical self-consciousness ensued. That our world history has been dominated by this powerful current over the past two to three centuries is remarkably clear. Since this "negative secularism" has brought tremendous harm to humans as expounded, our global community should be ready to advance into the higher stage of "corporate critical self-consciousness" (Smith 1982c: 162–163).

What Smith means by "corporate critical self-consciousness" is not intended to eradicate the rational and scientific spirit that pervades our present mode of thinking. On the contrary, it affirms its value but simultaneously transforms and enhances it by taking into account human faith and the reality of our global community most earnestly. This new epistemology challenges our previous concepts about ourselves and others. At this new historical stage, the validity of human knowledge, or rather, "humane knowledge," should be "verified both by the persons involved and by critical observers not involved" (Smith 1981: 60, 1982c: 164, and 1982d: 146). Through mutual verification, humans may become more conscious of the relationship between part and whole, or self and the entire community. They would in this way exercise their sympathy and imagination in the proper context. Diversities and particularities could only be preserved and appreciated under these circumstances. In treating the world as one community, one would discover that what Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists think, act, or talk about concerns "us all." In the end, inter-religious dialogues would be replaced by a common colloquy held in and for "our" community, and "religion" would be restored to its true identity (Smith 1981: 97–103).

3 The Smithian Paradigm and Its Application

Smith presents his theology of religion in a rapidly changing historical and global context. He views traditional Christian theology, parochial and exclusivist in its intent and orientation, as highly problematic when it faces a new world reality that is culturally complex and religiously pluralistic. In addition, Western scholars, under the spell of "negative secularism," regard and interpret non-Christian religions as distanced objects or abstract systems. As a result, they fail to look into the dynamic processes of other "religions" which include the authenticity of what believers feel and the actuality of their lived experiences. Against this intellectual trend, Smith proposes to see "religion" afresh by reexamining its original meanings and exploring its rich implications. He thus takes "faith"

as his starting point, emphasizing its grounding and encompassing nature, particularly its relationship with human aspiration to transcendence. He also asserts that although many different "cumulated traditions" exist, they have mutually influenced each other and have converged into a coherent unity. This realization from the perspective of the history of world religions should deepen and widen our perception of the world as one community. Ultimately, "corporate critical self-consciousness," which Smith repeatedly stresses in his theological construction, is what we moderns need to understand the "meaning and end of religion."

What Smith comes up with is by no means a methodology that would instruct scholars of religion to research their subject from a specific approach. Nor is it merely a theory among many that compete for interested followers, as we often see in modern scholarship. His is a strong appeal that invites us to reappraise our way of viewing and studying religion. The theology of religion he formulates is therefore nothing short of a new paradigm that intends to supersede that generated by the Enlightenment. It at least exhibits the following significant features.

First, Smith's theology of religion resists rigid cognitive forms as a valid way of understanding. It opposes linguistic positivism because of its strong tendency toward reductionism: it ignores dynamic human spiritual activities while narrowly focusing upon the objectifiable, fragmented verbal statements extricated from a living context. When taking the positivistic view as presupposition, scholars' perception of reality is distorted or limited and thus naturally they fail to see the truth. By the same token, "religion" in the modern sense manifests a similar negative effect; it restricts rather than facilitates our understanding of what is crucially human. Smith's emphasis upon faith serves to deconstruct this conventional "religion" and replace it with a reinterpreted, more flexible "religion." Certainly, this newly interpreted "religion" is not a clearly delineated form to be conceptually grasped. To describe it phenomenologically, it at most can be compared to a moving process during which humans continuously respond to the transcendent. One better understands it as a guiding referent associated with the realm of human religiosity. What Smith reconstructs is thus an amorphous category, ambiguous and yet powerfully comprehensive, which calls for our deep reflection if we are to fully realize it.

