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**CHANGE VS. ORDER—*SHIJIE* MEETS *TIANXIA* IN
CHINA'S INTERACTIONS WITH THE WORLD**

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All comments very welcome.)*

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Introduction

There have been numerous scholarly examinations of how China perceives its role and place in the world and how it conceptualises its place.¹ Most of these studies consider aspects of Chinese politics and identity, 'strategic' culture, or official rhetoric as they examine the interplay between traditional and modern Chinese political practices. Many look at how China's pre-modern history and traditional worldview affect China's foreign policy and engagements with the world today. Fairbank, in his classical edited volume, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, stated that the 'Chinese tribute system...has some indeterminate relevance to the world's China problem of today'.² He added that 'modern China's difficulty of adjustment to the international order of nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has come partly from the great tradition of the Chinese world order'.³ Similarly, Kornberg and Faust argue that 'one can better understand China's external relations, even today, by turning back the pages of history to ancient times'.⁴ Most recently, Scott echoes that 'China's past is very much at play in the present, concerning Chinese attitudes and world view on war and peace'.⁵

These approaches each utilize a particular interpretation of the history of China to explain China's behaviour today. Chinese history is neatly divorced from the present and treated as a natural course of development that has informed China's interactions with the outside world. It is true that China's distant and recent history influences the construction and current orientations of China's national identities. For instance, China's experiences and memory of the 'century of humiliation' inform much of current Chinese state-led and popular nationalism.⁶ But the concrete uses of history in China are part of the present Chinese condition; they both reflect and create the present. These historical references are shaped by present-day circumstances and help construct a particular picture of the present.

Rather than contemplating how the past influences China's perception of its role in the world today, this paper examines how China constantly negotiates its relationships with the world. It treats China not as a unitary actor but as a construct made up of multifarious identities at different levels. It calls into question the oppositions—between tradition and modernity, the past and the present, China and the West—which are often presumed or reproduced in our thinking about China's place in the world. China's relationship with the world cannot be grasped through simply projecting Chinese history onto the present. One can only understand

the interplay between history and present through examining particular uses of history in practice.

The paper explores how the world and China's place in it are seen in Chinese popular culture and visual expressions of state initiatives to promote Chinese culture. It emphasises the role of visual politics in framing China's relationship with the world. Visual expressions are an important aspect of contemporary everyday life and politics in China and elsewhere. Visual language appeals to wider audiences than the language of texts because it is attractive and comprehensible to people outside policy-making and scholarly circles. Visual representations are components of politics and frame identities just like political practices and texts do.

The paper analyses how images of the ever-changing world are depicted in two visual narratives: a promotional video of the Confucius Institute and the film *The World (Shijie)*. The visually narrated worlds of the film and the promotional video cannot be grasped through tracing historical continuities to the present or through drawing a line between history and the present. Nor can they be explained through counterposing China's traditional view of the world, *tianxia*, to the Western interpretation of international relations premised on state sovereignty. The fictional world that the characters of *The World* inhabit and the world for which China's leaders attempt to gain support through promoting Chinese language and culture have common properties: they each exhibit an interplay between the modern and traditional, the Chinese and non-Chinese, and the personal and universal. The world portrayed in the film and the world where China's official aspirations are presented are created, performed, and experienced through a spontaneous flow of images, practices, and relationships. China's engagements with the world and its interpretations of it take place at many levels involving a multitude of actors. Most notably, the visual narratives in the promotional video and the film reflect perceptions of a world that is always changing and lacks features predetermined by history or other factors.

The first section of this paper discusses the etymological distinction between the Chinese notions of *tianxia* and *shijie*. The predominant discussions of China's engagement with the world focus on China's inability to apply its surviving traces of traditional culture (including the traditional vision of the world, *tianxia*) to the Western-imposed world order, and China's failure to adapt to the established world order due to historical and cultural factors.⁷ These discussions reflect two well-defined and pre-determined visions of the world: China's cultural *tianxia* and the Western-imposed territorial world order composed of sovereign nation-states. Neither vision includes the notion of an ever-changing, multidimensional, and relational world, which *shijie* refers to.

The second section analyses the Confucius Institute's promotional video. The video's effort to promote Chinese language and culture abroad combines elements of traditional cultural notions with modern and widely recognisable messages. It capitalises on the changing nature of the world and presents China in the most favourable light. China is touted as a modern and important culture, and mastering the Chinese language is claimed to be timely for achieving professional and personal success. The marketing strategy of the Confucius Institute blurs the distinction between traditional and modern to produce a readily comprehensible message (at least in the West), with the name of Confucius appearing over the image of a dove in the centre of the Institute's official logo.

The third section explores the film *The World* by Chinese director Jia Zhangke. It examines how the film expresses China's renegotiation of its place in the world. The release of this film was the turning point in the director's relationship with the authorities, earning him high acclaim among officials and popularity among Chinese viewers. By analysing the stories of the main characters against the background of the main attractions of the world, I demonstrate how the world outside China is presented for the consumption of the Chinese public and how the characters perceive and experience the changing nature of the world through their work and life in the World Park. The film features the World Park in Beijing, but through its references to the world and China along with Beijing it produces a complex spatial narrative which is both China-specific and characteristic of the contemporary world outside China.

The fourth and fifth sections examine the aspects of the modern world depicted in the film, namely mobility and the virtues and vices of the modern world. Despite the quick pace of transition of Chinese society and the proliferation of mobility as an aspect of modern living, for many workers in China the park in Beijing is the furthest out into the world that they will get to glimpse and experience modernity with all its ills and merits. Intimate relations with the multifaceted and complex world, integral to the notion of *shijie*, are daily experiences for the protagonists of the film.

The last section discusses how China performs an instructive role through projecting a particular vision of the world in the park and by actively advancing a certain version of China through teaching the language and introducing Chinese culture to foreign audiences. The film *The World* shows how the world is interpreted in Chinese society with the help and active participation of the authorities. Yet, as the film vividly shows, the world, including within China, is an incoherent, diffused formation with different meanings for people making and living it.

Both of the visual narratives discussed in the paper exhibit China's use of informal politics, which appeal to common people, to shape perceptions of China (in the case of the Confucius Institute) and the outside world (in the case of the World Park). These narratives illuminate how China desires to be viewed by the outside world and how the outside world is represented in China. They highlight the intricacies and complexities of such representations, which often escape attention when analysed through the lenses of either China's 'traditional' worldview or the dominant world-order perspective. Rather than attributing Chinese views of the world's meaning and China's place in it solely to China's history and the contemporary international order, the paper attributes them to an interplay of interrelated factors.

Tianxia vs. Shijie

China's relationship with the world, its images of the world, and its contributions to the world have become matters of concern among scholars, the media, and policy-makers. Many academic debates both in China and the West have paid particular attention to the role that China's pre-modern image of the world plays in shaping China's engagements with the contemporary world. Among the many traditional Chinese notions, the concept of *tianxia* has been invoked as the one that best represents China's traditional worldview. In this view, the territory covered by the conquests of Imperial China constituted the whole world. It has become common historic knowledge that *tianxia* constituted the Chinese pre-modern cosmological view of the world, which was starkly different from the world order established by the European empires.⁸ The primary rationales for evoking the notion of *tianxia* in contemporary scholarship have been to suggest that the way China operates cannot be solely understood by applying Western concepts and principles,⁹ and, more recently in Zhao Tingyang's writings, that *tianxia* can offer an alternative model to the largely dysfunctional organisation of the world today.¹⁰ *Tianxia*, as an abstraction, is employed to underline China's peculiar historic position and its aspired influence in the world not only economically but as a generator of new ideas and norms. These interpretations of *tianxia* endow China with qualities that make it a distinct and special place in the world, one that cannot be grasped through Western concepts. These analyses interpret and construct China's present through appealing to certain historical readings of China's traditional worldview.

