

Cosmopolitanism with Chinese Characteristics:

Explorations of Localized Universality

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Explorations of Localized Universality

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Summary

By conducting a narrative analysis and a close reading this thesis explores modern cosmopolitan ideas that are rooted in Chinese culture and history. The thesis analyses Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu*, a selection of articles on 'harmony with a difference', and the '*tianxia* system' as proposed by Zhao Tingyang. The purpose of this analysis is twofold: first, it attempts to show how selected Chinese authors propose to overcome specific challenges inherent to cosmopolitan propositions, namely, how to balance universality with diversity, and what should be the foundation of the relationship between insiders and outsiders? The other purpose of this thesis is to understand how and why the authors emphasise China's culture and history, this is done by analysing the narratives that the authors use.

This thesis finds that the authors of the texts under analysis focus on China's culture and history for different purposes. The authors use historic continuity in an attempt to make sense of the constant changes in Chinese society and in order to give their ideas historical legitimacy. What they also try to do, is to emphasise 'the good' that can be found within Chinese tradition and can serve as guidance for the future. This thesis also finds that a strong emphasis on national cultural heritage can have disadvantages. Overemphasising Chineseness is sometimes a cause for overlooking several important issues and an obstacle to presenting a balanced view, coherent ideas or good examples.

Although finding a balance between difference and universality and defining the relationship between insiders and outsiders are important challenges, not all the texts attempt to find solutions to them or to explicitly deal with them. The texts in this thesis take different positions in relation to these challenges. These range from proposing the complete transformation of difference and otherness into an all-inclusive universality to emphasising that differences are to be nurtured and respected, and that it is only through difference that there can be such a thing as global harmony.

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This thesis could not have been written without the university library. Besides having a great collection of books and access to online databases, the library also saw to acquiring multiple books I was interested in, for this I am very grateful.

After six years of receiving *studiefinanciering* (study funds) from the Dutch Ministry of Education I feel that with the completion of my studies now is an appropriate time to thank everybody who has paid taxes to the Dutch government for providing me with financial support during my entire study. I am very grateful to have been a student at a time when Dutch society made higher education accessible to all of its citizens and am saddened to see this period in history steadily come to an end.

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Finally I would like to thank Anna for always being there to help out, encouraging me and reminding me that it is important not only to read, reflect, and then read some more, but to also actually *write* my thesis.

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1 Introduction

Is there such a thing as a commonly shared humanity? Can all people be both equal and different at the same time? How is history used to explain the present and guide the future? These are the large fundamental questions this thesis touches upon. These questions are not only diverse, complicated and paradoxical, but also indispensable to understanding why we make the choices we make and how we make sense of our lives. It is the importance of these seemingly unanswerable questions that has kept people interested in them for centuries.

While choosing the topic of my thesis, I decided I wanted to use this opportunity to engage in a theoretical exploration of the kind of fundamental questions mentioned. Questions that up until now I have had too little time and energy to delve into, and most likely will have too little time and energy to in the future. Thus, I decided to tackle these big questions in this thesis, be it through a downscaled and manageable study subject.

In a broad sense the topic of this thesis is cosmopolitanism. I use cosmopolitanism as a broad umbrella term describing any normative theory arguing for all of humanity to be somehow bound into a single community that moves beyond race, gender, culture, nationality, class and so forth. The constant reconfiguration of how humans define themselves towards others within and outside their communities, and the always changing nature of the interactions between people from different places and with varying backgrounds make cosmopolitanism, as a theory and ideological framework that attempts to somehow bind all humans together, a perpetually relevant and interesting topic. At the same time, the intrinsic human need to define oneself and one's community in relation to others make the prospect of the existence of a single human community seem practically impossible and to many people even undesirable. In this sense cosmopolitanism is somewhat paradoxical.

If cosmopolitanism may seem paradoxical, the title of this thesis is even more so. It promises to explore something both Chinese and cosmopolitan at the same time, or in other words: to explore something that is both local and universal. Although initially this might seem slightly odd, ideas about universality

are inescapably formulated by people with a personal and cultural background, and their ideas of universality are inevitably influenced by their own distinct backgrounds. This also goes for cosmopolitan theories. Upon closer investigation many cosmopolitan ideas appear to be fairly inward-looking, implicitly taking personal experiences and local culture as a starting point for reasoning outward to promote something that should be universally applicable. From this point of view I find it interesting to explore Chinese cosmopolitan perspectives. China is different and distant from Europe, where cosmopolitanism was historically first termed. Chinese cosmopolitanism thus could offer a glimpse into how thinkers from outside of the realm of the western philosophical tradition perceive the world, what kind of basic values they believe could be universally applicable, and how they attempt to bind humanity based on these values.

This thesis, however, does not intend to show what ‘Chinese cosmopolitanism’ encompasses. What it does do is analyse how a selected group of people from another part of the world and from a different culture cope with questions we all struggle with. How do they envision a shared humanity, what kind of solutions do they propose to the contradictions inherent to cosmopolitanism and what kind of context informs their views on these issues? In order to tackle this subject I have chosen three explicitly Chinese theories that I will analyse as cases of Chinese cosmopolitanism. This analysis will be conducted through a close reading to investigate how these theories balance universality and difference and envision the relationship between insiders and outsiders. A narrative analysis will be provided to uncover within what context the theories are positioned, how ancient concepts are made relevant and reconceptualised and what narratives are employed to do this.