If that is the case, this all-encompassing "religion" then denies the validity of the Western dualistic mode of thinking. What used to be the form of sacred versus secular has become a meaningless dyadic pattern in Smith's theology of religion. Since faith is the focal point, upon careful examination, any kind of human activity may unfold this universal quality. Even the establishment of modern scientism, which rests its trust on human reason only, involves human faith (Smith 1979:15). The breakdown of the old cognitive mode enlarges our vision to comprehend "religion" in all dimensions. This vision deals not only with individual persons but also with communities, whatever their "cumulated traditions," relating them to what they aim at transcendentally and experience existentially in ever-changing historical contexts. In this light, there should be little wonder that the scope of Smith's theology extends to cover what have traditionally been regarded as secular traditions, such as Confucianism and Greco-Roman humanism and their respective classics. In them, just as in all other world "religions," human faith is strongly present (Smith 1993: 176–195 and 1963a: 67–80).

Lastly, Smith's theology of religion is not value-neutral. The strong appeal to "corporate critical self-consciousness" demands that any persons or communities, without distinction between insiders and outsiders, make an all-out, concerted effort to realize our "religion" as an integrated unity. The requirement of being "critical" and "self-conscious" is intellectual and at the same time positively moral. The highlighting of such virtues as piety, reverence,

devotion, commitment, courage, loyalty, and service betrays a strong sentiment that is both religious and humanistic. Thus Smith's theology contains an obvious axiological purpose, although it is couched in rationalist terms and substantiated by historical evidence. It carries with it a prophet's vision and voice, which transcend the scholarly engagement we nowadays would commonly recognize.

4 TU Weiming's Confucian Humanism

Smith's theology of religion is a comprehensive vision; its emphasis upon such prominent features as human faith, transcendence, existential concern, interreligious connectedness, and global community is conducive to relating itself to humanistic traditions. This TU Weiming is keenly aware of. On quite a few occasions, Tu paid tribute to Smith, particularly subscribing to the inspiring scheme of "religion" versus "religiosity" Smith created (Tu 2000: 10–11 and 1985a: 132).[7] One feels that, while Tu has been transmitting the intellectual legacy from his immediate New Confucian predecessors and endeavoring to bring Confucianism into the global community, Smith's paradigm appears to him congenial and illuminating. This intellectual connection triggers us to compare Tu's agenda with Smith's general theological framework that we have outlined. This approach, I believe, will prove to be highly rewarding if we intend to understand Tu's interpretation of Confucianism or, even more broadly, the prospectus of Confucianism's status in the midst of world religions.

Tu's philosophical reconstruction is strongly motivated by his deep concern with two issues, one in recent Chinese intellectual history, the other in modern Western intellectual discourse. In his critical reflections upon the development of recent Chinese intellectual history, he meticulously notices that distinguishable forces have impacted on Confucianism and brought it to its present-day status (Tu 1987 and 1991b). Ruling authorities, often assuming the role of Confucian orthodoxy, took over this cultural and spiritual tradition and manipulated it for their political gains. They abused Confucianism, and thereupon complicated the tripartite relationship of "the Way, learning, and politics" that has so prominently characterized Confucian humanism (Tu 1985c). Equally, perhaps more seriously, were the radical iconoclasts of the May Fourth period who, witnessing successive military invasions and cultural onslaughts from the West, blamed Confucianism for China's defeat and weakness. They proposed to totally jettison this centuries-old tradition and in its stead opted for wholesale Westernization as the way out of China's predicament. This anti-traditional trend has exerted tremendous influence on a host of brilliant young Chinese in later generations who, in turn, defined the general intellectual outlook on Confucianism. Detrimental forces like these, as Tu perceives, are great challenges to the flourishing of the Confucian tradition.

On the other hand, eminent Western scholars' negative assessment of Confucianism also poses a serious problem for Tu. It impels him to rethink how to re-present this ethico-religious tradition and engage in creative dialogue with these Western critics. For example, Max Weber's depiction of Confucians and their "adjustment to the world…seriously undermines the Confucian capacity for psychological integration and religious transcendence" (Tu 1985b: 55). Joseph R. Levenson, in continuation of Weber's rationalization theory, also judged Confucianism to be entirely outmoded because its amateurism was unable to respond to modernity defined by strict bureaucratic system, technology, and

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[7] See also *Harvard University Gazette*, November 29, 2001.

professionalism (Tu 1986: 3–8 and 1976: 242–247). Confucian China thus saw "its modern fate" doomed along with the demise of imperial China in the beginning of the twentieth century (Levenson 1968). In a parallel argument, Robert Bellah, grouping Confucianism with Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Daoism, claimed that as it did not go through the same pre-modern stages as Christianity did, its historical experience and cultural constituency proved to be incompatible with modernity (Tu 1989a: 340–344).

