

# **COSMOPOLITAN CIVILITY**

**GLOBAL-LOCAL REFLECTIONS  
WITH FRED DALLMAYR**

**EDITED BY  
RUTH ABBEY**

**SUNY**  
PRESS

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Chapter 4

Toward a Mega-Humanism

Confucian Triadic Harmony for the Anthropocene

CHENYANG LI

... nature is not just an “environment,” but is part of us and penetrates into our being. What this penetration brings into view is the broader web of things, the infinitely rich and varied source of all beings—a source for which we have no definition or agreed upon name but which gratitude impels us to cherish and to venerate.

—Dallmayr 2017: 89

Humanism as a philosophy takes humanity as the foundation of value configuration; it places paramount value on human beings as its point of departure. Humanism in this broad sense hardly needs to be promoted today. As Charles Taylor has famously characterized, we live in a “secular age.” In today’s largely disenchanted world, humanity is already placed at the center of the universe, for better or for worse. Even the vast majority of the religious population openly or tacitly subscribes to some form of humanism. We live in a “new epoch,” however. A new epoch calls for a new form of humanism. In this chapter, I argue first that, as we develop a new humanism that promotes well-being, prosperity, and harmony for

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1 all, two defining themes must be integrated. The first is that this new  
2 humanism must reflect our response to the challenge of the Anthropocene.  
3 A new humanism is already outdated if it fails to understand fully and to  
4 address effectively today's environmental challenges (and more). The epoch  
5 of the Anthropocene calls for a "mega-humanism." The second theme is  
6 that it must have cultural roots. A humanism, even though with a universal  
7 character, is without vitality if it is cut off from cultural traditions. This  
8 chapter presents a Confucian perspective on a new humanism that would  
9 integrate the two essential themes.

10 The Anthropocene announces that the human species is now the  
11 dominant force in shaping the Earth. As observed by Will Steffen and his  
12 colleagues, the "human imprint on the global environment has now become  
13 so large and active that it rivals some of the great forces of Nature in its  
14 impact on the functioning of the Earth system."<sup>1</sup> They claim, in addition to  
15 the carbon cycle as manifested in climate change, that human beings now are:

16

17 (1) significantly altering several other biogeochemical, or element  
18 cycles, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and sulphur, that are  
19 fundamental to life on the Earth;

20

21 (2) strongly modifying the terrestrial water cycle by intercepting  
22 river flow from uplands to the sea and, through land-cover  
23 change, altering the water vapor flow from the land to the  
24 atmosphere; and

25

26 (3) likely driving the sixth major extinction event in Earth his-  
27 tory.<sup>2</sup> Steffen and his colleagues write that, "[t]aken together,  
28 these trends are strong evidence that humankind, our own  
29 species, has become so large and active that it now rivals  
30 some of the great forces of Nature in its impact on the  
31 functioning of the Earth system."<sup>3</sup> We should note that the  
32 situation is not about merely an expansion of the human  
33 impact on nature. It signifies not only a quantitative but a  
34 *qualitative* shift in that impact.

35

36 Scientists have not reached an agreement on the appropriateness of  
37 the concept of a new epoch and, if appropriate, on its starting point. The  
38 disagreements, however, are about stratigraphy rather than about the fact of  
39 amplified human impact on nature.<sup>4</sup> There is little doubt that human beings  
40 have become a global geophysical force and are capable of fundamentally

40



transforming the Earth. As 1995 Nobel Laureate Paul J. Crutzen and his  
 coauthor, C. Schwägerl, put it, “It’s no longer us against ‘Nature.’ Instead,  
 it’s we who decide what nature is and what it will be.”<sup>5</sup> The Anthropocene  
 reflects a fundamental fact of our time. We are in an epoch that is pro-  
 foundly different from previous times. While almost all previous versions  
 of humanism were developed for the Holocene, they are behind us now. In  
 our epoch, any form of meaningful humanism must take into account the  
 decisive impact of human activities on the environment and on ourselves.