The rest of this introductory chapter is structured as follows: section 1.1 is a short introduction to cosmopolitanism and section 1.2 explains why I have chosen to study Chinese cosmopolitanism in particular. Section 1.3 introduces several ideas about the role of history in society. In section 1.4 I clearly define my research questions and 1.5 outlines the methods I use for answering the research questions.

1.1 Cosmopolitanism

According to the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ has been used to describe a wide range of different ideas that each have at their core that all human beings are, could or should be members of a single community. There are countless forms and variations of cosmopolitanism related to the creation of a global political, cultural, social, moral or economic community. The first documented explicit expression of cosmopolitanism is attributed to the Greek Diogenese of Sinope, one of the founders of the Cynic philosophy, who in the fourth century BCE supposedly claimed to be a ‘citizen of the world’: a literal ‘cosmopolitan’ (κοσμοπολίτης, *kosmopolitês*). The earliest documented philosophical contemplations on being a part of humanity at large, and how one should accordingly act, came from Stoic philosophers during the third century BCE. They held that one should do his or her best to better humanity. In doing so, people should not confine themselves to one particular polis, but rather engage in a manner in which they are most capable and can make the best contribution to mankind (Kleingeld and Brown 2013).

After the Stoics set forth their philosophy, ideas that can be considered cosmopolitanism have played a part in most strands of western philosophy. It was not until the 18th century, however, that cosmopolitan thinking really took off in western philosophy. Although “cosmopolitanism was often used not as a label for determinate philosophical theories, but rather to indicate an attitude of open-mindedness and impartiality” (Kleingeld and Brown 2013), in 18th century Europe many thinkers explored ideas pertaining to the existence of a single global moral, legal, political and/or economic community. Examples include philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), who promoted universal morality; French revolutionary Anacharsis Cloots (1755-1795), who argued for the abolishment of states in a form of political cosmopolitanism and historian Dietrich Hermann Hegewisch (1746-1812), who envisioned global free trade (ibid.).

Discussions and explorations of cosmopolitanism continue to this day. Many forms of what was previously considered cosmopolitan thought have

branched out into particular positions within specialized fields of study. For example, international law, human rights, international relations and macroeconomics, though generally treated as specific fields within law, political science or economics, could be considered as particular strands of cosmopolitan theory. A reason for this could be that many ideas previously considered theoretical cosmopolitan dreams have, to a certain extent, become reality. With the realization of the United Nations, international law, the universal declaration of human rights, global trade and multicultural societies, theoretical considerations on the possibility and desirability of these universal systems are perhaps not as relevant as the study of this reality.

This, however, by no way means that cosmopolitanism is no longer a relevant field of study in our current largely globalized world. Most cosmopolitan theory today focuses on ethics and politics, although it is not always classified as being cosmopolitan. In the field of contemporary cosmopolitan ethics, philosophers Peter Singer and Kwame Anthony Appiah, for example, are interested in how to act ethically in the face of global inequalities. They address how the difference between how we value those close to us, family members or fellow citizens, and those in distant parts of the world, with whom we have no relation, is perceived and created, and whether or not this difference is ethically justifiable (e.g. Singer 2004, Appiah 2007).

Other cosmopolitan authors are more interested in how to solve the duality created by globalization. Although globalization may have brought almost full economic interdependence, communicative connectivity, global mobility, the (formal) universal acceptance of human rights and a shared vulnerability towards global threats like climate change and nuclear fallout, some argue that politically the world is still fragmented. For example, political theorists David Held and Campbell Craig advocate for creating an effective global political system in order to solve the gap between the globalized world and localized politics (e.g. Held 2010, Craig 2008).

Another contemporary approach comes from sociologist Ulrich Beck (2006: 1-17), who argues that in spite of globalization, or cosmopolitanization as he prefers to call it, we are to a very high degree socially, morally and politically bound by a national outlook. This national outlook binds our social perspectives

to nations and this, he claims, is in many ways an irrelevant way to perceive society. What we need, he argues, is a cosmopolitan outlook that transgresses the national outlook in order to bridge the gap between our current global reality and our perception of the world.

Although the *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy* says that cosmopolitanism can describe a wide range of ideas that bind all human beings into some kind of single community, I find that there is at the same time a strong tendency amongst the authors mentioned above to distinguish the ideal of cosmopolitanism from imperialism, colonialism or other universal theories that might justify oppression, domination or violent assimilation. This is difficult, because any universalizing theory inherently carries the potential to be a form of domination. This is a question that I find particularly interesting because it cuts right to the centre of cosmopolitanism: how to universally bind people without resorting to domination? This aspect of cosmopolitanism is highlighted in attempts to produce frameworks that are universally applicable but leave room for difference. One example of such thinking comes from Beck (2006: 30), who writes that cosmopolitanism should include the “recognition of difference, beyond the misunderstandings of territoriality and homogenization.”

