

Disparity and Continuum between Ancient Classics and Contemporary Culture: A Historicist Review

*Chi-yun Chen**

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* Professor, Institute of History, National Tsing Hua University.

Abstract

The deterioration of our present-day students' language ability, background knowledge, or even their overall aptitude for learning the Chinese classics, involves some more complicated and troublesome issues than that of mere school curriculum. It is symptomatic of a deepening cultural crisis, especially that of cultural fragmentation. A simple effort to strengthen the "Chinese classics curriculum" will not do, because the said cultural fragmentation has its very origins and takes its major form in the conflict between the "traditionalist-classicist" and the "anti-traditionalist-modernist" of cultural-ideological advocacy. The struggle has been going on during the last one hundred years or so and more recently has been complicated by the transplanted "postmodernist" drives for cultural and ideological multiplicity and pluralism.

The article reviews the roots of the crisis of modern Chinese education in its treatment of the "Classics" and China's traditional culture, the positivist-modernist attack on traditional Chinese culture, and the survival and revivalism of Chinese cultural tradition. It then analyzes the dilemma of the Positivist, the Neo-Confucian, the Huntingtonian and the postmodernist paradigms in handling the issues regarding the disparity and continuum between ancient Classics and contemporary culture.

The author suggests that, as an intermediary measure, a historicist approach may help extricate the "Chinese Classics" from the said adversarial bend, preserve its significance as the ancient canonical corpus writ, and explore its relevance to the modern and postmodern world. The author laments the misrepresentation of "historicism" by Fu Ssu-nien, perhaps the singly most influential historian of 20th century China, and calls for a correct approach to "historicism" as a prerequisite to properly approaching the issues of the meaning and

value of the classical legacy and the cultural tradition in modern China.

Key words: Chinese/Classics, traditionalism, Neo-Confucians,
General Education, Positivism, Historicism,
East-West, Postmodernism

I. The Critical and Complex Issue

Many Chinese educators, and non-educators as well, on both sides of the Taiwan strait, are alarmed by the low level of our present-day students' language skill and basic knowledge for reading and understanding some elementary corpus of Chinese classical works either as a part or as a core of their general education. If this is our main problem, then strengthening the teaching of the "classics" in the school curriculum, rather than a conference like the present one, would solve the problem. This may turn out to be an immediately viable solution of the problem, in spite of all the complicated issues discussed here. But, as a historicist-cum-classicist, I must say that the deterioration of our students' language ability, background knowledge, or even their overall aptitude for learning the Chinese classics involves something deeper and more troublesome than the issue of general education curriculum.

As a professional historian, I would like to note that the problems of our general education curriculum or even the crises of our education system as a whole came about as the end-product of a long chain of revolutionary upheavals in China's political, ideological, social, and fundamentally cultural spheres. Engulfed in these upheavals, a series of reforms of education and curriculum of education, have been offered as panacea by all kinds of leaders, the most drastic ones ranging from K'ang Yu-wei's "Confucian religion", Chiang Kai-sek's "New-life Movement", Mao Tse-tung's "Socialist Re-education" or "Cultural Revolutionary Education", to Li Teng-hui's "Mind-Soul Purification", which all turned out to be rather tokenistic, if not outright *non sequitur* or disastrous.

The crisis of our general education curriculum, or of our present-day education as a whole, is symptomatic of a deepening ideological crisis of cultural fragmentation, involving the Confucian/Chinese classical tradition as a core issue. In this crisis, the "Chinese classics", instead of contributing to integrative cultural education, finds itself as a partisan to the force of fragmentation. This is so because the said crisis of cultural fragmentation has its very origins in, and takes its major form as, the ideological confrontation between the "traditionalist-classicist" and the "anti-traditionalist/modernist" in educational-cultural-ideological matters.¹

II. Crisis Attacks on Classical Tradition

This confrontation has been going on during the last one hundred years or so and more recently has been complicated by the West-transplanted “postmodernist” drives for cultural and ideological pluralism, and cultural-socio-political-ethical diaspora. A brief historical review of the evolving confrontation may clarify the issue in its “time-deep” context.²