Following the publication of Zhao's book, three different meanings of *tianxia* were identified.¹¹ In all of them, *tianxia* does not presuppose definite spatial or temporal dimensions. Indeed, the *tianxia* order does not have spatial limits; it can expand as far as Confucian

principles and the imperial conquests. During the imperial period of China's history, the temporal dimension of *tianxia* had a cyclical pattern: the rule of a new dynasty marked the beginning of a new era in the Chinese calendar, which Chih-yu Shih calls the heavenly order.¹² The temporal aspect of *tianxia* was dominated by an emphasis on the internal (the greatest and highest) order and hierarchy, and did not welcome—and eventually could not survive—the changes brought about by the clashes with the Western imperial powers.

In his critique of Zhao's thesis, Callahan observes that Zhao's interpretation of China's traditional worldview has a top-down perspective, which is preoccupied with maintaining the internal order and hierarchy within the *tianxia* system.¹³ Zhao's proposed adaptation of *tianxia* for the twenty-first century presupposes a particular organisation of relationships between people, within families, and between nations. According to this interpretation of *tianxia*, priority should be given to the members of a family and community over outsiders.¹⁴ *Tianxia* here is concerned with order, hierarchy, and stability, whereby heaven grants the exclusive right of rule to the emperor. *Tianxia* is represented as an inward-looking system of values and governance that looked to Confucianism and the emperor as the highest authority in running the internal order. This vision of the world is essentially static, as it prioritises maintenance of the order imposed from above over change, spontaneity, and contingency, and it ignores a multiplicity of formulations of the world and China's place in it. While change was present in the strategic thinking of ancient Chinese rulers, as evident in the Chinese classic *Yi Jing (The Book of Changes)*, the presumption of change within the Chinese system of cosmology was based on the ideal of preserving the reign of the emperor and his domain, *tianxia*, for as long as possible.¹⁵ This preoccupation with the preservation of stability and order implied by the dominant interpretations of *tianxia* is echoed in current expressions of official nationalism in China, which stress that the existing political structure of the Chinese state, one-party rule, is essential for achieving the socio-economic goals set by the leadership. According to this stance, only the ruling Communist Party can guarantee stability, so no substantial change in the organisation of the state is welcome.¹⁶

Some academic attempts to reconcile China's traditional view of the world with its foreign policy orientations stress that the territorial-sovereign mode of the world order was imposed on China by the West and Japan in the late nineteenth century, and that China has had problems subscribing to and operating within it.¹⁷ Scholars have also suggested that China's worldview (*shijie guan*) is one of the more stable influences on China's foreign policy orientations.¹⁸ This line of argument, which is found in many scholarly analyses, is premised on China's distinctness and unique character throughout its history. This postulation leads to

the assertion that it is somewhat futile to analyse and understand China through applying Western norms and concepts. Yet China's alleged inadaptability to the territorial-sovereign mode of the world system is belied by the Chinese leadership's own formulations of its standards in foreign policy.

China remains one of the most outspoken advocates of the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity in international relations. It has not only accepted these norms, but become their ardent advocate.¹⁹ The Chinese leadership regards the realm of culture as inseparable from Chinese sovereignty and requiring protection by the party-state from the potentially harmful effects of globalisation. More recently this priority to protect the national culture transformed into the active promotion of Chinese culture around the world. As for the thesis that China's vision of the world order has been relatively stable, Chinese images of the world and China's role in it are subject to constant negotiation and dispute at different levels. The very fashion in which China attempts to protect and promote its culture blurs the distinctions between traditional and universal elements, fusing and blending them. Through these practices China's visions of the world and engagement with it are constructed, contested, and negotiated.

The concept of *tianxia*, as a system of governance valuing order, stability, and hierarchy, might reflect (though not without reservations) the Chinese government's official take on how China should be organised and governed domestically. However, *tianxia* does not account for the tensions, inconsistencies, and struggles which take place in China at multiple levels as an integral part of its interactions with the modern world. In fact, the Chinese vocabulary evinces relational and dynamic views of the world, as exemplified by the word *shijie*, which comprises two characters: *shi*—age, era, generate, and *jie*—boundary, circles. Originating in Buddhist thought and deriving from the Sanskrit term *loka-dhatu*, *shijie* in its original use perceives the world as ever-changing and destroyable.²⁰ It refers to both spatial and temporal dimensions of the processes taking place at a particular time and within certain physical confinements. While *tianxia* is generally understood as preoccupied with maintaining hierarchy, order, and unity, and the central role of the Confucian principles is to organise the civilized core of the system and ameliorate difference through acculturation, *shijie* does not have the same connotations. *Shijie* does not presuppose a division of the system into civilized and barbarian components and the acculturation of barbarian subjects. It emphasises temporal, ever-changing processes within physical spaces, be they confined to one person, a family, a social group, a city or a particular part of it, or the whole planet. As such, *shijie* promotes a vision of the world from the point of view of its current affairs, developments, relationships,

and experiences that will unavoidably come to an end. It stresses the interactions of people and social groups with the world surrounding them and suggests a dynamic and relational understanding of the world.

It is notable that ‘cosmopolitanism’ is normally translated into Chinese as *shijie zhuyi*, emphasising an outward-looking and never-finished process, in opposition to China’s purported historical perception of the world as an order-preoccupied *tianxia*. Cosmopolitanism here could be understood as ‘no longer merely an ideal project but a variety of actually existing practical stances’.²¹ The classical interpretation of cosmopolitanism put forward originally by Kant opposed not nationalism, as often presented in academia, but the absolutist statism of eighteenth-century Europe.²² The notions of *tianxia* and *shijie* could perhaps also be seen as complementary opposites representing the opposing values of stability and openness to change, where *tianxia* is represented as hierarchical and orderly and *shijie* stands for change in an ever-changing world. At the same time, *tianxia* and *shijie* visions of the world should not be seen as dichotomous, as they co-exist and complement each other in reflecting particular engagements with the world. In other words, *shijie* does not replace *tianxia* but helps shift the focus to processes and developments which would otherwise remain concealed and unaccounted for. It offers a more nuanced perspective on China’s complex perceptions and relationships with the world.

Now let’s look at China’s initiatives and visual representations expressing a dynamic view of the world in relation to the etymology of *shijie*. Different visual representations of China’s relations with the world present China as part of an evolving world and a site for developments engaging the world. The complexity and inconclusiveness of China’s relations with the world cannot be grasped through opposing the traditional Chinese worldview to the Western-dominated organisation of the world. The officially endorsed visual images present China as a modern and dynamic nation worthy of close study by the world. At the same time, China is portrayed as a space where the world in its many dimensions is manifested. The order-preoccupied discourse of *tianxia* and the argument that China cannot adapt to the West-imposed order overlook that China is part of the dynamically changing *shijie*.

Contemporary processes and relationships which are characteristic of the world and concern it at multiple levels shape China’s outlook. *Shijie* is a world of relations always in the making where people experience the world in a variety of ways. A certain place within China, such as the World Park, can be the ultimate place where people come into contact and experience the world in its many expressions (albeit with significant intervention from the authorities). The ever-changing world embraces China, reorganising its social life and

influencing its perceptions and relationships with the world. China's outlook is reflected in the visual representations planned for its recent initiative to set up a chain of Confucius Institutes around the world.