In response to these criticisms, whether from Chinese or Westerners, that characterize Confucianism as backward, lethargic, or rigid and thus unfit for modernity, Tu argues that Confucianism's inner, spiritual dimension, which enabled this tradition to continue for more than two millennia, has been seriously misapprehended. Confucianism did not die at the time of the Qing Dynasty's collapse. On the contrary, it has survived a series of historical setbacks, including the May Fourth iconoclasm in the 1920s and the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976. The recent rise of industrial East Asia, a geographical area that has traditionally been influenced by Confucian culture, bears witness to the vitality and "modern" character of this ethico-religious tradition.

Tu perceives that the cause behind these doubts and questionings lies in the problematic conception of modernity. To expose this obstacle, one has to trace its origin and explore its roots in the Enlightenment. In his reflection upon modernity and its relevance to Confucianism, Tu finds that since the eighteenth century, such notions as "progress, reason, and individualism" have been absorbed by the Western mind as signposts of modernity (Tu 1998). Driven by this "Enlightenment mentality," the West rapidly developed science and technology, on the one hand, and, on the other, implemented social systems to ensure human equality and freedom. What emerged from this development, however, is "instrumental rationality" or "rational instrumentalism" that nourishes narrow-minded scientism. It singularly emphasizes what is tangible and evidentially verifiable at the expense of the human spiritual dimension. World religions or spiritual traditions particularly of the East, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Daoism, have been ignored or relegated to irrelevancy. In addition, undue emphasis on individualism has lapsed into extreme anthropocentrism in the West. Humans in this context are separate, isolated entities, alienated from both the natural and communal environments in which they live and to which they are an integral part. Also due to the effect of rational instrumentalism, the West, prejudiced by Eurocentrism, has excluded non-Western or less developed societies from its ken, losing the vision to treat the global community as an organic whole. Thus this "Enlightenment mentality" has not only brought havoc and disintegration to the West but also given rise to the questionable views of non-Western societies, including Confucian China.

In the face of the stern reality that the modern West poses to humanity, Tu responds with the Confucian ideal world that is holistic and communal. He believes that in contrast to Western "exclusive secular humanism," Confucianism is a form of "inclusive humanism" (Tu 1989c: 93–121). This Chinese spiritual tradition regards human beings as "sentient, social, political, historical, and metaphysical" (Tu 1998: 13), who can therefore function as a potent remedy for our current malaise. Indeed, if "mutuality between self and community, harmony between human species and nature, and continuous communication with Heaven are defining characteristics and supreme values in human project" (Tu 1998: 14), Confucianism, with its marked emphasis upon the four dimensions of "self, community, nature, and the transcendent" (Tu 1998: 14), can contribute greatly to our world today.

Tu's confidence in and positive evaluation of Confucianism originates from his "faith" in the human person: humans are fundamentally religious. In his interpretation, this "Confucian 'faith' in the intrinsic meaningfulness of humanity is a faith in the living

person's authentic possibility for self-transcendence" (Tu 1985b: 64). That is, human nature, alternatively called human mind-and-heart, is conferred by Heaven. This immanent faculty bespeaks the fact that humanity, although limited by physical forms and life spans, shares the same substance with Heaven. Although living in the mundane world, humans are not entirely earthbound; they are able to transcend their earthly confines and attend to what they authentically are. It is this Heaven-endowed ontological constituency that defines humanity as anthropocosmic in its basic orientation (Tu 1989c: 77–78). It reveals that Heaven, as a transcendent referent, and humanity are dialectically interrelated. Further, this universal human mind-and-heart is always lively and creative; it responds to the changing experiences a human person undergoes. It serves as a cognitive faculty, connecting to the person's intellectual knowledge, but also functions affectively in relation to the person's emotional engagements (Tu 1976: 266–271). In a nutshell, it is the ground of being from which one derives one's ontological self and the base upon which one builds one's existential experience.