Another approach that addresses this question is offered by critical international theorist Andrew Linklater (1998). Linklater theorises on the boundaries that constitute communities and is particularly interested in how to ethically reconfigure existing political structures. In his work Linklater merges both political and ethical cosmopolitanism. He believes this to be necessary because the processes of globalization and fragmentation¹ have made the current state-centric approach to forming communities neither morally justifiable nor practical. In order to build a new type of political community, steps must be taken in the direction of “achieving progress towards higher levels of universality and difference in the modern world.” Where “higher levels of universality would not attach deep moral significance to differences of class, ethnicity, gender, race and

¹ In his work globalization refers to the process of growing global integration and interconnectedness, and fragmentation is the disintegration of people wanting to adhere to state-centric ideologies and national communities.

alien status” and “higher levels of respect for difference would display sensitivity to the variations of culture, gender and ethnicity” (Linklater 1998: 4-5).

All these types of contemporary cosmopolitan theories mentioned above attempt to address one or both of two large questions. First, how do we morally distinguish ourselves from others, can all people be considered ethically equal and how do we act accordingly, or: what attitudes do insiders and outsiders have toward each other and how should this change from the perspective of cosmopolitanism? Not surprisingly, the cosmopolitan answer to this question would hold that we are all morally equal. How this equality should inform and shape our behaviour is, however, presented differently by different authors. The second prominent question is: how can a system be both universal and non-oppressive, how do we balance difference with equality? Again most cosmopolitans would argue for some kind of universal equality, system of government, law or social welfare, but answers to the question how this should be implemented whilst respecting the many differences around the globe differ.

The search for this balance inherent to cosmopolitanism is what guides the analysis in this thesis. As will be further explained in section 1.4, I have chosen to formulate the questions that will be guiding my analysis of the selected cosmopolitan theories as follows: how do these theories balance respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity while promoting all-inclusive universality, and what relationship is proposed between insiders and outsiders?

1.2 Why Chinese Cosmopolitanism

Having outlined the basic characteristics of cosmopolitanism and introduced how I will be analysing cosmopolitanism in this thesis, I will now clarify how and why this thesis studies Chinese cosmopolitanism in particular.

As mentioned above, there have been countless attempts to create and defend contemporary forms of cosmopolitanism, but these do not exist without problems. Sociologist Craig Calhoun (2010) has identified some returning shortcomings in most contemporary attempts to create a cosmopolitan philosophy:

First, though an effort is made to include consideration of poor, developing, or emerging economies, cosmopolitan theories reflect the perspective of the rich. Second, though an effort is made to be multicultural, cosmopolitan theories are rooted in the West. Third, the way in which most cosmopolitan theories try to escape cultural bias is by imagining an escape from culture into a realm of the universal (as though those who travel aren't still shaped by their previous cultural contexts and as though the global circuits themselves don't provide new cultural contexts). Fourth, despite attention to social problems, because cosmopolitan theories are rooted in the (declining) core of the modern world system, they tend to imagine the world as more systematically and uniformly interconnected than it is. (Calhoun 2010: 597–98)

In light of Calhoun's arguments that non-western cosmopolitan theories are understudied, choosing China, a non-western developing region with a distinct language, culture and history, as a case study for understanding local forms of cosmopolitanism, can be of merit. However, a comprehensive account of cosmopolitanism in China would be beyond the scope of this thesis, due to time and length constraints. I have alternatively chosen to explore three different expressions of what could be considered modern Chinese cosmopolitan theories: Kang Youwei's (康有为) *Datong Shu* (大同书), a book on the creation of a borderless world written between 1884 and 1902; 'the *tianxia* (all under heaven) system' (天下体系, *tianxia tixi*), a theory for the construction of a world system as envisioned by philosopher Zhao Tingyang (赵汀阳) and elaborated on in several books and articles between 2006 and 2011; and the ancient Chinese idea of 'harmony with a difference' (和而不同, *he er bu tong*), as discussed by several Chinese authors in relation to globalization and international politics.

I have chosen these three examples of cosmopolitan writings for a number of reasons. The first reason is that these ideas are Chinese. I understand that classifying anything as strictly Chinese is problematic for at least three reasons. First of all, China as a nation is extremely diverse, different languages, histories and traditions all come together in a huge territory that is anything from homogenous. The second reason is that in our globalized world outside influence

is unavoidable, and local ideas are never exclusively local. Finally, by classifying these theories as belonging to a particular nation state I am myself recognizing, and thus enforcing, the idea that the nation-state is meaningful unit of analysis. In a thesis about cosmopolitanism this is a somewhat questionable position. In spite of these complications, I still call these writings Chinese, and with this I mean that they are written in Chinese by Chinese authors, who view themselves and their ideas as Chinese. In addition, the Confucian, Daoist and imperial history they draw on is often understood as being Chinese. Beyond all sharing a common national cultural heritage, the authors of these selected sources do not try to escape their cultural context to move into a universal realm, but instead draw on local culture and history to promote universality. This type of explicit cultural self-reflection is what Calhoun (2010) finds lacking in most cosmopolitan theory, where the unavoidable culturally and historically constructed assumptions and corresponding biases are often implicit.² In addition, these three selected case studies each reinterpret and reconceptualise ancient Chinese culture and history in order to suit current circumstances and promote ideas of universality. They each display diverse and distinct ways in which culture and history can be interpreted to defend different positions. As such they are each illustrative examples of the process of negotiating culture and history, which is an instrumental part of how worldviews change and adapt to new circumstances.