Beginning with China's defeat by the British in the “Opium War” in 1840-42, which opened China to the West, reforms introducing Western modern military technology were adopted and soon expanded into other related technologies and industries (including translation of Western books into Chinese). In reaction to these was Tseng Kuo-fan's (1811-72) conservative-classicist emphasis on conserving Confucian moral cultivation in the spirit of self-strengthening³. Following China's defeat by Japan in 1894-95, and the threat of imperialist partition of China after the Boxers uprising in 1900, reform of the entire education system was introduced, abolishing the traditional state examinations based on the Confucian classics and replacing it with Western-style schools and curriculum. In reaction to this was Chang Chih-tung's advocacy of “Chinese learning to be the fundamental and Western learning to serve practical purposes” and K'ang Yu-wei's promotion of Confucianism as a national religion. Then came the Republican Revolution in 1911-12, which destroyed China's 3000-odd-year old monarchical system and political culture.⁴

Frustrated by the lack of meaningful progress under the new Republic, Chinese intellectuals, in the May Fourth Movement of 1919, launched a whole-sale attack on China's cultural traditions, especially Confucian classical learning, for the sake of “total Westernization”. The Chinese Communist Party, founded in 1921 in the wake of the May Fourth Movement, henceforth adopted the ideology of Western Marxism, which relegates all traditional Chinese culture to the dusts of times past, i.e. the relics of “slave society” or “feudalism”, to be swept off to make way for a China remade in the Western style of socialism.⁵ Against these, the Chinese Nationalists and other cultural nativists vainly offered the proselytized reductionist

“National Essentialism (Fundamentalism)”, “Chinese Moral Revivalism”, and “Spiritual Cultural Reconstruction” as ineffectual ideological defence, while seeing their part of the world move decidedly under the fold of Western capitalism.⁶

A few things become evident in this brief review :

- (1)The Confucian Classics, considered as constituting the core of China's cultural tradition, has been continuously attacked as the enemy or obstacle of China's modernization progress and seemed to be a lost cause;
- (2)The counter-attack by those on behalf of the classical cultural tradition tended to be reactively defensive in nature, which had little impact on the direction of China's modern development process, but (especially in the Neo-Confucian advocates like Carson Chang, Mou Tsung-san, Tu Wei-ming, Liu Shu-hsien, and Li Ming-hui) was itself molded in style and substance by Western philosophical and cultural theories.⁷

III. Survival and Revivalism of Cultural Tradition

In view of the above recount, it is most remarkable that China's classical legacy continues to attract sizable, enthusiastic, and determined advocates-supporters from both the elite and the masses among non-Marxian Chinese, and since 1980 even among Marxian Chinese. And the modern Neo-Confucians, as its principal advocate, have been the most, if not the only, creative Chinese thinkers in the international philosophical-ideological arena. In explanation of this, two representative theses may be noted:

- (i) The Levensonian explanation -- According to Joseph Levenson,⁸ many late 19th century and early 20th century Chinese thinkers-leaders epitomized China's difficult transition between traditional and modern times, which coincided with intensifying conflicts between East and West. These thinkers-leaders recognized in their conscious, rational, and practical thinking (i.e. by their mind) the superiority of the modern West and the inevitability of accepting Western cultural influence. But sub-consciously,

emotionally-sentimentally, or a-rationally, if not outright irrationally, (in other words, by their heart), these same thinkers-leaders were strongly attached (i.e. fixated) to China's cultural-classical tradition in spite of the West. Hence, whenever these thinkers-leaders noticed some defects or undesirable trends in the Western culture, their nativistic fixation would be transformed into conscious, rational, and practical anti-Western, conservative stand. This may account for Yen Fu's (1853-1921) and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao's (1873-1929) changing attitude toward the West, or Hu Shih's (1891-1962) public profession of "Total Westernization" and private adherence to traditional Chinese behavioral patterns. This may even partly explain China's acceptance of Marxism as an alternate modern Western ideology criticizing and combating modern Western capitalistic culture.

(ii) The modern Neo-Confucian explanation--Representative arguments of the Neo-Confucians include:

(A) Culture is organic-wholistic and nativistically ingrained (even inborn or innate) in a people, therefore one cannot discard some part (i.e. the traditional part) of Chinese culture without damaging the whole; and it is doubtful whether one can really discard some part of Chinese culture even if one wants to, or, if one did, whether one would still be a Chinese or even a normal human being.⁹

(B) The modernist attack on China's cultural tradition and classical legacy was based on incorrect or incomplete knowledge of such tradition and legacy; thus, if one (such as the Neo-Confucians) knows and understands China's classical-traditional culture correctly, one would not attack it so violently and so indiscriminately. Recently, the most frequently argued issue is that China's classical legacy is congenial, or at least not hostile to the ideals of democracy, human liberty, and individualism, even though it had been inefficacious in generating the institutional form for actualizing these ideals.¹⁰