The idea of the Anthropocene is not only about environmental issues;  
 it is for a new geologic epoch. Moreover, it is *a new worldview, a new phi-*  
*losophy.* Morally speaking, increased human impact comes with increased  
 responsibility. Not only are pre-humanistic views that rely exclusively on  
 divine protection no longer viable, but extreme anthropocentric views that  
 take all non-human existents merely in their instrumental values to serve  
 narrowly defined human interests have also become senseless. Conversely,  
 the central idea of the Anthropocene flies in the face of extreme biocentric  
 or deep-ecological views that place humanity at the level of a mere thing  
 among all other things (or a mere species among other species) in the world.  
 A new humanism appropriate for the Anthropocene must guard itself on  
 both fronts. Humanity is not merely an ordinary piece in the puzzle of  
 mapping the universe, nor is it the absolute center. A new humanism needs  
 to find its balance in view of the Anthropocene.

Furthermore, no form of humanism is viable without cultural roots.  
 The report of UNESCO’s 2011 “High Panel on Peace and Dialogue among  
 Cultures” on “Towards a new humanism and reconciled globalization”  
 declared that the purpose of a new humanism is to “create a climate of  
 empathy, belonging and understanding, along with the idea that progress  
 with respect to human rights is never definitive and requires a constant effort  
 of adaptation to the challenges of modernity.”<sup>6</sup> This understanding of the  
 new humanism emphasizes a common humanity beyond particular cultural  
 traditions, with a goal of building “a single human community.” Such a  
 goal is worthwhile and admirable. However, such a vision for a humanism  
 has yet to take into account the new epoch of the Anthropocene. As such,  
 it would have been outdated even before it was constructed.

A single human community at the global level cannot exist without  
 cultural foundations, for at least three reasons. First, the full realization of  
 the individual requires local communities as well as a global human com-  
 munity. We can travel around the world, but ultimately we need a home  
 to return to. Any form of a viable new humanism must have its cultural

1 roots. Second, a new humanism cannot be developed successfully without  
2 using various cultural resources. A viable new philosophy does not appear  
3 suddenly in a vacuum. It has to be established on previous explorations,  
4 of both success and failure. Third and finally, as we develop a new world  
5 philosophy of humanism, we cannot ignore the very fact that, even con-  
6 sidering world secularization, the vast majority of the world's population is  
7 nevertheless religious. The "disenchanted world" of our "secular age" is not  
8 totally disenchanted. Religion is at the center of most world cultural tradi-  
9 tions. Western humanism since early on, especially during the Renaissance,  
10 has had an intricate relationship with the Christian church. We cannot ask  
11 the world population to leave their gods or spiritualities behind to embrace  
12 a new humanism. For these and other reasons, a viable and effective new  
13 humanism must be rooted deeply in cultural traditions of the world.

14 Therefore, if successful, we should have a common new humanism  
15 that can be articulated and justified from various cultural perspectives. This  
16 new humanism does not depend on the hegemony of any single cultural  
17 tradition, nor does anyone have to embrace a particular cultural tradition  
18 or all cultures to come on board. Yet this new humanism does rely on a  
19 foundation provided collectively by world cultures. Perhaps John Rawls's  
20 proposal of "overlapping consensus" is relevant here. Rawls is concerned with  
21 the issue of how a multicultural society can produce public reason to serve  
22 as the foundation for justice for all. He proposes that a multicultural society  
23 where people subscribe to fundamentally different "comprehensive doctrines"  
24 may nevertheless agree on principles of justice that are justified respectively  
25 in the metaphysics of each cultural tradition. He writes, "Comprehensive  
26 doctrines of all kinds—religious, philosophical, and moral—belong to what  
27 we may call the "background culture" of civil society. This is the culture of  
28 the social, not political."<sup>7</sup> Rawls is concerned with the political in society.  
29 For political arrangements, people can collaborate without sharing the same  
30 comprehensive doctrine in their background culture.