This thesis does not set out to make a direct comparison of these three selected examples. Despite the similarities in topic, national heritage and language, differences such as the specific historical context, the possible socio-economic and political divides between the authors, among many other formative variables, would make a comparative study of the chosen case studies complex beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, an attempt is made to position each work as an idiosyncratic example of how normative Chinese theory on cosmopolitanism is constructed while drawing on concepts from the same national philosophical heritage.

² My own views are also far from neutral and the choices made in this thesis, from the choice of the topic and method to my language use, are unavoidably influenced by many aspects of my personal and cultural background.

What this thesis also does not analyse are Chinese texts related to cosmopolitanism (世界主义, *shijiezhuyi*) as such. This is for several reasons. Most contemporary Chinese academic or philosophical articles on cosmopolitanism I have come across seem to be primarily concerned with cosmopolitanism rooted in western philosophy and how it can be applied to various aspects of contemporary Chinese law, culture, politics or economy (e.g. Wu Hongyu 2001, Zhang Zhengwen 2005, Wang Ning 2006). Studying these texts could be interesting for many purposes, also within this thesis. However, as the length of this thesis is limited, I have decided to select three cases that will keep this thesis focused on cosmopolitan ideas rooted in China and drawing from Chinese tradition. I have, thus, decided to leave Chinese texts on cosmopolitanism as such out of this thesis.

1.3 Historical Consciousness and Future Narratives

The three theories analysed in this thesis all use traditional Chinese terms. This is important in relation to the topic of this thesis, Chinese cosmopolitanism, because it recognizes the need for any cosmopolitan theory to acknowledge its own roots and the circumstances that give rise to it. However, the fact that these theories give Chinese concepts such a prominent position, when they describe normative propositions aimed at providing guidance for the future, raises questions concerning the use of history and tradition for promoting contemporary ideals. This section sheds light on some theoretical perspectives on the interplay between historical consciousness and promoting ideals and how my analysis approaches this complicated issue. These theoretical perspectives offer additional relevance to the material studied in this thesis and provide an extra analytical level of understanding and analysing the implications and uses of the Chinese specificity within these supposedly universally applicable theories.

There are many theories related to the role history plays in society and how historical narratives shape perspectives. A pioneer in this field was French

philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. In the book *The Collective Memory* (1992 [1925]) Halbwachs put forward his view on the relationship between memory, history and society and popularised the idea of a 'collective memory'. The 'collective memory' is one of four types of memory that Halbwachs distinguishes between. He divides memory into autobiographical memory, historical memory, history and collective memory. "Autobiographical memory is memory of those events that we ourselves experience, while historical memory is memory that reaches us only through historical records. History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an 'organic' relation - the past that is no longer an important part of our lives - while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities" (Olick and Robbins 1998: 111). The idea that there is such a thing as a collective memory is important, because it is in essence a memory which is shared among people. It forms a foundation for how we experience and perceive not only ourselves as individuals, but also our shared identities and societies.

Halbwachs' particular distinction between different types of memory and history helps clarify that history as written records or 'historical facts' can be distinguished from history as it is experienced and perceived by a person or a group of people. This distinction, however, is difficult to apply strictly, and these different types of histories and memories are dynamic, overlap and interplay with one another. As Kerwin Lee Klein (2000) shows, even the terms memory, collective memory, popular memory, history, historical consciousness etc. are used in multiple and overlapping ways by different people throughout time. Here I will be using these terms in the manner in which Klein identifies them as being used most commonly at present: history refers to past events and the records of these events, memory is how past events are personally remembered by a single person, and historical consciousness is a kind of merger between the two, historical events as they are perceived by a person or collectively as a group of people or society at large.

There are three ideas concerning the role that history and historical consciousness play within society that I would like to introduce here. These ideas capture some potential reasons for why the texts discussed in this thesis draw so heavily on their 'Chineseness' to make their cases. First of all, according to Eric

Hobsbawm (1972) (in Olick and Robbins 1998: 115-116), history can serve as a means of making sense of society at large. He believes historical consciousness is the best way for coping with constant change and the existential problems rapid transformation gives rise to. In China the past hundred years have been characterized by rapid transformation. The transition from the ancient civil service examination to modern western style education, the end of the dynastic system, the communist revolution and the reform and opening up era have meant massive changes resonating through all levels of society. Looking back at history in order to understand where society stands today would make sense from this perspective. Turning to the past in order to understand the present is a valid idea and is broadly accepted, however, it is not a very exciting idea. Besides this, all societies have gone through extremely rapid change the past century. This brings me to a slightly more radical suggestion about the role of historical consciousness as proposed by Theodor Schieder (1978). He writes that “historical thought serves a compensating function making up for the actual loss of history by exaggerating a consciousness of it” (Schieder 1978: 8). This perspective could be more applicable to China, as its recent changes have been paired with the massive destruction of thousands of years of heritage, for example, during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and in the more recent process of urban development. From Schieder’s perspective this material destruction of history can be a cause for an increased level of attachment to it at present. This paradox of destruction of and attachment to history is also emphasized by Andreas Huyssen (1995) (in Olick and Robbins 1998: 120), who further argues that at present “novelty is associated with new versions of the past rather than with visions of the future.” Through these three interrelated ideas I understand the existence and prominence of cosmopolitan philosophies rooted in China’s ancient past that address problems of the present and aim to create a better future. History is required to understand our present, the loss of history leads to an exaggeration of historical consciousness, and the best way to envision the future becomes through new versions of the past.