With Confucius Out into the World!

Chinese authorities have called for a greater cultural presence of China worldwide to accompany China's growing political and economic power, echoing Zhao's argument that China needs to match its economic assertiveness with the generation of new ideas for the world.²³ One of the most telling examples of this mode of thinking in policy-making is the 2004 initiation of the establishment of a chain of Confucius Institutes around the world. The mission of these institutes, as formulated in the official document disseminated by the government, is to promote 'friendly relationships with other countries and enhance understanding of the Chinese language and culture'.²⁴ The activities of the institutes are coordinated by the central Confucius Institute headquarters in Beijing, which is subordinate to the central government's National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. The institutes have mushroomed around the world, with the first one established in Seoul in 2004. Initially, it was anticipated that there would be at least one such institute on each continent, and that one hundred Confucius Institutes would be set up around the world before 2010. However, the initiative was enthusiastically supported by governments and institutions worldwide so that in 2008 there were already 245 Confucius Institutes established in seventy-one countries and regions around the world.²⁵ While the idea of a network of cultural institutions abroad is not new – China here follows the longstanding traditions of other similar initiatives, such the Alliance Française, the British Council, Japan Foundation, Goethe Institute and so forth, the format which China has adopted in promoting its language and culture abroad is very distinct. Confucius Institutes are established in close association with local institutions of higher education, on their premises where the head of the Confucius Institute is also a senior member of the university faculty. As an official agent to promote Chinese culture and language abroad, the Confucius Institutes take a very informal form. They are deeply embedded into the structure of the universities around the world relying on their rich-out to students and general public.

Given the University of Manchester's recent strategy of investing more in research and teaching on China, as well as the city's populous and vibrant Chinese community, Manchester naturally became one of the proposed locations for a Confucius Institute. At the ceremonious

launch of the Manchester Institute in October 2006, the audience was shown a promotional trailer of the institutes in which one of the characters proclaimed that institute students would be taught in the spirit of Confucius to know and understand China better. The video was very brief, but the narrative was effective in communicating its central ideas.

According to the video, the institutes not only serve as a basis for learning about China through teaching the Chinese language. They also offer courses on different aspects of Chinese culture: calligraphy, Chinese cuisine, tai chi, kung fu, traditional music and singing, fan dance, and the art of paper cutting. The long list of aspects of Chinese traditional culture is complemented by a short reference to the success of Chinese sports, with a close-up image of Chinese NBA basketball player Yao Ming. The video also makes references to China's recent developmental initiatives, with the image of a Chinese engineer engaging in a conversation with a young westerner against the backdrop of the Three Gorges Dam. At the same time, the video emphasises that China is not ethnically homogeneous by zooming in on images of the Mongolian grasslands and their inhabitants. This introductory part of the video concludes with snapshots of the headquarters of the Confucius Institute in Beijing and the offices around the world. White doves fly out from the headquarters around the world, one of which is captured in the official logo of the Institute. This introductory part focuses on China's development path and its most important characteristics. It is followed by three short visual narratives illuminating the modern nature of Chinese language learning.

Firstly, learning Mandarin is presented as a practical and valuable activity which could create more career opportunities and success. The Chinese language itself is presented as the future medium for business. The first short video presents a young white western man at an interview for a corporate job. In the first scene he is picked from the numerous candidates waiting for an interview. He was the only one reading a Chinese newspaper, while the rest were absorbed by English-language papers. The interviewer, whose face we don't see but the plate on his desk explicitly says 'to be hired', meaning the selected candidate is his man, poses a question: 'Who is your teacher?' The interviewee replies with a certain amount of confidence and pride and a winning smile: 'My teacher is Confucius!' This episode suggests that knowing Chinese is an unbeatable advantage. The viewer is left with no doubt that this candidate was hired.

The next short scene of the video takes place at the bottom of the Eiffel Tower in Paris. A young white man spots a girl on a bike and approaches her in a rather determined way, knocking her off the bike. A book falls out of her bag which is a textbook of Chinese. The couple exchange looks of interest, and next we see them studying together and holding hands

on their way to the Chinese class in the Confucius Institute in Paris. The message of this episode is that learning Chinese can not only bring people together through business relations but serve as a medium of friendship and romance.

The last sequence of the video starts at 9 a.m. in a classroom with background music from the French film *Amelie*. It then progresses backward in time to show the student leaving home, having breakfast, and in bed with the alarm going off at 8:30 a.m. and a female voice calling: 'Jack, it is time for Chinese!' That is probably the central message of the entire promotional video. Chinese is presented as a pragmatic, useful, and *timely* language to learn. Its time has come and it is prudent to master Chinese. Doing so is a guarantee of success in business and a way to impress and earn admirers. The video also that China is becoming more important in the world, and that learning Chinese is desirable if you want to keep pace with world developments.

The promotional video reflects China's efforts to popularise a particular image of itself and its culture internationally. It presents an image of a modern, dynamic, rational, business-oriented, but romantic culture that promotes peace and informal politics through education and cultural exchange. Language teaching and culture promotion serve here as tools of public diplomacy. With this initiative of language instruction, China produces an alternative to the preceding sporadic attempts of Chinese communities worldwide to provide Chinese language training predominately to the members of the diaspora. The initiative can also be regarded as China's response to the concerns voiced by many Chinese in the early 1990s about the increasing and potentially destructive influence of Western 'global' culture and the English language on Chinese culture and society.²⁶ The initiative reflects the earlier desire to immunise Chinese culture from the unfavourable influences of Western-orchestrated globalisation. Now it has developed into a proactive popularisation of the Chinese culture and language around the world. Confucius Institutes are oriented towards a foreign, predominately non-Chinese, audience, with a view toward reinforcing the presence of Chinese culture around the world. By promoting Chinese language and culture, the Chinese state is attempting to project a certain image of China to a foreign audience. This image is of a peace-loving, peace-seeking, harmonious China that engages with the world through informal means and culture. There has been at least one clear example of the diplomatic purpose of the initiative. In Japan, a traditional competitor of China in the region of East Asia, the first Confucius Institute was symbolically established inside Ritsumeikan University's memorial hall for peace.

The Confucius Institute initiative raises a host of questions about China's motives and interests. How does this promotion of Chinese culture and language relate to China's growing

economic and political relevance in the world? Is it driven by China's aspiration to play a more important role in the global arena or by its desire to further increase its economic presence? Or is it also motivated by its political rivalry with Taiwan and its desire to have the exclusive rights to represent Chinese culture internationally? Whatever the precise combination of motives, through the Confucius Institutes China is attempting to tell people around the world about a changing and dynamic China.

China's global promotion of Chinese culture and language through the Confucius Institutes calls into question the *tianxia* outlook on the world. The *tianxia* order is usually not seen as welcoming and accommodating change, and cannot fully adapt to the Western territorial-sovereign world order. China's engagement with the world through the Confucius Institutes is an alternative way for China to advance its initiatives among foreign audiences. Rather than acting through explicitly state organisations, China directly appeals in an almost informal and personal way to people on the ground. It reaches out to individuals, predominately of non-Chinese origins, overseas to influence their perceptions of China. The initiative is in part a response to the dynamic and changing nature of the world—with China at the forefront—and thus it reflects the *shijie* outlook. The Confucius Institutes hold up a mirror to new developments and engage with them in an upbeat way. China is presented as an important part of a changing world.