Since innate, organic human nature or mind-and-heart commonly dwells in every person, selfhood becomes the starting point of Tu's interpretive scheme of inclusive humanism.[8] Since humans possess the heavenly endowed mind-and-heart, Tu expounds, they thus have the potential to become sage-like. It is true that they are ontologically identical with Heaven, but existential circumstances distance them from their original substance. If they intend to achieve the state of their true identity, they must exert their utmost effort to reach this goal through an unceasing self-cultivation. As a matter of fact, because human nature is a person's ontological grounding, by necessity no human person can avoid engaging in this process of self-transformation in order to realize his or her authentic self. As human mind-and-heart is an inexhaustible resource, the more one explores it, the more one obtains nourishment from it for life's sustenance. Thus *junzi* 君子, or profound persons, constantly vigilant when alone, must examine their inner selves at all times. What is required of them is a reflective spirit and a clear self-consciousness. Self-cultivation hence points to a highly retrospective, inner-looking orientation.

Self-cultivation as a lifelong moral effort is both a deepening and a broadening process. It involves two dimensions that are simultaneously interrelated. Vertically it elevates one toward Heaven by delving into the depth of one's inner nature. Horizontally it expands one's narrow self to include other human beings whom one may or may not be acquainted with. Self-cultivation then is not a solitary or privatized exercise that seeks joy in spiritual ecstasy or finds consolation in inner peace. Rather, the highest state of personality achieved by this kind of moral effort, popularly attributed to a sage, culminates in the commonality that is sharable among all human beings. This is the point where our universal human nature lies and the platform upon which we humans mutually communicate. At this stage, one returns to one's original self and reaches harmony with one's ground of being (Tu 1989c: 23–37).

Tu further explains that human persons are born into a network of human relationships, with different degrees of complexity. With many external givens, they live as social beings, again with different degrees of complexity. Hence human relatedness and sociality circumscribe what humans may existentially encounter. In this context, self-cultivation as

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[8] Tu primarily followed the "eight-steps" scheme, as stipulated in the *Great Learning*, to structure his "inclusive Confucianism" (Tu 1985a: 134–135). For a succinct explanation of the "eight-steps" and the text of the *Great Learning*, see Chan 1963: 84–94. To highlight Confucian religiosity, Tu summarized these "eight steps" into two categories, "person" and "community," added "metaphysics" to form three conceptual levels, and took the *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*) as his basis of interpretation (Tu 1989c). For an explanation and translation of this text, see also Chan 1963: 95–114.

a deepening and broadening process always involves a community in which a person might happen to live and grow. In other words, it is not self-centered but "a deliberate communal act" (Tu 1985b: 58) that contains strong altruistic connotations. When profound persons establish themselves, they also establish others. Deepening one's subjectivity brings benefits not only to oneself but also to the community as a whole. Conversely, it is only when one realizes that one is nourished by, is part of, and integral to the community that one can really complete one's self-cultivation. Therefore profound persons are those who are always "conscientious, honest, and courageous" (Tu 1989c: 33–34). Human mind-and-heart and its cultivation, in the final analysis, is not value-free; to be sure, it carries with it an axiological purpose.