31 Our challenge of establishing a new humanism goes deeper than the  
32 political. In an important sense, humanism is a cultural tradition. But it is a  
33 cultural tradition that does not belong exclusively to any particular historical  
34 cultural tradition. It can be shared by people of different comprehensive  
35 doctrines. Our new humanism is not only a moral philosophy; it is also  
36 a metaphysical theory. Such a metaphysical theory can be a fundamental  
37 philosophy to be shared by people of varied cultural traditions. People  
38 of Hindu traditions, for example, can subscribe and contribute to such a  
39 humanism without having to accept the Confucian philosophy of triadic  
40



harmony; the rich Vedic cultural traditions can provide adequate resources  
 in shaping and in support of the humanism of the Anthropocene. There-  
 fore, in an important way, my proposal goes one step further than Rawls  
 in that it requires us to tap into the comprehensive doctrines of various  
 cultural traditions.

The new humanism must resonate with various cultural traditions and  
 gather synergy from every direction. Of course, such a new humanism is not  
 yet available in a ready-made, completed form within any cultural tradition.  
 It has to be generated. Its generation involves a two-way process. On the  
 one hand, various cultural traditions provide resources for the construction  
 of a new humanism. On the other hand, this process also provides oppor-  
 tunities for the self-examination of various cultural traditions, for them to  
 adjust, reform, and rearticulate their value configurations.<sup>8</sup> Advocates of the  
 new humanism must engage themselves on both fronts to advance such a  
 noble cause.

I believe, on both accounts of the Anthropocene and cultural roots,  
 Confucian philosophy has important resources to contribute to a new  
 humanism. At the center of Confucian philosophy is the ideal of harmony.  
 Over a long history, this notion has been interpreted and misinterpreted  
 in various ways. Its contemporary encounters in China have added at least  
 as much to its misfortune as to its fortune. It is therefore worthwhile to  
 reiterate that, philosophically, Confucian harmony is not mere agreement,  
 conformity, or even superficial stability. It is instead a dynamic generative  
 process in which the prospect of every party getting its due is optimized.  
 Harmony can be achieved at various levels of existence, in an individual, a  
 group, society, and the entire world.<sup>9</sup>

At its fundamental level is the Confucian holistic philosophy of the  
 triadic harmony of heaven, earth, and humanity. Together these three ele-  
 ments form a unity of grand harmony. In the Confucian scheme of harmony,  
 each of these three has its proper role and function; each promotes, and is  
 promoted by, the others; and each contributes to the overall harmony of  
 the universe. This ideal of the unity of heaven, earth, and humanity can be  
 traced back to the Confucian classic *Book of Change*. The *Xici Commentary*  
 of the text states, “There is the way of heaven; there is the way of earth;  
 and there is the way of humanity.”<sup>10</sup> These three ways are not separate,  
 with each on its own path; they work together and provide the framework  
 for cosmic harmony. The idea is to integrate these elements (*jian san cai*  
 兼三才) without collapsing them into one single thing. This view is not  
 anthropocentric because it does not hold that only humanity has intrinsic



1 worth; nor does it claim that all other things in the world exist merely  
 2 to serve human needs. Confucian harmony philosophy accords everything  
 3 its own worth and recognizes its legitimate place in the universe. It is not  
 4 antihumanistic either because it rejects the view that in the biotic commu-  
 5 nity humans merely hold a status equal to nonhuman members. It gives  
 6 humanity a special place in the universe. The mission of humanity is to  
 7 work with heaven and earth in achieving harmony in the world. We can  
 8 label this Confucian notion of harmony “triadic harmony.”<sup>11</sup>

9       Within this triadic harmony of heaven, earth, and humanity, “earth”  
 10 stands for Mother Earth, on which we humans depend for our lives; the  
 11 earth is a living entity with a life of its own. “Humanity” is more than a  
 12 mere biological species, but the humankind with moral consciousness. In  
 13 this view, human beings are not just one of numerous species on earth;  
 14 we are a unique kind of being, endowed not only with superior capacities  
 15 but also with a special mission to contribute in a unique way toward the  
 16 harmony of the cosmos. Xunzi, a key Confucian thinker during the classic  
 17 period, compared human beings with other things in the world and argued  
 18 for the fundamental distinction of humanity:

19

20       Water and fire have vital energy (*qi* 氣), but not life (*sheng* 生);  
 21       plants and trees have life, but no consciousness (*zhi* 知); birds  
 22       and beasts have consciousness, but no sense of appropriateness/  
 23       rightness (*yi* 義). Humans have vital energy, life, consciousness,  
 24       and, in addition, a sense of appropriateness/rightness. This is  
 25       why humans are the most valuable beings under the heaven.<sup>12</sup>

26

27 Because only human beings are capable of moral construction and because  
 28 only through moral construction can the world become harmonious, it  
 29 follows that humanity is valuable in a unique way.