(C) As an extreme version of (B), it has been asserted that Chinese/Oriental culture and the Western culture represent fundamentally different

spiritual-intellectual orientations, such as Western materialism, animalism, or objectivism based on de-personalized reason as opposed to Chinese spiritualism, moralism, and subjectivism ingrained in human nature-cum-feelings; thus, East and West each has its merits and shortcomings, and in some way the Chinese/Oriental culture may even be superior to its Western counter-part in a deeply humanistic sense.¹¹

(D) Scholars oriented to the social sciences would argue that those who attacked the traditional culture or classical legacy as enemy or obstacle to modernization progress misconstrued the relationship between tradition and modernity as being incompatible, rather than being in a continuum; the most compelling argument in support of this thesis has been the construed continuum between traditional Western religion and modern Western science. The inference is: the stronger the traditional base of a culture, the stronger its modernizing capacity; hence, to modernize China, one must revitalize its once vibrant classical tradition.¹²

IV. The Huntington Paradigm or Exemplum

Between the above-mentioned theses (i) and (ii), there are a number of variation themes combining elements adopted from both theses. Of these, the more recent and most often discussed one is Samuel P. Huntington's thesis of "civilizational Crashes" (vantage 1993 and 1996).¹³ While one may find faults with Huntington's conceptualization of culture, civilization, and "civilizational crash", his thesis does subsume a mixture of viewpoints and theories about how different "cultural traditions" interacted in the past, their present conditions, and their developmental possibilities.

As a political scientist concerned with power-based international relations, Huntington's immediate and prime concern is with the changing reality of international relations following the collapse of the Soviet Communist power-block. However, instead of seeing the America-dominated West emerging as a global

monolithic power, such as

U.S.A. > Western Europe > Eastern Europe > non-West

Huntington is postulating an initial form of multifarious and multilateral re-alignments and crashes among major present civilizational blocks, shaping up in the bipolar line-up as [the West against the rest], somewhat along the old line-up of [West against East].

Huntington's theory attracts the most attention in Oriental/Asian countries due to its implication for both the age-old themes of "West's domination over the East" and "modernity overwhelming and wiping out all traditions (meaning mostly the not yet modernized Eastern cultures)", in the "modern West against traditional East" equation. According to Huntington, an Eastern people may succeed in modernization, thereby acquiring technological, industrial, scientific, economic, and military power equaling and rivaling the West, without giving up their own cultural tradition as ingrained in their language, history, religion, customs, institutions, etc., all the way to their collective and individual subjective self-identification.

To the contemporary Neo-Confucians¹⁴, Huntington's view that, at the heart of each civilization there are some enduring traditions which do not change through (or even in spite of) the modernization process, tends to confirm what they (the Neo-Confucians) had been asserting all along since the 1920's. Now, they are glad to see their viewpoint confirmed by a prominent Western scholar from the modernist "social sciences" camp.

The main-stream thinking of the "social scientists"-cum-"Modernists" has been that the historical developments of all peoples, in spite of their different cultural traditions, follow the same law of progress toward modernity, wherewith the world will become one. This would be so, whether one follows Auguste Comte's (1798-1857) postulation of positivist progress "from theology, through metaphysics, to positive science", or Karl Marx' (1818-83) law of historical development "from primitive communalism, slave society, feudalism, capitalism, to communism"--all people will advance toward the same destiny as "the end of history". Within this process, the conflicts and struggles in the world occurred

mainly between people in the more advanced stage and those in the less advanced stage. In proto-modern time, such struggles would be, according to the positivists, between the “modernized, developed” and the “under-developed, not yet modernized” peoples, or, according to the Marxists, between the “colonist, oppressor, exploiter” and the “colonized, oppressed, exploited”, i.e. between the more successfully modernized (the industrialized) and the less successful (pre-industrial) ones, and not between peoples of different cultures, such as the West against the East. Since, to the Eastern peoples at least, both “Positivism” and “Marxism” are variant strains of “Western modernism”, their postulated “end of history” means the disappearance of all Eastern cultural traditions.¹⁵

Now, although Huntington still takes for granted humankind's unilineal progress toward modernity, he much downgrades the cultural impact of the modernizing process. According to Huntington, modernization has wrought very little fundamental change of the world's pluralistic traditions of culture. Far from being able to generate a unitary civilization, it may even fail to effect the peaceful co-existence of diverse civilizations in a super-modern world. Thus, a modernized East is still the East, and the olden “West against East” paradigm merely becomes Huntington's theme of “the modern West against the rest”. Hence, history will not end; neither will the cultural traditions of the East or the “non-Western” disappear in the foreseeable future. Implicitly, Huntington seems to consider most peoples of the world (including many Eastern peoples) as already in the age of modernity, thus significantly downgrading the unique importance of the “West” together with “modernity” in his paradigm.