However, creating a collective historical consciousness that can steer towards a future goal is not achieved by simply publishing a book, essay or even a large- scale propaganda campaign.

Lipsitz (1990) and Wallace (1996) have sought to understand memory in terms of ongoing processes of contestation and resistance, a relatively free space of reading and reaction in which official and unofficial, public and private, interpenetrate. Dominant memory is not monolithic, nor is popular memory purely authentic. ... As Thelen (1989) puts it, “the struggle for possession and interpretation of memory [or historical consciousness] is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests.” “It is a product”, Irwin-Zarecka (1994) writes, “of a great deal of work by large numbers of people”. (Olick and Robbins 1998: 127)

Thus, rather than treating the theories discussed in this thesis as the singular way in which China’s history is being turned into historical consciousness or collective memory, these theories are treated as examples amongst many other versions and interpretations of history found throughout China, which compete and interact with each other to create a historical consciousness that matches and influences people’s everyday experiences. Examples of the sources of information that form a part of people’s historical consciousness include, but are not limited to, state education, films, television shows, documentaries, stories people tell each, books and also the materials analysed in this paper.³

I have argued that the theories I discuss are part of a search to answer existential questions about society through the use of history and that the destruction of history leads to an increased desire towards historical consciousness, and that this historical consciousness is used to create visions of the future. I also take the position that historical consciousness is not created by a single person, but is the result of a complex interaction of interests and actors. What remains for this section is to discuss how to study the presentations of history. In order to do that it is important to understand how history is communicated and ultimately understood. The best way to approach the use of history in the theories I analyse is by understanding the narratives they employ. Kenneth J. Gergen (2006) writes that historical consciousness is fundamentally a consciousness of narrative:

³ I go into further detail on the reception and influence of the *Datong Shu*, ‘harmony with a difference’ and the ‘*tianxia* system’ in section 1.5.1.

Historical consciousness is inherently consciousness of narrative; we are sensitized to the ways in which realities created by historical accounts perform functions within culture. They can be valuable constituents of long-standing cultural traditions, serving to demark (construct) a particular tradition, to invest it with honor and to articulate a rationale for its future. ... To lend intelligibility to a given tradition is to lend silent affirmation to the sense of the good that it embodies. (Gergen 2006: 116)

The perspective put forward in this quote contributes to a further understanding of the theories I analyse in this thesis that are part of creating a historical consciousness. Historical consciousness takes its shape as the acceptance or creation of a narrative that takes a normative position on certain aspects of culture and history. The key to understanding the role of culture and history in the theories I analyse lies in understanding the narratives their authors employ to promote their propositions. Although this understanding will not lead to direct conclusions about how these narratives are received and how they interact with other narratives to create historical consciousness within individuals or society at large, it does present a particular narrative that is part of this interaction and has an influence as such.

Narrative is a very broad term and can refer to any kind of story. Many things can tell a story and contain a narrative, be it a picture, a novel, the design of a building, or a cosmopolitan philosophy. Because of the close relation between narrative and understanding or sense-making many fields of study within social sciences and humanities, like anthropology or literature studies, are interested in the study of narratives, or narrative analysis. There are many different methods to conduct a narrative analysis and many of these include creating classifications and identifying patterns. For my analysis I rely on insights provided by Mieke Bal (2009 [1985]). She (*ibid.*: 226-229) argues that creating and applying a narrative taxonomy is not always necessary and that the main purpose of a narrative analysis should not be classifying, but understanding the text under analysis. According to Bal, a narrative ultimately comes through asking appropriate questions.

The aim of analysing the narratives of the theories in this thesis is, in broad terms, to gain insights into the use of history to create a historical consciousness aimed at realising future goals, and specifically, to understand the use of Chinese culture and history in promoting universality. This leads me to ask the following questions, which will also serve as part of the research question: which reasons are given for presenting the theory, what narrative is told to make ancient concepts relevant, how are ancient concepts reconceptualised, and how can they serve a future function. Through this set of questions I increase the understanding of the narratives that theories present and how they are potentially understood, and bring forward the use of the Chinese specificity of the theories.

1.4 Research Questions

In the previous sections I have presented the two parts of my research question, related to cosmopolitanism and historical consciousness, and their theoretical rationale. Here I draw together the previous sections and present the full research question and reiterate its main purpose.

This thesis will analyse Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu*, a selection of articles on 'harmony with a difference', and the '*tianxia* system' as proposed by Zhao Tingyang through two sets of interrelated questions. The first set of questions aims to understand what narrative is employed to promote these theories: within what context are the theories positioned, how are ancient concepts made relevant and reconceptualised, what narratives are employed to do this? The second set of questions aims to highlight how these theories deal with one of the main challenges to cosmopolitan propositions: how do these theories balance respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality, and what relationship is proposed between insiders and outsiders? In more detail, I will analyse how the outsider is conceptualised in relation to the insider: can they be considered equals and be different at the same time, are others excluded because of their otherness or accepted in spite of it?