Multifaceted Confucius

China's presentation of itself as a Confucian nation involves an ideological shift. Since the June 4th massacre at Tiananmen Square in 1989, there has been a noticeable departure from Marxist ideology in favour of the popularisation of Confucian values in public and official discourse in China.²⁷ Guo suggests that the revival of Confucianism as orthodox ideology is one of the main tasks for the Chinese leadership in the twenty-first century; it will nurture and strengthen the national spirit and unite the nation.²⁸ Confucianism has been revived at different levels in Chinese society and is often referred to as a new moral code, one that has even been used to evaluate party officials' performance.²⁹ Confucian ethics are vigorously popularised on Chinese TV and in popular literature.³⁰ The acceptance of these new cultural products by the Chinese is often attributed to the increased 'demand for order, social values and ethics' in a rapidly changing society.³¹

Until recently, the return to Confucian values has been characterised by its domestic objectives: it was proposed as a remedy for Chinese society's problems and the declining authority of communism. However, China seems to increasingly present Confucian principles

as guidelines for foreigners' perceptions of China, as evidenced by the name Confucius Institute. In 2006 the China Confucius Foundation published a standard portrait of Confucius 'to give him a single, recognisable identity around the world'.³² By making the central principles of Confucianism, including peace, harmony, and virtue, essential to its international image, China has started a new global public campaign to establish itself as an influential cultural authority and a peaceful, benign power. However, China has not yet shown a willingness to abandon communism as the guiding principle of its ruling party and leadership. With the Confucius Institutes initiative, China ingeniously fuses traditional and particular aspects of its culture with modern and universally recognisable styles and images.

While conflating some aspects of Confucian thought with communist ideology,³³ China cautiously ignores other important components of Confucianism in promoting its Confucian image. It is remarkable how the recent move of Chinese authorities to promote Confucian ideas is mixed with the promotion of other modern ideas such as mobility, adaptability, affluence, and so forth. These attributes seem not only to be incompatible with classical Confucian thought, but to go against its very grain. When China claimed to be ruled according to Confucian principles, emigration and trade were perceived by the Chinese rulers as undermining the stability of the Confucian order. Confucianism prioritised agriculture and regarded commerce as a dishonourable activity; it associated those engaged in commerce with exploitation and parasitism.³⁴ Trade was seen as corrupting of human morality. Emigration was suppressed and condemned as against the value of filial piety towards parents and ancestors, as emigrants could not dutifully pay their respects to older family members.³⁵

China's move to promote its language and culture through the network of officially sponsored Confucius Institutes expands and transforms its strategy to popularize a particular version of its national culture outside China. In early 2000 Chinese intellectuals urged youth in China not to renounce their language in favour of English, as 'English, after all, is only a tool to know the world'.³⁶ Now, however, Chinese is presented as a language in line with world developments. In its popularisation, China combines very modern objectives with elements of what is claimed to be traditional Chinese. Most telling, perhaps, is the very non-Confucian look of the official logo of the Confucius Institute: a white dove with wings spread out to embrace the world, while the world extends an arm to embrace the dove (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The logo of Confucius Institute



China did not choose any supposedly Chinese images or mythical characters for the logo, such as the panda, the dragon, or even the sacred bird the phoenix, which is highly regarded in Chinese mythology. One possible explanation for China's choice of an internationally recognised image is that it sought to emphasise that China seeks to engage with the outside world in an informal, people-oriented manner, rather than through highly institutionalised, state-centric international organisations. The choice of imagery to accompany these initiatives seems to express a desire to get the world to peacefully welcome China's growing presence and influence in it. It is emphasised that China goes out into the world to educate the people of the world without them having to enter China. The promotional video says that Confucius was preoccupied with making 'education available to all men' (in pre-modern China), and now through establishing Confucius Institutes China is giving almost everybody in the world an opportunity to learn about China without leaving their countries.

The promotional video of the Confucius Institute and the state-endorsed discourses and imagery popularising this initiative illustrate how official Beijing wants China to be perceived by audiences worldwide. They frame a particular image of China and can be seen as expressions of the Chinese state's 'soft' power. What is important is that the initiative and the international public relations efforts associated with it cannot be grasped solely by reference to either the allegedly Chinese-history-rooted *tianxia* vision of the world or to the West-dominated state-centric international system. The imperative of change, which is not integral to the dominant interpretations of *tianxia* and China's relationship with the Western world order,

is built into China's Confucius Institute initiative and the international public relations campaign.

The Park, Beijing, and the World

As part of the 'China at Manchester' festival that was tied to the launch of the Confucius Institute there, a number of films by Chinese director Jia Zhangke were screened. Jia is often regarded as one of the best of the new (sixth) generation of Chinese filmmakers. His film *The World* in some ways echoes the promotional video of the Confucius Institute, but it also provides a different perspective on China's changing relationship with the world. The film looks at how commoners in China perceive and experience their relationships with the outside world. While the promotional video was made with the close involvement of the state and therefore presents a visually codified formulation of China's engagement with the world, the art of film is not directly related to the discourse of the state. As Shapiro observes, the 'contemporary cinema provides a mode of thought about time and events that encodes the peculiarities of the present'.³⁷ Building on the work of Deleuze, Shapiro argues that cinematography through its 'banal' visual representation of nationhood and its treatment of daily life is engaged in the cultural expression of a nation and is closely related to the projects of states.³⁸ That is even truer if a film receives the support and endorsement of the state.

Until 2004 Jia Zhangke was famous outside China mainly for his highly acclaimed films made without the permission of the Chinese government. His films were well-received in the West. All of his earlier works, such as *Xiao Wu* (1998), *Platform* (2000), and *Unknown Pleasures* (2002), were 'underground' creations which were awarded prestigious awards at film festivals in the West. *The World*, however, was destined to have a different life in China. It received approval from the Film Bureau and was the first film by Jia to be publicly shown in China. Moreover, it was generously funded by the authorities, and its premier took place during the National Day holiday, by far one of the most celebrated holidays in China. In Jia's own words,³⁹ in recent years the environment for filmmaking and censorship in China has been slightly relaxed by authorities. Thus it is not his style of work that has changed but the climate for film, which became more receptive to 'underground' work. He emphasises the importance of access to the Chinese market and the ability of his films to be watched by wider circles of the Chinese public.⁴⁰ However, there are more political explanations for why *The World* received such active promotion from the authorities, and one should turn to the plot of the film to explore them.

The film starts off with a lavish beauty-pageant-like performance of people in national costumes from around the world. The plot is set in the World Park in Beijing, which features small-scale replicas of famous sights from all over the world. The viewers follow the daily experiences of work, romance, drama, and friendship of people who live and work in the park. None of the characters in the film are natives of Beijing. They came there from remote parts of the country and abroad in search of a better life and more stable income. The film's narrative focuses on security guards and performers, but also includes other migrant workers in Beijing. 'See the World Without Ever Leaving Beijing' is the slogan of the park, as viewers are reminded several times throughout the course of the film.

The themes raised in the film are different from those in Jia's earlier works, which were all set in his hometown in Shanxi province. Through the experiences of local people, his earlier films portrayed the changing conditions of life in China undergoing a buoyant economic transition. *The World*, on the other hand, is set in Beijing, and although the social problems of China are at the crux of the film, they are softened by the prominent background setting of the park and its extravagant shows. The film focuses on the daily struggles of the film's characters, with Beijing and China reference points for developments in the world; China's social ills and troubles of transition are partly represented as part of the contemporary world. The ever-changing character of the world, including China and Beijing, is the main theme of *The World*. The film depicts a curious intersection of geoscapes perceived by the film's characters. The references to the world, China, and Beijing are intertwined to produce a narrative of complex spatiality which is both China-specific and characteristic of the contemporary world. For the characters, Beijing and its World Park embody the world. Love, drama, and various spectacles unfolding in the park are their only experiences of the contemporary world. They are the prisms through which the protagonists learn about the outside world, relate to it, and experience it in their daily life. The world embraces Beijing, which many people in China regard as the hub of their life.