Huntington's vantage was informed first of all by the reality of international power politics as a result of (1) the collapse of the Soviet communist block, (2) the economic crises in the Western capitalist countries (especially in the re-united Germany), (3) the rising economic power (before the current fiscal crises) of some Asian countries, including China, and (4) the growing recalcitrance of the Islamic people against Western cultural influence and American political hegemony. In longer terms, ideologically, Huntington's position exemplifies a decided retreat of the “Positivist/modernist” mode of thinking in the face of multiple “postmodernist” challenges, culminating from a long series of disappointment and disillusionment

with the Enlightenment ideals of reason, progress, and transcendent Truth--Nietzsche, Freud, the Existentialists, and the post-Marxists.¹⁶

V. The Postmodernist Paradigm and Paradox

More significantly, subsumed in the old “West against East” paradigm, there are a number of paired conceptual constructs, such as “universal vs. particular”, “abstract vs. concrete”, “reason vs. feeling”, “prosaic vs. poetic”, “objectivism vs. subjectivism”, “transcendental vs. immanent”, “ideas vs. persons”, “logics vs. dialectics”, “ethical principles vs. moral cultivation”, etc., which have recently been re-capitulated into the theorem of “the absence of a concept of truth or of the transcendent in Chinese culture [in contradistinction to the predominance of this in Western culture]”.¹⁷ However, recent development of Western thought and culture from Nietzsche to the postmodernists, instead of persevering in the Western pole of such bipolar pairs, has been progressively tending toward the Eastern/Chinese side of the spectrum. This may explain the tremendously popular reception of the transplanted “Western postmodernism” in both Taiwan and mainland China presently. Ironically, both the Eastern-slant of “Western postmodernism” and its enthusiastic reception in the East serve as strong arguments against Huntington's postulation that West is West and East is East, whose cultural traditions never change nor interchange.

However, like previous Chinese acceptance of “Western Marxism”, the current Chinese reception of “Western postmodernism” may turn out to be also highly paradoxical. Postmodernism, with its critique of West/modernism and the concomitant leaning toward the East in the bipolar “West-East” spectrum, which account for its special appeal to the East, was originated and developed in the Western historical context and reacting to the reality of the modern West with its excessive universalism, abstractionism, objectivism, absolutist truth claim, etc. Hence postmodernism's countervailing emphasis on the particular, the concrete, the subjective, and relativized truth, etc. Transplanted into China, postmodernism tends to add excesses (emphasis on the particular, etc.) to excesses in the

East/Chinese end of the spectrum and further deplete what is deficient (universalism, etc.) in that subject culture.¹⁸

For example, If the authority claim of “truth” in the Western cultural tradition tended to be absolutist, and positivist modernism made it more excessively so, the postmodernist critique or attack of such absolutism does not annihilate but merely moderate truth's authority in the West. On the other hand, with the authority claim of “truth” being relatively weak (if not totally absent) in the Chinese cultural tradition, the transplanted postmodernist assault on “truth” threatens to eradicate its tenuous presence from contemporary China. The consequence would be excessive and extreme irrationalism (as expressed in the catch-words “I can do whatever I feel like”), which not only runs rampant in the so-called “neo-neo human species” (*hsin-hsin jen-lei*) among our younger generations, but tends to raise its ugly head in present Taiwan political, business, mass-communication media scenes, all the way to the Mafia underworld. As such, Postmodernism makes not only strange but dangerous bed-fellows with Chinese classicism or the Neo-Confucianists.

VI. Historicism as a Compromise Approach to Modernity

The foregoing is my “historicist” recapitulation of the cultural crises¹⁹, occasioning the concomitant attacks on and defences of the classical core of traditional culture in China during the past 150 years, and the paradox presented by the transplanted “postmodernism” in present day Taiwan. “Historicism” is a controversial term, as evinced by Karl Popper's “historicist” attack of “[Marxian] historicism” or Fu Ssu-nien's parody of it into an extreme version of “positivist scientism”, and is itself under attack by “New Historicism” of the postmodernist strains.²⁰ Basically, I am using the term, as defined by Maurice Mandelbaum, as asserting that “an adequate understanding of the nature of a phenomenon and an adequate assessment of its value is to be gained by considering it in terms of the place it occupied and the role it played within a process of development”²¹. But there is a great deal more to it.