Confucian humanism, Tu argues, takes seriously the fact that humans are biologically and socially embedded. It actually treats this as its presupposition in its entire philosophical construction. From an individual person's perspective, family, society, state, and the world are progressive stages that one must go through in one's lifetime. These circles seem restricting on the surface. However, as mentioned, humans are able to transcend their limitedness and live out their authentic self through strenuous moral effort. The practice of self-cultivation, grounded in one's mind-and-heart, is meant to facilitate a person to respond harmoniously and creatively in these different situations. In the Chinese context, for example, *xiao* 孝 (filial piety), the cardinal familial virtue, contains ethico-religious meaning and functions symbolically. Pious children do not gain their worth by slavishly obeying family instruction. Rather, by self-cultivation they should know how to creatively transform what they inherit to fulfill their "moral obligation and historical consciousness" (Tu 1989c: 43). *Li* 禮 (ritual propriety), the most important social virtue, is more akin to a "dynamic process" than to a "static structure" (Tu 1989c: 53) in and by which *ren* 仁 (humanity/humaneness) and *yi* 義 (righteousness/rightness) "can be realized in the context of human relations" (Tu 1989c: 53). That a ritual can take effect always presupposes social recognition and appreciation. It calls for reciprocity and public participation by moral persuasion. *Xiao*, *li*, and other Confucian virtues like *sangang* 三綱 (Three Bonds) and *wuchang* 五常 (Five Constancies) are not rigid rules meant to press individuals into conformity but, rather, are meant to harmonize family or society into solidarity through communal consensus. In Tu's words, "society so conceived is not an adversary system consisting of pressure groups but a fiduciary community based on mutual trust" (Tu 1989c: 48). To realize a "fiduciary community," whether on the scale of a family, society, state, or the world, requires "communal critical self-awareness" (Tu 1986: 21), as Tu conclusively affirms. If that were achieved, it would result in a situation where "ultimate self-transformation as a communal act" (Tu 1989c: 94) finds its consummation. It would be an ideal state where full humanity is revealed at its best.

Tu formulates his "inclusive humanism" as a response to the challenges coming from within China as well as from the West. To those who criticized Confucianism for being lifeless, reactionary, or outmoded, he counters with the affirmation that this cultural tradition is an "open system" (Tu 1985a: 131), whose spiritual wealth far exceeds how it is commonly understood or represented. In particular, its emphasis upon human mind-and-heart and the necessity of unceasing self-cultivation deepens our human subjectivity that is dearly needed in the face of modern "secular humanism." After all, humans as anthropocosmic beings should and can transcend their existential limitations by tapping the resources of their ontological grounding. The stress upon "ultimate self-transformation as a communal act" also leads us to realize the dynamic relationship between every human person and the community in which he or she lives. Concentric human geography, from family to society, state, and the world, well defines the boundaries of our human existence.

To impart the moral demand of "communal critical self-awareness" to all those who participate in these different spheres of life will turn our world into a "fiduciary community." Confucian humanism thus enormously deepens and broadens our vision, and is an invaluable contribution to our world community today.

Against the Smithian paradigm, one sees that Tu's programmatic presentation of Confucianism highlights three important dimensions: selfhood, transcendence, and community. These three, although categorized for expository convenience, are organically interrelated. In this context, it is significant to observe that Tu does not define Confucianism, as many scholars would do, in political, social, or ethical terms. By exploring these three salient features and interpreting their possible implications, Tu, on the one hand, deconstructs the traditional conception of Confucianism which its antagonists attacked relentlessly and, on the other hand, reconstructs it with a new face suitable for an age of global consciousness. For the latter end he makes his intent clear: "if the well-being of humanity is its central concern, Confucian humanism cannot afford to be confined to East Asian cultures. A global perspective is needed to universalize its perennial concerns" (Tu 1986: 21). Understood in this way, these features do not constitute one more religion or system to be brought into juxtaposition with other world religions. Rather, they are exactly those "perennial concerns" which pertinently reveal Confucian religiosity. As such they are more encompassing and appealing. This new Confucianism, with its reference to universal human nature and global conviviality, is much richer in content and wider in its boundaries; it is meant to accommodate all humanity and, indeed, it sincerely invites all to join in.