30       The meanings of “heaven” are complex. It has both enchanted and  
 31 disenchanting meanings. The Chinese philosopher Fung Yulan 冯友兰  
 32 found that the idea of heaven, “*tian* 天,” has at least five meanings. They  
 33 are, 1, as the sky; 2, as the personified god; 3, as unavoidable fate; 4, as  
 34 the natural course of the world; 5, as moral reason.<sup>13</sup> In the context of  
 35 heaven-earth-humanity, heaven can be taken to mean different things by  
 36 Confucians of various streams. To philosophers like Tu Weiming, “heaven”  
 37 means a force that is “omnipresent and omniscient,” or divine, a force that  
 38 holds the ultimate meaning of the world.<sup>14</sup> Understood in this way, heaven  
 39 somewhat resembles “God” in monotheist traditions. It is the ultimate source  
 40



of morality or legitimacy. The *Zhongyong* states that “what is endowed by 1  
 heaven is human nature 天命之谓性.” Mencius also commented that heaven 2  
 is about to confer a great responsibility on him (“this man”) 天将降大任 3  
 于斯人也 (*Mencius* 6B). Yet even with this understanding, heaven is not 4  
 a personified God as found in monotheist traditions. While heaven is a 5  
 leading creative force of the universe, it is not the only creative force. In 6  
 the Confucian conception of the triadic harmony, heaven is a co-creator 7  
 with earth and humanity. 8

For secular Confucians, “heaven” can mean the universe beyond earth, 9  
 though it may be laden with spirituality. The classic Confucian thinker Xunzi 10  
 took “*tian*” largely to mean the natural course of things. He included the 11  
 universe beyond earth as part of “*tian*.” For instance, Xunzi wrote, “What 12  
 is the relation of order and chaos to *tian*? I say: the revolutions of the sun 13  
 and moon and the stars and celestial points that mark off the divisions of 14  
 time by which the calendar is calculated were the same in the time of [the 15  
 sage-king] Yu as in the time of [the despot] Jie.”<sup>15</sup> And “[o]f the things of 16  
*tian*, none is brighter than the sun and moon; of the things of the earth, 17  
 none is as bright as fire and water.”<sup>16</sup> In the sense used above, “*tian*” stands 18  
 for what is above the earth in the universe. As humans extend our capacity 19  
 to exert impact into space, and colonization of the space is now a real 20  
 possibility,<sup>17</sup> this part of the triadic structure should be taken more seriously 21  
 than ever before. With this conception of triadic harmony, we can allow 22  
 heaven to be open to different interpretations, accommodating both secular 23  
 Confucians and Confucians with a religious orientation. 24

In the Confucian triadic conception of harmony, while humanity is 25  
 not the center of the world, it is more than just one member of the animal 26  
 kingdom. Humanity is a member of the biotic community, but it is not 27  
 a member with equal status to other members because it has the capacity 28  
 to transform the world. At the risk of being overly simplistic, I would say 29  
 that in the Confucian view, humanity bears at least a third of the weight 30  
 in this triadic cosmos. Thus, a Confucian holistic philosophy may assign 31  
 humanity a status in the universe that is considerably higher than is found 32  
 in the holistic sustainability philosophies developed in the West, such as 33  
 Land Ethics and Deep Ecology. 34

The *Wenyuan Commentary* of the *Book of Change* spells out that the 35  
 unity of humanity, heaven, and earth implies that, when humanity acts prior 36  
 to heaven, heaven does not go to the contrary.<sup>18</sup> The *Zhongyong* states that 37  
 heaven and earth “attain” their proper order “when equilibrium and harmony 38  
 are realized to the highest degree.”<sup>19</sup> Humanity is of course an active force 39  
 40