Combining “history” (the particular) and “ism” (the general), “historicism”, as

reconstructed from the Rankeian exemplum, postulates history as a creative process subsuming or coopting the particular and the general, the individual and the universal, concrete facts and abstract principles, idiographic and nomothetic cognitions, even nature and spirit, thereby de-constructing these static cognate pairings by recognizing the “composite nature of the human person”²². To Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-19110), Ernest Troeltsch (1865-1923), Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954), Karl Mannheim (1893-1947, and Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), “historicism is not only a theory of historical knowledge, a methodology of the socio-historical sciences, but marks a decisive turning point in the understanding of reality -- in fact the specifically modern conception of the world.” (Pietro Rossi). As Dilthey stated: “the historical awareness of the finitude of all historical phenomena...of the relativity of every sort of belief, is the final step towards the liberation of man, the condition of overcoming the anarchy of philosophical systems”. For Meinecke, “historicism is a fundamental element of modern thought, the highest level yet attained in the comprehension of human beings, capable of healing the wounds it dealt (such as the anarchy of philosophical system, and cultural fragmentation) through the relativization of values.” For Croce, “historicism is the conclusive moment in modern thought...a superior form of rationalism...the recognition of the rationality of the historical process in all its aspects.”²³ As a “modernist critique and remedy of positivist modernism”, “historicism” may subsume both the Popperian historicist attack on “historicism” which is its mere parody²⁴, and the postmodernist challenges to modernism, which historicism anticipated and forecalled (except, or even including, Hayden White’s “New Historicism”).²⁵ It is with this understanding that I offer the “historicist approach” as an immediate-cum-intermediate measure to deal with our current cultural, educational, and classics curriculum issues.

VII. Historicism Controverted in Modern China: Past Experience

In this connection, one must discuss an important modern Chinese strain of “historicism”, introduced and espoused by I’u Ssu-nien (1896-1950) and others,

with the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, as its institutional base. Wedded to the “scientific positivism” introduced and espoused by Hu Shih (1891-1962), this aims at “scientifically reconstructing” China’s ancient-classical cultural legacy, a process that has been going on from the 1920’s to the present. As such, this -- the agenda of “scientific reconstruction of China’s ancient-classical tradition” -- has the status of official orthodoxy in the intellectual-academic establishment in Taiwan, especially in matters concerning government cultural-educational policy. And it is from this agenda that China’s classical tradition received the most severe threat.²⁶

If “historicism” in the Popperian parody means the Marxian strain of modernism at its worst, the Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien strain of “historicism” turns out to be an extreme version of Comteian “Positive Scientism”.²⁷ In Auguste Comte’s (1798-1857) postulation, the progress of the human mind (or the development of science toward modernism) goes through three stages, i.e. the theological (religion), the metaphysical (philosophy), and ultimately the “positive” (science). Granting that the postulation is heuristically valid, the historicist in “recognition of the rationality of the historical process in all its aspects” (above-quoted) would see these three stages in a historical-cultural continuum, wherein their disparities are merely of idealtypic construction. Historically, “metaphysical philosophy” grew out from, and on the basis of, “theological religion”, and “positive science” in turn grew out from, and on the basis of, “metaphysical philosophy”, each of these had been “modern”, “progressive”, and “rationally valid and viable” in its own time/stage. In terms of their idealtypicality, none of these ever exist in their pure form as real historical entity, i.e. there is no “scientific modern culture” nor even “scientific modern mind” existing without its “metaphysical-philosophical” and “theological-religious” substrata. Borrowing the terminology from postmodernism, one may call the “positive-scientistic” as “post-metaphysical” (not anti-metaphysical), and the “metaphysical-philosophical” as “post-theological” (not anti-theological).

Proselytizing “historicism” polemically, the Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien camp tended to turn the idealtypical characteristics of these developmental stages into incompatible, antagonistic sets of reductionist ideologies, i.e. the “positive-scientistic” as “anti-metaphysical/anti-philosophical”, and the “meta-physical-philosophical” as

“anti-theological/anti-religious”, the one can only exist in the absence of, or by combating, the other. This violates the fundamental spirit and tenets of “historicism”. By treating China’s ancient-classical tradition not as in a continuum with, nor as a core or substratum of, the living Chinese culture, but as a museum relics of the dead past, the Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien “historicist agenda to reconstruct China’s past” proceeded in partnership with the above-mentioned Westernist/modernist attacks on China’s traditional-classical culture.