Beijing constitutes the whole world especially for all those who have not experienced the world outside China and who are forced to travel long distances from remote parts of China to fast-growing cities in search of jobs and higher living standards. In their encounters with the modern world, the characters' experiences of mobility, as a fundamental condition of modern life, become 'post-progressive' (to borrow a term from Rofel):⁴¹ they exercise mobility in search of a better life, but experience it as a movement without purposeful destination. Moreover, although mobility brings them into contact with the modern world, they are ultimately alienated from it.

Experiences and Perceptions of the World

Mobility without Destination

Practices of mobility are indispensable for experiencing the modern world, both within and outside China. The very act of mobility (as opposed to the traditional sedentary style of life) is a manifestation of coming into contact with modern life. ‘An obligation to mobility’ is imposed on the characters of *The World* in their interactions with the contemporary world.⁴² The characters had to undertake journeys to come into contact with the modern world in Beijing. Travelling short or long distances becomes an important component of joining modern citizens. In this way the protagonists’ experiences of the world are related to how they perceive a modern condition. Their perceptions of modernity and of the world are co-constitutive and mutually informing.

The mobility that the characters in the film undertake is restricted, however. There are only a limited number of physical destinations and means of travelling available to them. There are also substantial institutional barriers to their mobility. Their perceptions of the material world outside China are confined to how it is presented in the park, where their life journey has led them thus far. The ex-boyfriend of Zhao Xiaotao, the main female character, stops in Beijing to visit her on his way to Mongolia. She says, ‘Your mum was right. Breaking up with me was good for you’. He replies: ‘And for you too! New world every day’. She agrees, ‘That is right. I see the world without leaving Beijing’. She thus utters the official slogan of the park as her own life motto. For her and other park dwellers, the park provides their only exposure to the outside world: ‘I am on the train to India’, ‘Are you going to Japan?’ They move from one spot in the park to another, participating in colourful performances, impersonating different nationalities, and living the world through their shows. One day they are Indian dancers, another they are Japanese, American, African, and so forth. In their daily shows they engage in a very cosmopolitan mode of living without leaving Beijing or taking a plane. They experience the world through costume performances while outside the stage they face the realities of life in present-day China. And so perceptions of the outside world and China’s realities are intimately intertwined in the daily routines of the characters. Their daily life in the park conditions their perceptions of the outside world, and China and the world are mutually constitutive. The design of the World Park—which expresses the views of the Chinese state cultural authorities—and the everyday manifestations of modernity in China are the prisms through which the protagonists of the film perceive the world.

Planes are depicted as an idealised modern way of travelling, but almost nobody in the park has ever been on a plane. When asked, ‘Who flies on those planes?’, Xiaotao is baffled:

‘Who knows? I don’t know anybody who has ever been on a plane’. Instead, visitors and employees of the park can fly on the ‘magical flying carpet’,⁴³ or by paying a visit to the site of an old plane they can experience flying with the guidance of park workers who welcome them with the very real voice of a flight attendant: ‘Our airline would like to welcome you on board. Before landing in our park, this plane made international flights. We have preserved its original appearance. The hostesses are all performers of the Five Continents Company. Everything is there for you to experience the beauty of air travel’. An actual airplane flight is presented as a highly desirable but almost unattainable activity for the dwellers and visitors of the park. They cannot afford the modern condition of experiencing the world through the air, though covering long distances is not only a meaningful but a necessary condition for their interactions with the modern world. *The World’s* characters, in other words, are found on the periphery of the modern world where taking planes is often presented as a non-alienable attribute of modern living. The closest they can come to experiencing it is through rides on magical carpets or decommissioned planes at the state-sponsored tourist sites. Trains, on the other hand, are accessible and affordable means of travel. And a train journey is associated with bringing the modern dream of financial success closer to reality. Taisheng, Xiaotao’s current boyfriend, recalls that on the first night of his stay in Beijing he slept in the hotel next to the train station, listened to the trains, and dreamt of becoming successful in Beijing.

A passport is also essential for visiting the foreign world. There are several references to its practicality in the film. The main protagonists, Xiaotao and Taisheng, do not seem to have passports, which in China you only need to travel abroad. When Xiaotao’s ex-boyfriend stops in Beijing on his way to Mongolia, he shows his passport to Xiaotao. She does not understand why he needs it until he explains that he is going to Mongolia (by train). A passport is also associated with freedom.⁴⁴ The only non-Chinese characters in the film are Russian women who are employed to perform in the park. When they arrive in Beijing their manager insists on keeping their passports. They reluctantly hand them over to him. We later find out that Anna, one of the Russian dancers, had to take up prostitution to afford to visit her sister in Ulan Bator. She is the only employee in the park who is able to take a plane. Xiaotao gets on well with Anna, and they become closer without knowing each other’s language through doing laundry together, drinking, sharing, and chatting. When Anna tells Xiaotao that she is going to change jobs, Xiaotao does not understand what she means but notices that she is worried and tries to cheer her up: ‘Christmas is coming. [There will be] fireworks in the park. It’s beautiful. You should see it. I will take photos for you. I envy you. You can go abroad. You can go

anywhere. What freedom!’ Underlying Xiaotao’s remark is the assumption that a person with a passport and thus the capacity to travel anywhere can be free.

Taisheng is attracted to Cun, the sister of one of his dubious friends. She hails from Wenzhou and her husband has been living in Paris for many years. She wants to join him and recently applied for a French visa. Taisheng cannot understand why her husband left. Cun explains that Wenzhou people are ‘attracted to going abroad’. Taisheng suggests that if she does not get her visa, she should come to the World Park as they have all the French attractions there: the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, and the Arc de Triomphe. But as Cun observes, they don’t have Belleville, the Parisian Chinatown where her husband is supposedly based. In the end, Cun gets her visa, and Taisheng looks at her passport curious about the visa, but he still cannot relate to her desire to leave China.

The narrative lines referred to above depict how the characters of the film perceive the world and experience modern living. In their interactions with the world, the forms of mobility available to and exercised by the protagonists are essentially restricted. They come into contact with these forms without leaving Beijing. They only occasionally leave the premises of the park, the passers-by travel by train, and if they go abroad they are confined to their circles of relatives and friends in Chinatowns. Cosmopolitanism takes a domesticated character. The characters engage in a cosmopolitan mode of living without leaving their current homes, or if they do go abroad they are confined to the spaces dominated by China. Restricted mobility without a clear destination stands out as a value and aspect of modern living. The act of moving is associated with bringing the ideal of modernity closer to reality, even if what constitutes being modern is not clear to the performer. Moving is a mark of the modern identity for the characters of *The World*. They are engaging in what Zigmunt Bauman metaphorically calls a ‘liquid life’, a series of beginnings without a clear destination, where ‘the need...is to run with all one’s strength just to stay in the same place’.⁴⁵ This indeterminate nature of modernity among the Chinese can also be linked to China’s post-socialist transitional context, where ‘the struggles...over the meaning and ownership of modernity’ are highly likely to occur.⁴⁶ This meaning for the protagonists of *The World* seems to be ambiguous, with no clear formulation or source. Like Rofel’s young Chinese female interviewees, the characters of *The World* have ‘no sense of certainty about historical progress’.⁴⁷ The only prominent aspects of their lives are restricted mobility, uncertainty and precariousness. Mobility as an essential part of modern living does not grant them membership in the modern world, governed and dominated by multiple-passport holders and frequent travellers by plane. They are alienated

from this world, though in many ways their very alienation makes the conditions for this modern world possible.⁴⁸

The Vices and Virtues of the Modern World

Jia's films are celebrated for their exploration of the problems of China's post-Mao transition. They expose societal vices, troubles of development projects, and personal tragedies in the course of transformation. *The World* is no exception. The film exemplifies how the values celebrated in China in the reform period clash with traditional virtues, which are not presented as peculiar to China. The problems of China are presented as notoriously modern and partly credited to its engagement with the outside world. They are as much problems of the modern world as they are of China. The global and local intersect in the production of attributes which are shared at many levels by many societies today irrespective of their geographical locations. They are expressions of how the capitalist economy penetrates and conditions human lives in different parts of the world.