5 Comparative Discussion

Trained primarily as an Islamicist, Smith works in a culturally and religiously pluralistic environment. Life experience informs him that traditional, exclusivist Christian theology is not only powerless to explain pluralistic reality but is miserably misleading in the face of our rapidly changing modern world. He finds that the crux of this Christian parochialism lies in the Enlightenment project which manifests a reification process. "Religion" in this unfortunate context is thus deprived of its original meaning which emphasizes reverence, piety, obedience, and devotion. Instead it is replaced by another "religion" that refers either to objectifiable phenomena or to some distanced, abstract belief systems. What is fundamentally human disappears from the consciousness of the modern West. "The meaning and end of religion" is indeed in great peril. By centering upon the interpretation and understanding of Islam in the modern world as a heuristic example, Smith delves into the intricate developments of world religions and their mutual interrelationships and begins his quest for the authentic "religion."

By contrast, Tu's *Problematik* originates from his grave concerns for "the Confucian China and its modern fate." He is laden with modern Chinese historical consciousness and takes what Confucianism has encountered since the early twentieth century most seriously. Analyzing the challenges posed by the Chinese critics of Confucianism as well as by their Western counterparts, he detects that the "Enlightenment mentality," which upholds the value of reason, science, and technology at the expense of human spirituality, lies in their presupposition as their common creed. As a form of "negative humanism," it wrongly informs Chinese radicals or liberals and many Western intellectuals, beguiling them to conclude that Confucianism, no more than a historical relic, belongs to the past. How to reinterpret this Chinese cultural and spiritual heritage as a living tradition while, at the same time, interacting with the global community has thus become Tu's central task.

It is important to observe that Smith and Tu, although grounded in different backgrounds and experiences, formulate their issues almost the same way. Smith is a vehement critic of the Enlightenment, as is Tu. Both are opposed to the de-humanizing effect that this powerful intellectual trend has exerted on the general intellectual outlook of our modern and contemporary world. They take it to be the primary cause which denies humanity of its true identity and fragments our global community. Smith and Tu, therefore, while facing the present and looking forward to a renewed future, engage in their intellectual activities with an obvious retrospective tendency. They agree that by examining or reinterpreting the past, one finds answers that address our current malaise while opening new possibilities.

What is more significant is that when they begin to tackle their issues, the scope of their visions is no longer narrowly Christian, Confucian, or restricted to any particular religious tradition. Smith rejects the position of being a Christian theologian or merely an Islamicist, although undoubtedly he is well-qualified to be considered an expert on both, but rather he assumes the role of a historian of religion. He argues his case in the context of world religions and substantiates it with many historical facts from a comparative perspective.[9] His purpose is, by alluding to more sources or pieces of evidence, to present a convincing vision that is universal and acceptable to the world community. This effort to be more inclusive is a prominent feature in his theology of religion. Tu, in comparison, follows his Confucian tradition more closely. This is clear from the fact that in his argument for human religiosity, he relies upon *Zhongyong* 中庸, one of the foundational Confucian classics, for a systematic expression of his views. In the Confucian sense, he "transmits" (*shu* 述) more than "creates" (*zuo* 作). However, his concerns over Confucianism and its relationship to modernity require that he maintain constant dialogues with other world cultures or religions. In addition, because Confucianism as an "inclusive humanism" harbors the vision to include all humanity, it by nature transcends its cultural and geographical boundaries and reaches to the larger global community. This expanding nature of Confucianism from Tu's side dovetails well with Smith's agenda of world religions. It is Smith who sets up an inviting community for world religions and Tu who responds by bringing Confucianism into its active participation.

For both scholars, correcting the Enlightenment distortions and presenting a universally available experience or "common creed" for humanity is an overriding concern. Smith deeply mistrusts any rigid, cognitive category as a valid way for true human understanding, considering it to be an offshoot of the Enlightenment project. Indeed he is extremely skeptical about approaches to religion that propose a "methodology;" his antagonism against phenomenology of religion is a case in point (Smith 1981: 86–87 and 1979: 7). In opposition to the emphasis upon external objects or phenomena, he affirms that a person and his or her subjectivity should be the locus of religion. It is the faith of a human person that brings meaning to life; it is also this faith that generates variegated "cumulated traditions" which we now call world religions. If the study of religion is of value, it is because in the process of uncovering a "cumulated tradition," one witnesses how humans interact with the transcendent in which they find their ultimate meaning of life. These spiritual dimensions, the immanent and the transcendent, are what we moderns should retrieve in the first place.