1 in realizing equilibrium and harmony. Rather than immersing humanity  
 2 into heaven, both texts recognize a leading role for humanity in the Triad.  
 3 In the Confucian system, all three components are required to generate and  
 4 maintain harmony in the cosmos. Without the thriving earth, human beings  
 5 cannot survive. Without heaven, either the world would lose its spiritual and  
 6 moral roots (in an enchanted sense) or the earth could not continue, as it  
 7 is part of the cosmos (in a disenchanting sense). Finally, without humanity,  
 8 the world would be hollow in meaning, and there would be no conscious  
 9 agency to actively engage and promote harmony in the cosmos. Confucians  
 10 see the fundamental value of humanity in its constructing and promoting  
 11 the Way (*dao*), which in *Analects* (15.15) is a unique human capacity.

12 The notion of triadic harmony is a metaphysical view in the sense  
 13 that it presents a foundational framework for the deep relationships between  
 14 heaven, earth, and humanity. According to this notion, the cosmos is not  
 15 monopolized by any one party. Nor is humanity the center of the cosmos.  
 16 Heaven and earth are not there just to provide resources for human con-  
 17 sumption. Each has its own purpose and worth. Humanity is not part of  
 18 heaven or earth; it is their guardian and partner. Humanity as an active  
 19 and powerful participant in the triadic harmony has a responsibility to do  
 20 its share in promoting and maintaining such a harmony.

21 The Confucian philosophy of triadic harmony may be illustrated in  
 22 terms of three principles. The first principle is the humanity principle, namely  
 23 that humanity represents the quintessence of the myriad things between earth  
 24 and heaven and that it bears an inescapable responsibility to play an active  
 25 role in harmonizing the world. Second, the earth principle, according to  
 26 which the earth is not merely a source of resources. Earth has its own life  
 27 and its own place in the cosmos. It retains its own dignity. Third and finally  
 28 is the heaven principle. In the enchanted Confucian world, heaven serves  
 29 as the ultimate source of morality. In the disenchanting Confucian world,  
 30 heaven represents all spheres beyond earth. It refers mainly to all in space  
 31 beyond earth, and it provides the environment in which earth and humanity  
 32 exist. The heaven principle in the disenchanting sense requires humanity to  
 33 respect the dignity of space and not to use it for narrowly defined human  
 34 or earthly purposes. In the age of the Anthropocene, the heaven principle  
 35 becomes even more important, as it has implications for what we humans  
 36 should and should not do with respect to space.

37 Tu Weiming has called the Confucian view “anthropocosmic.”<sup>20</sup> Such a  
 38 view is not theocentric (“God-centered” or “Heaven-centered”) or anthro-  
 39 pcentric, but presents an “anthropocosmic unity.” The concept of the Anthro-  
 40

pocene has provided us with a powerful idea about a significantly elevated 1  
 role for humanity in the cosmos. It gives us a pressing reason to revisit and 2  
 take seriously the Confucian triadic philosophy of heaven-earth-humanity. 3  
 By giving a significant creative role to humanity, the threefold Confucian 4  
 principle of heaven-earth-humanity has anticipated a philosophy for the 5  
 Anthropocene. In the Confucian view, the Anthropocene does not amount 6  
 to the replacement of an omnipotent God by humanity. In the Anthro- 7  
 pocene, rather than monopolizing the rest of the world, humanity still dances 8  
 with it (or with “heaven and earth”), even though the role of humanity 9  
 has become more and more active and decisive. This is consistent with the 10  
 Confucian vision. Given its magnificent status in the triad, humanity is 11  
 capable of fundamentally transforming the world. We can change the world 12  
 to serve our narrowly perceived interests or we can transform it toward the 13  
 ideal of grand harmony. We want the latter. Toward that end, we need a 14  
 new humanism as a guiding philosophy. 15