Among the qualities which are singled out as measures of success in the modern world and China is financial accomplishment. Many conversations in the film revolve around the subject of money or the lack of it. The characters talk about debts, salary levels, pay rates, compensation and gambling. Money, rather than what it can buy, is depicted as the value which brings the realisation of dreams closer. The blind pursuit of money goes hand in hand with tragedy. Taisheng's co-villager nicknamed Little Sister comes to Beijing in search of earnings and finds a job on the construction site near the park. To make extra money he works all day and overtime at night until one day a cable breaks, severely injuring him. Lying on his deathbed in the hospital he scribbles his last message to Taisheng, which contains a list of people with the sums of debt he owes them. This is the tragic legacy which he leaves for his family to take care of. They will now have to face the reality of spending most of the compensation paid by the construction company for his death to cover his debts.

Only two characters in the film represent values which are not measured by financial success in the modern world. Anna, Xiaotao's Russian friend, came to China to earn money for her family in Russia, and although she has to take up prostitution, her cause is pure. She wants to save up money and visit her sister in Mongolia. She confesses that Xiaotao is her only friend and her song to her is a non-material expression of friendship and affection. Xiaotao appears to be indifferent to money, status, and career growth. She refuses the advancements of a seemingly successful businessman, and is somewhat unenthusiastic about the role she is assigned in the daily performances in the park. When the new manager announces that she is

going to perform an African dance, Xiaotao answers, 'Whatever'. The character of Xiaotao is an example of female goodness, humbleness, purity, loyalty, and modesty. She resists the vices of the modern world, many of which her boyfriend Taisheng possesses. At the same time, Xiaotao's character is intrinsically cosmopolitan despite her necessary attachment to China and work in the park. The way Xiaotao relates to and cares for Anna, who is not only a foreigner but also a prostitute, points to Xiaotao's ability to rise above ethno-cultural and social divisions in her relations with people. For her the value of a human being is separate from any social and moral codes or affiliations.

Taisheng, on the other hand, is the mouthpiece of the values of individualism and self-reliance. Perhaps the epitome of his personal stance and views is expressed in an intimate scene in a hotel room when Xiaotao asks him to be faithful and never cheat on her: 'If you ever cheat on me I will kill you. You are my whole life. If you are unfaithful, I will be left with nothing'. Taisheng brings her back to what he considers today's reality: 'Don't have so much faith in me. You can't count that much on anybody these days, including myself. You can only count on yourself'. Taisheng's views on relationships are reminiscent of Bauman's observation about the character of romantic relationships in 'liquid modernity', which are 'light and loose' and avoid the promises of long-term commitments.⁴⁹

The modern world of the protagonists is filled with positive and negative features. The values of these features, however, cannot be determined, as it is not clear which of them can bring the protagonists closer to the realisation of their dreams. The characters of the film represent millions of rural migrants in China who are estranged from the modern world and the benefits often associated with it. In China's promotion of the Confucius Institutes, the modern and traditional and the particular and global are in flux to produce desirable images of China for foreign consumption. Similarly, in the daily struggles and experiences of the outside world of the characters in *The World*, there is no clear distinction between what represents good and bad. There is no clear sense of what system of values constitutes moral guidance and what life aspirations are considered auspicious and therefore desirable.

Educating the Intersected Worlds

The promotional video of the Confucius Institute and the film *The World* produce visual accounts of the world for different purposes. However, they parallel and complement each other in their representations of the world and China's place in it. Both construct an interpretation of the world that is presented as the dynamically changing world of today. In these visual interpretations, the Chinese state plays the role of cultural authority.



Figure 2. Taking photos in the park

A visit to the World Park is presented as an educational activity which will introduce the visitors to the main attractions in the world. It offers a particular perspective on and formulates a prescribed knowledge of what the major cultural sites of the world are. A visit to the park is not merely entertainment, as the tour guide of the park declares: ‘Good day, dear visitor. Welcome aboard the elevator of our own Eiffel Tower. We hope this panoramic view will heighten your knowledge of the world’. The park offers a view of the world that for many visitors could be their only experience of the world’s most famous sites.⁵⁰ The world is reproduced in snapshots: The park has its own Eiffel Tower that is 108 metres high, the Twin Towers of Manhattan in America (though the images were jettisoned after 09/11), London’s Tower Bridge and Big Ben, Italy’s Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Egyptian pyramids, the Taj Mahal, St. Mark’s Square, and so forth. The park’s primary aim is to introduce visitors to the main attractions of the world outside China (See Fig. 2). There are no references to Beijing’s tourist sites in the World Park.⁵¹ The park’s main audience is China’s domestic tourists. When I visited the park on the last Sunday of the May Holiday in 2007, I expectedly did not encounter any foreigners queuing to enter it. Most visitors were families and groups of tourists from other parts of China who came to Beijing over the week-long holiday and used the opportunity to visit the World Park. The world presented in the park caters to Chinese consumers, who come to rest, relax, and effortlessly take in a picture of the world. The choice of food on International Street (*guoji jie*), adjacent to the main gate of the park, is limited to

varieties of Chinese cuisine, such as Sichuan, Hunan, Cantonese, and Shanghaiese (See Fig. 3) The park is presented as a place where visitors learn about the outside world in one step. China serves as a stage while Chinese people are the creators, performers, and consumers of the world.

Like the park, the Confucius Institutes have an educational dimension, but they are primarily directed at foreign audiences and overseas Chinese, with the slogan of learning about China without needing to enter it. The Confucius Institutes' promotional video offers carefully selected messages and materials detailing Chinese contemporary society and polity; the video highlights major and probably the most well-known aspects of contemporary China. It also emphasises that the initiative is catered to the personal needs of people around the world, needs which will be met through qualified Chinese instructors. But the audiences targeted for educational purposes are not presented as a homogeneous group.

The intersection of global and local is especially evident in *The World*, where the world, reconstructed within a particular locality, is presented as a place of diverse cultures and contested identities. The film does not present China as possessing a uniform culture either. There are references to multiple dialects, which will only be overcome once migrants come together in Beijing and are forced to speak standardised Chinese to understand each other. There are also references to cultural stereotypes and diverse modes of living in different parts of China. Taisheng observes that Shanxi people are sour and like 'vinegar', and Wenzhou people have a 'travelling' gene in their blood and 'rely on their hands to make money' (*shou yi ren kao shou chifan*).

Towards the end of the film the director of the World Park informs the troupe that the next Chinese New Year's CCTV concert will be broadcast from the park and that they 'will be viewed by one billion people worldwide'. Yet the Chinese population today is estimated to be more than 1.3 billion. The main TV programme of the year is closely watched by the Chinese overseas who total more than 30 million people. The director's underestimate of the potential audience of the concert not only excludes a vast number of people in China, but the officially highly regarded overseas Chinese. Thus his remark delimits China's world to less than that presented in the Chinese official discourse.