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[9] Smith's readers are always awed by the voluminous and meticulous notes he quotes from various sources, including archaic classics and rare collections in different languages. For instance, the main text of *The Meaning and End of Religion* is two hundred and two pages in length, but its endnotes, printed in smaller font, exceed 129 pages. The main text of the other book, *Faith and Belief*, has 172 pages, but its endnotes, also printed in smaller font, occupy 157 pages, actually longer than the main text.

Smith further reminds us that from the perspective of the history of religion, all "cumulated traditions" have influenced one another and are intimately interconnected. If this has been the case in the past, it should be evermore so in our contemporary world. This acute sense of our oneness is the foundation upon which we establish our global community. "Corporate critical self-consciousness" thus demands that we take every human person and his or her faith seriously, on the one hand, and, on the other, treat our unity as an undeniable living reality. By resorting to our critical reflections and collective efforts, we may hope to bring about a world in which people of diverse faith expressions live together peacefully and talk about issues that concern "us all."

Smith's faith-oriented theology of religion might smack of Protestantism (Pruett 1990), but from Tu's Confucian perspective, nothing could be more agreeable than Smith's views. In a similar and comparable vein, Tu grounds his Confucian humanism in human nature or mind-and-heart, regarding it as the starting point to universalize a global vision. He basically follows the Mencian line of thought and subscribes to the notion that this human nature, as Heaven-endowed, innate knowledge, is good and worthy. It shares the same substance with Heaven and popularly inheres in every person. Because of it, humans are able to transcend mundane living and aspire to what they authentically are. Human mind-and-heart as a generative and responsive faculty hence possesses immanent and transcendent dimensions. However, one should point out that, unlike Smith's Protestant propensity to separate immanence and transcendence into two different realms, Tu's human nature "lies not in radical transcendence but in immanence with a transcendent dimension" (Tu 1989c: 121). This feature shows that Tu's philosophy tends to be holistic as well as monistic. To transcend one's physical limitedness and achieve unity with Heaven, the ultimate goal of Confucian humanism, one is required to engage in an unceasing process of self-cultivation. For this aim, one seeks no other place than to delve into one's original mind-and-heart to tap its inexhaustible spiritual resources. This lifelong effort of self-cultivation for ultimate transformation, the way to maintain true selfhood, stands very prominently in Tu's reinterpretation of Confucianism, but a similar discussion seems lacking in Smith's theology of religion.

Tu's stress upon self-cultivation, not as isolated or privatized but as a communal act, is predicated upon the understanding that humans are born and live in a network of relationships. Structurally, as the *Great Learning* clearly stipulates, this communal dimension expands concentrically all the way from the family to the world (see note 8). In other words, it starts with the relationship that is biologically defined and gradually extends to people of less blood-relatedness. As long as one is critically aware that one possesses a Heaven-endowed mind-and-heart, the same as is universally held by other human fellows, and practices self-cultivation, one is able to transcend selfishness and attend to the ground of common humanity. This ensures our hope to establish a "fiduciary community," the basis of which is care and trust. Self-cultivation is therefore a deepening and broadening process, and it involves an obvious anthropocosmic orientation. What Tu presents above is, without doubt, characteristically Confucian, but its programmatic structure, particularly with reference to the interconnectedness of person, transcendence, and community, tallies perfectly with Smith's overall theological framework.

Smith calls his theology of religion "humane knowledge," with a clear emphasis upon the faith of every human person and a special appeal to the conscience of those who look at this faith. By this "knowledge" he means to eliminate the distinction between the insider and the outsider and consolidate the global community because we are one intrinsically and intimately related existentially. Indeed with "corporate critical self-consciousness," we humans as a whole can realize this vision. By comparison, Tu names his Confucianism

"inclusive humanism," an intentional coinage to counter the negative "secular humanism." He hopes that by highlighting the importance of human mind-and-heart, the ontological ground of every human person, the Confucian vision can include the entirety of humanity. Human subjectivity, after all, is most fundamental. In that sense he would not mind calling himself a "fundamentalist" (Tu 1991a).[10] To regard him as an existentialist is justifiable, as long as by that one refers to a Confucian transmitter who takes human lived and living experiences with utmost seriousness (Neville 2000: 83–105). However, Tu prefers using "inclusive" or "holistic" to underline his Confucian humanism as it is intended to deal with humankind's ultimate concern in all its dimensions.