These questions are important for the following reasons: the first set of questions is directly related to why the authors of these theories believe them to be relevant and how this specific version of cosmopolitanism is culturally applicable to China. First of all, this allows for a better understanding of how the specifically local Chinese aspects of these theories are emphasised and constructed. Secondly, by revealing the narratives used to position these ideas within a certain cultural or historical context I offer insight into ideas that play a part in the formation of historical consciousness aimed at playing a guiding role for the future. The final set of questions addresses fundamental issues present within any cosmopolitan theory, understood as any normative theory arguing that all of humanity should be bound into a single community. This issue is the balance between cultural relativism and universal domination, insiders and outsider, the self and the other. Each cosmopolitan theory is explicitly universal, but cannot avoid these questions. Where the first set of questions focuses on the local aspects of the theories, this second set analyses them within the broader tradition of cosmopolitanism.

1.5 Method

In this section I first explain how and why I have chosen the particular texts I analyse in this thesis, then I discuss how I primarily rely on narrative analysis and close reading as a method for conducting my analysis. Finally, I give a brief explanation to how I reference Chinese names and classical works and how I use Chinese characters in this thesis.

1.5.1 Selecting Sources

As mentioned earlier, I have chosen to explore three different expressions of what could be considered modern cosmopolitan theories, these are: Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu*, 'harmony with a difference' as discussed by several Chinese authors and 'the *tianxia* system' as envisioned by philosopher Zhao Tingyang. Here I go into more detail about why I have chosen these particular theories, how they have

played a part in shaping ideas about Chinese history and the future of China and the world and what particular texts I will rely on in my analysis.

I have chosen to analyse Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu* because it stands out in several ways. First of all, it is a very detailed account of how the world should be united and organized. Kang's theory is universalising to an extreme degree and attempts to turn humanity into one whole, and can as such be considered cosmopolitan. In addition to that, it draws from a vocabulary rooted in Chinese tradition. Kang frames his theory using ancient Confucian terms like *datong* (great unity, 大同) and *taiping* (complete peace and equality, 太平) and refers to Confucius throughout the book.⁴ For these reasons the *Datong Shu* fits well within this study of cosmopolitanism with Chinese characteristics.

Although the text is already over a hundred years old, the ideas it presents are still as radical and thought-provoking as they were when the book was first published in 1935. The book's relevance in shaping ideas in China and abroad is emphasized by the continual interest it draws. In his book on cosmopolitan in political philosophy Derek Heater (1996: x) writes that Kang's *Datong Shu* is "the first book on world government in the context of modern political conditions." Keith Schoppa (2000: 41-43) and James Reeve Pusey (1983: 15-27) credit Kang's works with playing an instrumental role in introducing the idea of progress into China. Guo, Baogang (2003: 202) writes that chairman Mao Zedong (毛泽东) quite possibly was inspired by the *Datong Shu* for creating the people's communes during the disastrous Great Leap Forward (大跃进, *da yue jin*) (1958-1961). Through Kang's book the ancient concept of *datong* has become inextricably linked to his ideas and any contemporary work considering this notion includes a reference to Kang's interpretation. To this day the *Datong Shu* continues to be discussed and debated inside and outside of China (e.g. Tang Zhijun 2000, Gao Ruiquan 2009, Callahan 2013: 109-114).

In this thesis the *Datong Shu* also serves as a marker for the start of an age in which ancient Chinese thought, tradition and history required a radically new reinterpretation in order to maintain their relevance and suit the new circumstances. Although it was communism, not traditional Chinese thought, that

⁴ See the index of K'ang Yu-wei (2011 [1958]: 292) for page numbers of the many sections where Kang refers to Confucius.

became the leading way to interpret history and guide the future, the departure from most practical forms of communism starting in the 1980s have brought back reinterpretations of Chinese tradition as a means to deal with the present and look to the future (e.g. Yan Xuetong 2011, Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]). The *Datong Shu* serves as a stepping stone from a time when attempts to reconfigure Chinese tradition were initiated, but not successfully completed, to the present day where this challenge has once again been picked up, be it under very different circumstances than one hundred years ago.

For the analysis of the *Datong Shu* I primarily rely on a reissue of an abridged translation by Laurence Thompson originally published in 1958 (K'ang Yu-wei 2011 [1958]). I also use a Chinese version published in 1997 by the Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House (上海古籍出版社, *Shanghai guji chubanshe*) (Kang Youwei 1997 [1935]) to read the Chinese original of passages that I find particularly interesting or hard to understand in the translation.

'Harmony with a difference' is a very old idea that has been applied to all kinds of situations since the 1990s. It was for example used by former Chinese president Jiang Zemin (江泽民) in a speech when he visited the United States in 2002 (Jin Zhengkun and Qiao Xuan 2007: 88) and has since become a guiding ideal in China's foreign policy (Zhang, Feng 2013: 49-50). 'Harmony with a difference' is also one of the key concepts of the idea of the 'harmonious world' (和谐世界, *hexie shijie*), which Jiang Zemin's successor Hu Jintao (胡锦涛) put forward. The idea has also been equated with the 'one country, two systems' (一国两制, *yi guo liang zhi*) idea that was created to explain the system that would be used after the reunification of Hong Kong with China in 1997 (Callahan 2004a: 142-144, 2004b: 590). On top of this the Confucian ideal of harmony, of which 'harmony with a difference' is an integral part, is considered an essential part of East-Asian culture (Li, Chenyang 2014). The term is also used to address issues concerning cultural globalization stressing the need for global harmony while respecting diversity (e.g. Fei Xiaotong 2000, 2001).