By educating the world about China and telling the Chinese about the world, the Confucius Institute's promotional video and the film *The World* produce multiple intersected images of the world. These images are multilayered, conflicting, heterogeneous, and in flux. The contemporary world depicted in the promotional video needs to show a better understanding of China to be in line with world developments. For the protagonists of *The*

World, the world, China, Beijing, and the park are enmeshed, and they come to recognise this complex spatiality in their own unique ways in spite of the strong presence of the state.

Conclusion

In *The World*, when Xiaotao finds the farewell text message from Cun on Taisheng's mobile phone, she leaves him and stays in the flat of a friend from the park who got married and is away on honeymoon. Taisheng, not realising what he has done wrong, finds and confronts her: 'What is wrong? You have left without saying good-bye—why?' Xiaotao responds with silence. In the next scene we learn that there was a gas leak in the block of flats, and Xiaotao and Taisheng are carried unconscious or dead outside and laid on the ground. The film is over, the screen goes blank, and the voice of Taisheng asks: 'Are we dead?' Xiaotao's voice replies: 'No, it is just the beginning'. It is the beginning of a new world which they experience as a sequence of constant beginnings with no clear direction or end. Every day is a new world (*yitian yi ge shijie*), although the setting for them is the same. The concluding remark of the film expresses the vision of the modern world found in official and popular visual representations: a world always in the making through mutual influences and personal experiences.

The depictions of the world and China's place in it in *The World* and the Confucius Institute's promotional video challenge treatments of the world order that have been taken for granted. They also highlight the struggles and constant negotiations over the meaning of the world and China's place in it that take place in China at different levels. China's perceptions of and engagements with the world cannot be grasped by assuming that the only traditional notion of the world available to China is *tianxia* and by examining how China adapts to the West-dominated international conventions imposed on it. China's interactions with the world are conditioned by the particular effects of time and space.

China's initiation of the Confucius Institutes around the world and its promotional video illustrate how China evokes universally recognised images, norms and practices along with some traditional concepts to construct and project a particular image of itself to foreign audiences. To make the modern world work to China's advantage and to produce a particular place for China in it, traditional and modern notions are conflated. The experiences of the world for the inhabitants of the World Park in Beijing are regulated and formalised by the design of the park and its regime of work, but they are not solely a product of how the architects of the park and the producers of the shows configure it. Despite the state-sponsored setting and its multiple limitations and restrictions, the experiences of the world of the workers of the World Park are utterly personal, though conditioned by the socio-political and economic

factors integral to China's participation in global processes. While visitors to the park can only see aspects of the world that are selectively represented there, performers live through their daily performances and experiences at the park. Through their emotions, relationships, daily encounters and shows, they not only imagine the world but also craft and live it. And so even if the whole world is restricted to a particular place, it is performed differently and experienced in a variety of ways every day.

The visual narratives in both the promotional video and *The World* point to change as an essential aspect of the world experienced in China. The world is changing and so is China's place in it. It is therefore important to learn and understand China better, as the promotional video tells us. On the other hand, the interaction between global processes and domestic dynamics in China change China's socio-cultural conditions in profound ways. These changes and China's closer engagement with the world are made possible through the alienation of many at the very centre of the changes along with those who cannot or will not adapt to the ever-changing world.

Notes

¹ The classical study was a collaborative volume edited by John K. Fairbank, *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations*, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1968). Since then many writings have addressed the Chinese world order and China's perception of where it fits in the world. They include Mark Mancall, *China at the Centre: 300 years of Foreign Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1983); Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, *China's Quest for National Identity*, eds., (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993); Lydia H. Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); Judith F. Kornberg and John R. Faust, *China in World Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005), and David Scott, *China Stands Up: The PRC and the International System* (Abington: Routledge, 2007).

² John K. Fairbank, 'A Preliminary Framework' in Fairbank, ed., note 1, p.1.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ Kornberg and Faust, note 1, p. 7.

⁵ Scott, note 1, p. 8.

⁶For example, see William A. Callahan, "National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism," *Alternatives* 29 (2004): 199-218; William A. Callahan, "History, Identity and Security: Producing and Consuming Nationalism in China," *Critical Asian Studies* 38, no.2 (2006): 179-208, and Peter Hays Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

⁷ For debates on the persistence of traditional culture in China's foreign policy, see Michael Ng-Quinn, "National Identity in Premodern China: Formation and Role Enactment", in Dittmer and Kim, note 1, pp. 32-61. For the argument on China's incongruity with the sovereign-territorial-based international system, see Chih-yu Shih, *Navigating Sovereignty: World Politics Lost in China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 27.

⁸ Cosmology can be understood as 'a way of acting, thinking, and creating a world, including distinctive ways of being and thinking what is human, of organising space and of calibrating time'. See Stephan Feuchtwang, "Between Civilizations: One Side of a Dialogue," *Social Identities* 12, no. 1 (2006): 79-94, p. 85.

⁹ In addition to the studies mentioned in footnote 1, see Chih-yu Shih, *China's Just World: The Morality of Chinese Foreign Policy* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publisher, 1993) and Chih-yu Shih, note 7, who builds on this argument.

¹⁰ Zhao Tingyang, *Tianxia tixi: Shijie zhidu zhexue daolun* (The Tianxia System: a Philosophy for the World Institution) (Nanjing: Jiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2005), and Zhao Tingyang, “Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept ‘All-under-Heaven’ (*Tianxia*),” *Social Identities* 12, no. 1 (2006): 29-41.

¹¹ The first sense of *tianxia* is geographical and refers to all of the lands (as were known to Chinese) under heaven. But the territory included in this sense did not have clear boundaries, as they could be extended and restricted in accordance with the victories and defeats of the Confucian rulers of the all-under-heaven. The second sense of *tianxia* is the popular sentiments of the people inhabiting the all-under-heaven, which through their transformation and submission to the rule of the Confucian order bestowed legitimacy to the rulers. In the third, ethno-political sense, *tianxia* is the system promoting family-like relationships which can eventually serve as a model for an alternative world international organisation addressing the problems of the contemporary world.

¹² Chih-yu Shih, note 7, p. 29.

¹³ William A. Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-hegemonic or a New Hegemony?,” *International Studies Review* 10 (2008), p. 754.

¹⁴ Daniel A. Bell, *China’s New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 29; Joseph Chan, “Territorial Boundaries and Confucianism”, in *Confucian Political Ethics*, Daniel A. Bell, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 81.

¹⁵ Wang Gungwu. “China and the International Order: Some Historical Perspectives”, in *China and the New International Order*, Wang Gungwu and Zheng Yongnian, eds. (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 23.

¹⁶ Wu Guoguang. “From Post-imperial to Late Communist Nationalism: Historical Change in Chinese Nationalism from May Fourth to the late 1990s,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2008): 467-482, pp. 473-474.

¹⁷ Kai-wing Chow, “Narrating Nation, Race, and National Culture: Imagining The Manzu Identity in Modern China,” in *Constructing Nationhood in Modern East Asia*, Kai-Wing Chow, Kevin M. Doak, and Poshek Fu, eds. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 49; Shih, note 7, p. 27.