Both Smith and Tu are critically aware that they are engaged in a theme that is profound and subtle. They repudiate the "Enlightenment method" that treats a subject by presenting it as a well-defined category calling for epistemological recognition. They realize that they are constructing a theology or philosophy the understanding of which requires a radical overhaul of intellectual attitudes. Instead of relying upon human cognitive power, they, coincidentally, appeal to human affective faculties for a true understanding. Smith suggests that one may compare the understanding of human aspiration to the transcendent to the appreciation of poetry or art, the only difference being that the level of the former is even higher (Smith 1993: 221–223, 227–228). Tu, too, likens the comprehension of traditional Chinese wisdom to the art of listening. Only with a calm and attentive mind can one's ears be attuned to the sound of the ancient sages (Tu 1989b: 54–57). Faith or human religiosity in their presentation is a kind of art which demands a delicate spirit and sensibility to approach it. Smith and Tu work in different social and cultural milieux, and yet they observe the same intellectual problems that have dominated our modern mode of thinking, formulate compatible conceptual frameworks in their explorations, and arrive at very similar conclusions to these perennial human issues.

6 Concluding Remarks

There is no doubt that the external circumstance which Tu Weiming faces today is far more complex than those his New Confucian predecessors actually encountered or could even imagine. While adhering to a vision that affirms the centrality of human subjectivity and the importance of self-cultivation as a communal act, an article of faith passed down from Xiong Shili 熊十力 and Mou Zongsan,[11] Tu has to figure out how to introduce it to a global context characterized by ethnic, cultural, ideological, and religious pluralism. His effort to redefine "cultural China" by expanding it to embrace members, either communities or individuals, who were not previously included should be seen as part of his general New Confucian agenda.

Also one step forward from his New Confucian predecessors is Tu's effort to reinterpret Confucian humanism in the presence of other world religions. Here the stern challenge is the issue of comparability and compatibility between them, given the fact that Confucianism has for long been consigned to a tradition of state institution, political ideology, social ethics, or scholasticism; as a religion, it has not yet obtained general intellectual consensus in our global community. To Tu's mind, Confucianism is able to

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[10] See also Arif Dirlik's acrimonious attack by applying this same term but with a very negative meaning (Dirlik 1995: 254, 262).

[11] For an introduction to their philosophies, see Tu 1976: 242–275, Liu 2003: 57–72, 107–125, Berthrong 1994: 103–131, and Makeham 2003: 55–78.

assume the prominence among world religions today that it had among ancient world civilizations in the Axial Age (Tu 1989a: 337–340). But he needs to argue for his cause. His decision to examine Confucian religiosity from the internal perspective of this tradition, instead of dwelling upon the term or concept of religion by offering possible definitions, is strategically creative. It is in this connection that Wilfred C. Smith's theology of religion serves an illuminating and helpful function, as this article has attempted to demonstrate.

Many Chinese and Western scholars have recently tried to answer this question: Is Confucianism a religion? There are various responses and they are offered from different perspectives.[12] To this question, Tu would give an implicit yes but with qualifications. To use the Smithian expression, Confucianism, just like any other world religion, is not a religion recognized as a system of beliefs. It is a "religion" because it is a tradition laden with strong religiosity. And this religiosity is best found among Confucian followers who have manifested their "faith" in their mind-and-heart.

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[12] A complete listing would be too numerous. Some notable examples are: Chen 1999, Huang 1997, Wang 1994, Neville 2000, Ching 1986, Taylor 1998, Berthrong 1998, and Tucker 1998.

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