The Anthropocene has made it possible and necessary to develop an 16  
 entirely new form of humanism, one that is arguably qualitatively different 17  
 from all previous versions. Following Tu Weiming’s use of “anthropocosmic” 18  
 in characterizing Confucianism, we can call this new humanism “anthro- 19  
 pocosmism.” As our new humanism is not meant to be confined to any 20  
 single cultural tradition, Confucian or otherwise, perhaps we should avoid 21  
 making too close a connection to Confucianism. After all, the rearticulated 22  
 Confucian triadic harmony of heaven-earth-humanity is meant to contrib- 23  
 ute to the construction of a new humanism accessible to other cultural 24  
 traditions, rather than to be the new humanism itself. For this reason and 25  
 because of the tremendous capacity and potency accorded to humanity in 26  
 this philosophy, we can call it a “mega-humanism.”<sup>21</sup> 27

The new humanism is “mega” in the sense that, in it, humanity pos- 28  
 sesses overwhelming power over nature to either destroy it or protect it. It 29  
 is without any doubt a strong humanism. The “mega” is not a hyperexag- 30  
 geration of the unique value of humanity; nor is it an intoxicated obsession 31  
 with human narcissism. The “mega” stands for a super-vision, a powerful 32  
 vantage point, from which humanity can reunderstand and reposition itself 33  
 in such a way that enables it to remake the world. The mega-humanism 34  
 is therefore an entirely new humanism unlike anything before it. In it, 35  
 humanity is not the only intrinsic value. In comparison with traditional 36  
 anthropocentric humanisms, mega-humanism places not only value but also 37  
 responsibility on humanity. The role of humanity in this mega-humanism, 38  
 though extremely powerful, must be properly envisioned. 39  
 40



1 In *Analects* 15.29, Confucius famously said, “it is the capacity of  
 2 humanity to promote the Dao, it is not for the Dao to promote humanity  
 3 人能弘道，非道弘人。”<sup>22</sup> In such a Confucian view, the super-capacity of  
 4 humanity places responsibility rather than entitlement on humanity. If the  
 5 Confucian philosophy of the triadic harmony of heaven-earth-humanity has  
 6 been a mere vision in the past two millennia, the Anthropocene has made  
 7 it more real than ever. The Anthropocene brings us to a time to transform  
 8 this age-old Confucian philosophy into a new humanism with true prac-  
 9 tical significance. It brings us to the real possibility of a mega-humanism.  
 10 Under this new humanism, human beings are not only charged with the  
 11 responsibility but also the power to harmonize with nature. Though this  
 12 mega-humanism can be supported by and from the Confucian philosophy  
 13 of triadic harmony, it is not exclusively Confucian. Proponents of the  
 14 mega-humanism do not have to accept an entire Confucian metaphysic  
 15 to embrace such a new humanism. A new humanism will be more viable  
 16 if its proponents can find its philosophical foundations in their respective  
 17 cultural traditions.

18 Over many decades, Dallmayr’s philosophical inquiry has been con-  
 19 cerned with social justice and cultural diversity. In one of his most recent  
 20 books, *Return to Nature? An Ecological Counterhistory*, Dallmayr calls for a  
 21 resurgence of “a chastened humanism” or “a differentiated holism.” Against  
 22 the dominant strand of modern Western thought in which “nature survived  
 23 only as an exile or resident alien,”<sup>23</sup> Dallmayr advocates a view of wholeness  
 24 or a holistic relationship between “humanity” and nature and a complex mode  
 25 of interdependence among humans, nature, and the world in the direction  
 26 of the “cosmotheandric” perspective articulated by Raimon Panikkar.<sup>24</sup> Char-  
 27 acteristically for Dallmayr, developing such a view requires us to draw on  
 28 different resources and cultural traditions. This chapter answers Dallmayr’s  
 29 call by making a contribution to developing such a new humanism from  
 30 a Confucian perspective.

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### Notes

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1. Will Steffen, Jacques Grinevald, Paul Crutzen, John McNeill, “The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical & Engineering Sciences* 369 (2011): 842–67.