'Harmony with a difference' can be considered cosmopolitan in a sense that some authors use this concept as a guiding principle that can universally bind all people in global harmonious co-existence. Like the other examples in this

thesis, it is an ancient Chinese idea reinterpreted as a form of cosmopolitanism in order to suit contemporary needs, and it fits within the framework of this study. There is not one particular person who is the front runner on this idea, so I have selected five Chinese-language articles to analyse as primary sources in this section. I have chosen the articles by searching the China Academic Journal Database CNKI on the term “和而不同” (harmony with a difference, *he er bu tong*). Subsequently I arranged the 3408 results by the number of times they were cited and went through the first couple of pages of top results to find five articles that linked the concept of ‘harmony with a difference’ to a global perspective, and would be suitable for the exploration of cosmopolitanism in this thesis. As a result I have chosen two published speeches given in 2000 by the late Fei Xiaotong (费孝通) (2000, 2001) and an article by Cai Tuo (蔡拓) and Sun Qi (孙祺) (2009). These authors propose to use ‘harmony with a difference’ as a practical and conceptual tool for dealing with different consequences of recent globalization. I have also selected one article by Wang Yiwei (王义桅) (2007) and one by Jin Zhengqun (金正昆) and Qiao Xuan (乔旋) (2007), which both deal with ‘harmony with a difference’ as a guiding principle in conducting international relations.

There are several reasons for including Zhao Tingyang’s ‘*tianxia* system’. First of all, I include it because his work is a prime example of specifically Chinese cosmopolitanism. In his books and articles Zhao calls for the entire world to be ethically and politically united under the banner of his reinterpretation of the Chinese word *tianxia*. In order to do this he draws heavily on Chinese philosophy and history. Zhao’s ‘*tianxia* system’ is both cosmopolitan and explicitly Chinese and is thus a theory that is in line with the topic and scope of this thesis. Besides this, his work has been a fairly hot-topic in China and abroad for several years and has even given rise to a movement which has also been called ‘neo-tianxiaism’ (新天下主义, *xin tianxiazhuyi*) (Zhang, Feng 2013: 51). According to William Callahan (2011), Zhao’s theory has further been influential in several ways:

[Zhao Tingyang] has been able to set the agenda, and generate a powerful discourse that sets the boundaries of how people think about China’s past, present, and future. He does this by employing

familiar vocabularies; for the general reader, he talks of ‘sacrifice for Tianxia’, for liberal IR [international relations] scholars, he talks of China as a ‘responsible power’; for IR theorists, he discusses how China has its own ‘world view’ that is different from the West’s; and for Beijing’s political elite, his ideas resonate with China’s ‘harmonious world’ policy. (Callahan 2011: 109)

Zhao has not only set the agenda in China, his works have been a topic in articles by several non-Chinese China scholars. For example, William Callahan has discussed Zhao Tingyang’s works in multiple articles and books (Callahan 2008, 2010, 2011, 2013) analysing his ideas in the context of their discursive impact, the harmonious world policy, and citizen intellectual’s debates about the China dream. International relations scholar Allen Carson (2011) has discussed Zhao’s *tianxia* concept in light of debates on Chinese international relations theories, and has used Zhao’s introduction of the ‘*tianxia* system’ as a stepping stone to discuss Chinese style international relations theories by Yan Xuetong (阎学通), Wang Yiwei and others. Carson concludes that although notions of *tianxia* and ancient Chinese international relations practices are merely theoretical, they might play a role in redefining relations within South East Asia in the near future. Elena Brabantseva (2009) touches upon Zhao’s work in her analyses of visual representations of Chinese conceptions of the world and China’s place within it. Zhou Lian (2009) gives Zhao a prominent place in his overview of the present state of political philosophy in China. Francesco Sisci (2009) writes about the ‘*tianxia* system’ in relation to drastic ideological changes that have occurred throughout Chinese history.

In order to analyse Zhao’s ‘*tianxia* system’ I primarily rely on a revised edition of his book from 2005: *The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution* (天下体系：世界制度哲学导论, *tianxia tixi: shijie zhidu zhexue daolun*) (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]), and to get a better understanding of his ideas I have also gone through his book *Investigations of the Bad World: Political Philosophy as First Philosophy* (坏世界研究：作为第一哲学的政治哲学, *huai shijie yanjiu: zuowei di yi zhexue de zhengzhi zhexue*) (Zhao Tingyang 2009a) and a number of articles he published in English and Chinese on the topic (Zhao Tingyang 2006a, 2006b, 2009b, 2012).

I believe these selected texts make for an appropriate amount of primary sources to present both a varied and a detailed picture of how certain Chinese authors operationalise Chinese history to present cosmopolitan ideals in modern China.

1.5.2 Analytical Methods

There are many methodological tools that could be used to analyse the selected texts and answer the research questions. I have chosen to rely on narrative analysis and close reading, be it in slightly hybrid forms. Before explaining how I will conduct a narrative analysis and a close reading, I will briefly outline some other methods I considered and why I chose not to use those.

As I am studying texts, textual analysis might have sounded like a good methodological tool. However, textual analysis is generally used for analysing specific structures or words in large quantities of text, for example a large set of newspaper articles. Considering that my analysis is qualitative rather than quantitative, textual analysis would not have been very useful. Discourse analysis is another popular method for analysing texts. However, I find that discourse analysis often places a heavy emphasis on how knowledge and power are constructed through language/discourse. Because this thesis is not primarily concerned with the relationship between language, power and knowledge, but rather with how a text attempts to tackle certain problems, discourse analysis is not particularly suitable. Finally, I also considered concept analysis, as I am analysing concepts this method could have been useful. However, concept analysis is primarily used in philosophy to analyse the true meaning or validity of concepts, which is also not what I set out to do.