¹⁸ Samuel S. Kim, “Chinese Foreign Policy in Theory and Practice” in *China and the World: Chinese Foreign Policy Faces the New Millennium*, Samuel S. Kim ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), pp.3-33, p 10 lists four levels of variables composing China’s foreign policy structure: ‘the top level, *policies* (most variable), the second level, *principles* (most vocal), the third level, *the basic line* (reaffirmed or revised every five years at the party congresses), and the fourth level, *worldview* (*shijie guan*) and *national identity* (most constant) [italics in the original]’.

¹⁹ ‘Jiang Zemin Calls for Fair New World Order’, *China Daily*, April 13, 2000, http://english.people.com.cn/english/200004/13/eng20000413_38891.html. See more on China’s approaches to sovereignty in Allen Carlson, *Unifying China, Integrating with the World: Securing Chinese Sovereignty in the Reform Era* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) and Allen Carlson, “More than Just Saying No: China’s Evolving Approach to Sovereignty and Intervention” in *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S Ross, eds. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), pp. 217-240.

²⁰ For more on the origins and uses of the concept of *shijie*, see Chun-Mei Chuang, “The Translation and Construction of Shi-Jie – Several Cosmopolitanisms in the Discursive Field of Westernization in Early Twentieth Century China,” *Soochow Journal of Sociology* 20 (2006): 59-108, especially pp. 76-77. I thank Wei Yin for directing me to this source.

²¹ Clifford cited Pheng Cheah, “Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical-Today,” in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), p. 21.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

²³ Other academics have expressed a similar opinion. For example, Chinese-American new Confucian scholar Tu Weiming argues for universalisation of Confucianism: ‘A global perspective is needed to universalise its (Confucianism) concerns’ (Tu Weiming, “Towards a Third Epoch of Confucian Humanism,” in *Way, Learning and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*, Tu Weiming ed. (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1989), p. 159. Similarly, Kang Xiaoguang, a professor at the People’s University in Beijing, has strongly argued both for Confucianisation of the Chinese society and political system and for exporting it. See Kang Xiaoguang, “Wo weishenme zhuzhang ‘ruhua’ – guanyu zhongguo weilai zhengzhi fazhan de baoshouzhuyi sikao” (Why do I support Confucianisation – a conservative reflection on China’s future political development), 2004, available at <http://www.tecn.cn/data/detail.php?id=4908> (2).

²⁴ China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, “Introduction to the ‘Confucius Institute’ Project”, no date. <http://www.edu-chinaembassy.org.uk/english/confucius.htm>.

²⁵ www.confuciusinstitute.net/confucius_institutes, accessed 7 July 2008.

²⁶ See Nick Knight, “Reflecting on the Paradox of Globalisation: China’s Search for Cultural Identity and Coherence,” *China: An International Journal* 4, no. 1 (2006), pp. 26-27 for a detailed overview of the intellectual debates in China on the impact of globalisation on Chinese culture.

²⁷ Not only have Chinese leaders adopted Confucianism-inspired notions in their political lexicon—echoed in such terms as “Harmonious Society” and *Xiaokang Shehui*—it is now claimed that Mao was one of the practitioners of Confucianism. Kang Xiaoguang, note 23, refers to Lin Biao’s following characteristic of Mao in the ‘Summary of Project 571’: ‘Mao is wearing the skin of Marxism, practicing the doctrines of Confucianism, and applying the methods of Qin Shi Huang.’

²⁸ Guo Yingjie, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 62.

²⁹ Bell, note 14, p. 9.

³⁰ One of the examples of this trend is *Sentiments on the Analects of Confucius*, a book by Yu Dan which topped the list of best-selling books in China for two months in summer 2008. The book was based on Yu Dan’s lectures broadcast in a popular TV series on Chinese Central TV. See John Liu, “Confucius TV Spin-Off Leads China’s Non-Fiction: Top 10 Books,” *Bloomberg News*, 17 July 2008, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601088&sid=a2KZVfUqxteg&refer=muse>.

³¹ Shuyu Kong quoted in John Liu, note 30.

³² “China Unveils Standard Portrait of Confucius,” Xinhua, September 24 2006, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2006/Sep/182087.htm>

³³ The communist rhetoric is especially evident in the materials distributed by the Chinese Communist Party. For an apt example, see Hu Jintao’s *Report to the Seventeenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, October 15 2007, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749.htm.

³⁴ Yen Ching-Hwang, “Ch’ing Changing Images of the overseas Chinese (1644-1912),” *Modern Asian Studies* 15, no. 2 (1981), p.264.

³⁵ Lu observes another collision of Confucian values with recently promoted modern norms. He notes that the term *xiaokang* society (moderately well-off society), which has recently been widely acclaimed in Chinese political rhetoric, was mentioned alongside the term *datong* in *The Book of Rites*. The book is attributed to Confucius, where *xiaokang* was considered inferior to *datong*. See Sheldon H. Lu, *Chinese Modernity and Global Biopolitics: Studies in Literature and Visual Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), p. 200.

³⁶ “Protection of Chinese Language Urged,” *People’s Daily Online*, 27 May 2004, http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200405/27/eng20040527_144542.html

³⁷ Michael J. Shapiro, *Cinematic Political Thought: Narrating Race, Nation and Gender* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 15.

³⁸ Michael J. Shapiro, *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 49.

³⁹ Interview with Jia Zhangke, by Valerie Jaffee, *Senses of Cinema*, http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/04/32/jia_zhangke.html.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁴¹ Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 129.

⁴² Shapiro, note 37, p. 33 evokes Virilio’s characteristic of modernity as ‘obligation to mobility’ in defining it as an ‘aspect of contemporary power’.

⁴³ The fictional flying carpet appears in epic stories of most prominently the Middle East, such as *One Thousand and One Nights* and others.

⁴⁴ The link between holding a Chinese passport and freedom is especially apparent in the recently popularised case of Woesser, a Tibetan poet living in China who openly criticised the Chinese government for its treatment of Tibet and was repeatedly refused a passport allegedly to prevent her from engaging in anti-Chinese government activities abroad (*Associated Press*, 23 July 2008). Chinese authorities practice confiscation of passports of Chinese Muslims, especially Uyghurs, to stop them from going on Hajj to Mekka independently from the pilgrimage organised by the state *Radio Free Asia*, 27 June 2007, available at http://www.rfa.org/english/uyghur/uyghur_passports-20070627.html.

⁴⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, “On Living in a Liquid Modern World,” in *The Contemporary Bauman*, Anthony Elliott, ed. (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 108.

⁴⁶ Susanne Brandtstädter, “Transitional Spaces: Postsocialism as a Cultural Process,” *Critique of Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (2007), p. 135.

⁴⁷ Rofel, note 41, p. 129.

⁴⁸ Arendt elaborates on the condition of alienation from the modern world: ‘expropriation, the deprivation for certain groups of their place in the world and their naked exposure to the exigencies of life, created both the original accumulation of wealth and the possibility of transforming this wealth into capital through labor. These together constituted the conditions for the rise of a capitalist economy’. See Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 254. I thank Pheng Cheah for directing me to this source.

⁴⁹ Zygmunt Bauman, “Falling in and out of Love,” in Elliott, note 45, p. 102.

⁵⁰ There was an intention to build several World Theme Parks around China to create an opportunity for Chinese people to get a glimpse of the world’s attractions. The two surviving ones are Beijing’s *World Park* and Shenzhen’s *Window of the World*. Shenzhen and Beijing are also two of the main destinations for migrant workers in China. With the growing number of opportunities for Chinese people to travel abroad the need in these parks became less relevant. Such was the fate of the similar park initiative in Chengdu (I thank an anonymous participant of the Centre for International Politics Colloquium on 22 April 2009 for this information).

⁵¹ There is a small replica of a section of the Great Wall in the park in the section representing Asia.