2. The Earth has endured five major extinctions. The first major extinction was probably caused by climate change approximately 440 million years ago, and



it wiped out about 25 percent of the families of marine life (there was no or little other land life-form). The second major extinction was around 370 million years ago, with 19 percent of families lost. The third major extinction took place about 245 million years ago, and 54 percent of families disappeared. The fourth extinction was approximately 210 million years ago. It wiped out 23 percent of families. The fifth major extinction was about 65 million years ago and resulted in the loss of 17 percent of families of life-forms, including the remaining terrestrial dinosaurs. For more information, see <http://www.actionbioscience.org/evolution/eldredge2.html>. For a discussion of the sixth extinction, see Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

3. See their appendix for more information.

4. See Richard Monastersky, “Anthropocene: The Human Age,” *Nature* 519, no. 7542 (2015).

5. P. J. Crutzen and C. Schwägerl, “Living in the Anthropocene: Toward a New Global Ethos,” *Yale Environment 360*, January 24, 2011, [http://e360.yale.edu/feature/living\\_in\\_the\\_anthropocene\\_toward\\_a\\_new\\_global\\_ethos/2363/](http://e360.yale.edu/feature/living_in_the_anthropocene_toward_a_new_global_ethos/2363/).

6. *The UNESCO Courier*, October–December 2011, 2.

7. John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 14.

8. For more discussion of value configuration, see my “Cultural Configurations of Values,” *World Affairs: the Journal of International Issues* XII, no. 2 (2008): 28–49.

9. For a detailed account of the Confucian philosophy of harmony, see my *The Confucian Philosophy of Harmony* (London/New York: Routledge, 2014).

10. *Thirteen Classics with Commentaries* (“TTC”) 《十三經注疏》 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shuju, 1985), 90; cf. Richard Wilhelm and Cary F. Baynes, *The I Ching or Book of Changes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 351–52.

11. See Chenyang Li (2014).

12. John Knoblock, trans., *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol. II, books 7–16/17–32 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990/1994) (*Xunzi* 9.16a; Knoblock: 103–4).

13. Fung, Yulan 《中國哲學史》 *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1961), 55.

14. Tu Weiming, “An ‘Anthropocosmic’ Perspective on Creativity,” in *Dialogue of Philosophies, Religions and Civilizations in the Era of Globalization: Chinese Philosophical Studies*, XXV, ed. Zhao Dunhua (Washington, DC: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2007), 147. For more discussion of the concept of “heaven,” see my “Is the Confucian Concept of ‘Heaven’ Still Relevant Today?,” in Zhao, *Dialogue of Philosophies, Religions, and Civilizations*, 161–64.

15. *Xunzi* 17.6; Knoblock 1994, 17; modified.

16. *Xunzi* 17.14; Knoblock 1994, 20.

17. The *New York Post* reported that more than 100,000 people have applied to take a one-way trip to Mars to colonize the Red Planet; see “More Than 100,000



- 1 Apply for Mission to Colonize Mars in 2022; 40 Picked Will Never Return,” *New*  
 2 *York Post*, August 10, 2013, <http://nypost.com/2013/08/10/more-than-100000-apply->  
 3 [for-mission-to-colonize-mars-in-2022-40-picked-will-never-return/](http://nypost.com/2013/08/10/more-than-100000-apply-for-mission-to-colonize-mars-in-2022-40-picked-will-never-return/).  
 4 18. *TTC* 17; cf. Wilhelm and Baynes: 382–83.  
 5 19. Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton  
 6 University Press, 1963), 98.  
 7 20. Tu, “An ‘Anthropocosmic’ Perspective on Creativity,” op. cit.  
 8 21. The term “mega-humanism” has been used by Rudi Roth to describe a  
 9 universal belief system of a post-theistic era after the end of the Abrahamic religions  
 10 in which natural humanistic beliefs have replaced traditional religious beliefs *After*  
 11 *God??: A New Approach for Secular Humanism* by Alan Gordon. The mega-humanism  
 12 expounded in this chapter, however, calls for revisiting and reviving the traditional  
 13 philosophy of Confucian triadic harmony and similar world traditions in contrib-  
 14 22. I read 能 as capacity rather than merely as “can.”  
 15 23. Fred Dallmayr, *Return to Nature? An Ecological Counterhistory*, Lexington,  
 16 KY: The University of Kentucky Press, 2011, xi.  
 17 24. *Ibid.*, 178.  
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