Ironically, in the very direction that the “Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien historicism” turned out to be a distortion of Western historicism, it was falling back into the tradition of an extremist form of Chinese “historicism” known as “k’ao-chü Evidential Research” which climaxed in China’s “late classicist era” during the 18th century.²⁸ It is in the modernist mode of this latter tradition that the “Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien historicists” have worked most effectively in research and in gaining main-stream acceptance and support of their ideological stance, including their treatment of China’s classical tradition.²⁹

VIII. Rehabilitating Historicism and Classicism

As an orthodox ideology of main-stream modernism in Taiwan, this extremist “positivism-scientism” masquerading itself as “historicism” has wrought havoc not only to classical studies but in all areas of humanistic and social studies. Presently what is needed as an immediate measure is a thorough critical review and reformulation of historicism as a form of modern thought, extricating it from the “positivist” extreme and returning it to its proper function as a modern, self-reflective, moderating critique of modernism. This may first of all moderate the “positivist-scientist” attacks, under the guise of historicism, on China’s classical cultural tradition. Since most of the “Hu Shih/Fu Ssu-nien positivists” profess to be historicists, they cannot legitimately oppose such an historicist rectification. And if they do, let us hope that historicism will perform its function of processually de-constructing such an antagonistic “ism” (i.e., extreme “positivism-scientism” as an ideology) by historicizing it. In the same process, historicism may moderate the

conflicts between the “traditionalist-classicist” and the “anti-traditionalist/modernist”, between “modernism” and “postmodernism”, and between West and East as bipolar idealtypes, thereby healing the wounds of cultural, philosophical, and ideological fragmentation in present-day Taiwan. Then, as an intermediary agenda, it may proceed onto a truly historicist reconstruction of China's past, rehabilitating its classical core, and rediscovering its meaning and relevance to the modern and postmodern world.

In conclusion, let me say that as an historian and historicist, I am aware that such an agenda may not satisfy the yearning of the modern Neo-Confucians or the hermeneutic need of the classicists. But as an immediate and intermediary agenda, I believe that historicism has its timely functions to perform. Since historians and historicists can not predict the future, I do not know what a truly historicist reconstruction of China's past will thence-forth turn out to be.

Notes

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9. One finds a curious echo of this in Hu Shih, the advocate of "total Westernization", Jerome B., Grieder, *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance*, Cambridge, Mass., 1970, p. 160.
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11. Most recently, David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, Albany, 1987; *Anticipating China: Thinking through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture*, Albany, 1995; *Thinking From the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in Chinese and Western Culture*, Albany, 1998.
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古代經典與當代文化之斷裂與連續—— 「歷史主義」的述評

陳 啟 雲*

摘 要

在當前台灣通識教育課程中，「中華古代經典」的意義、價值和功能的分析討論，牽涉到「傳統和現代化」在中西文化的比較、對立、衝擊和調適中的定位和動向。

本文回顧近百年來「現代化」和「西化」的趨勢，以及「全盤西化」和「現代化即西化」的理論，對中華文化傳統（尤其是儒家經典）的致命衝擊。並指出：雖然現代化和西化在海峽兩岸（馬克思主義和資本主義）都是勢不可當的走向，但中華文化傳統（包括儒家經典）面對種種打擊，卻是「野火燒不盡，春風吹又生」。作為中華文化傳統代言人的「國粹論」者、「文化本位論」者和「現代新儒家」，在中、外學術論壇上，也屢有不容忽視的發言地位。最近在台灣突顯的「民粹主義」和「後現代主義」，表面上雖然視「中華文化傳統」為寇讎，但在理論底線上，卻與「文化傳統」、「文化本位」

*清華大學歷史研究所教授

論者同樣地站在「主體·主位」的出發點，對「現代主義」、「資本主義」和「殖民主義」採取批判態度。

本文分析了「現代主義」(Levenson)、「新儒家」、「杭定頓文明論」和「後現代主義」文化觀，並提出「歷史主義」作為解決「主義」紛爭和「意義」斷裂的底線立場。

關鍵詞：傳統、現代化、西化、儒家經典、杭定頓、後現代、新儒家、歷史主義、實證主義