In this thesis I apply what is generally known as narrative analysis for answering the first set of the research questions. Narrative analysis is often used in studying literature and for analysing stories collected during anthropological fieldwork. My thesis is based on the idea that thoughts and histories are not communicated in a random and free-floating manner. Instead, people construct a narrative to communicate them. I believe a narrative analysis is useful to understand how ideas are presented and argued in favour of. I do not seek to apply

a rigid taxonomy of narrative structures, but instead I base my narrative analysis on the ideas set forth by Bal (2009 [1985]). She argues that conducting a narrative is best done through asking the right questions in relation to what it is you wish to find out about a particular narrative in order to increase your understanding of a text. The questions that I will be asking to understand the selected texts are: which reasons are given for presenting the theory, how are ancient concepts reconceptualised, what story is told to make ancient concepts relevant, and how can they serve a future function?

For the second part of the research question, related to cosmopolitanism, I will rely on close reading. Close reading is a somewhat contested, and sometimes considered outdated, method of analysis and is generally associated with literary criticism and film studies. In some forms, such as proposed by *The New Criticism* movement, close reading attempts to ignore any context and focuses purely on the text (preferably a poem). I believe close reading is a useful tool for finding out how the texts attempt to balance universality with difference. First of all, because it takes the texts as a basis of study and then allows for any theme, topic or word to be closely analysed in the text. Although the contexts that the theories I analyse exist within are an important aspect of this study, the main emphasis of the second part of the research question lies on what is actually written in the selected materials. This thesis is primarily concerned with how the texts deal with particular theoretical questions related to cosmopolitanism. Although these questions are of a theoretical nature and I will be studying them on the basis of texts, they are important fundamental questions on how we as humans coexist (McCaw 2013: 49-65 and Paul and Elder 2006).

There are several ways to conduct a close reading, one common method is selecting a small passage and scrutinizing how the words, structure and meaning operate. In my thesis I apply another method, namely that of analysing a text through the lens of certain concepts or themes in order to scrutinize a system of thought (ibid.). I will dig into the texts paying special attention to how they treat the aforementioned questions associated with cosmopolitanism.

1.5.3 Chinese Names, Characters and Classical Works

This thesis uses a large number of articles by Chinese authors. In order to avoid confusion about how I reference these works I find it important to clarify how I do it in this thesis. Many authors of works referenced in this paper share the same family name, when I refer to them I use their full names, family name first e.g. Zhang Shuguang (2011), Zhang Zhengwen (2005), Wang Ning (2012) and Wang Yiwei (2007). In the bibliography these authors are listed alphabetically, also with their family name first. In the case of Chinese texts where the authors' names are given in characters I use pinyin to transcribe them. Some Chinese authors writing in English present themselves with their given names first: e.g. Chishen Chang and Q. Edward Wang. In these cases I present the family name first, followed by their given names separated by a comma: e.g. Chang, Chishen and Wang, Q. Edward. This is in order to indicate that I have switched the parts of names round. Where Chinese authors writing in English transcribe their names using the Wade-Giles transcription, I leave their names in Wade-Giles. In this manner throughout the entire text all Chinese names are referenced with the family name first, under which they are listed in the bibliography of the thesis.

In several parts of the text I refer to classical Chinese works. When I refer to specific passages, I provide the name of the book, as well as the chapter and passage numbers they come from, for example: *The Analects* (13.23) or *Guanzi* (23.5). I rely on the website *ctext.org* of *The Chinese Text Project* as the main source for these classical works. This website provides access to a wide range of classical Chinese texts as well as commentaries and translations and has a convenient search function.

The first time important terms or names that are originally in Chinese appear, I provide the Chinese characters and pinyin Romanisation. For several longer quotations I have also added the Chinese original as a footnote. This is added so any reader versed in Chinese can conveniently see the original text and does not need to be fully dependent on my translations. Finally, I have chosen to use simplified Chinese characters throughout the entire thesis. I am aware that most texts printed before 1956 were originally written in traditional characters, but for the sake of consistency I only use simplified characters.

1.6 Structure of Thesis

The next chapter gives a brief account of the history of cosmopolitanism in China, this in order to provide the background information necessary for understanding the cultural historical contexts, in which the ideas discussed further on are situated. Chapters 3 to 5 analyse Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu*, a selection of texts on 'harmony with a difference', and Zhao Tingyang's 'tianxia system' respectively. The thesis concludes with a summary of the main findings and a personal assessment

2 Background Information: Chinese Cosmopolitanism

As previously discussed, cosmopolitanism has its philosophical and etymological roots in ancient Greece. The Chinese word for cosmopolitanism is *shijiezhuyi* (世界主义) or literally ‘worldism’. This term came into use in the late 19th century,⁵ when new foreign ideas were rapidly introduced and fiercely debated in China. Whether or not there is some kind of equivalent of cosmopolitanism in China predating the introduction of this particular term, is a debatable question. The answer to this question is inextricably tied to the ancient Chinese perception of the world, which is a complex issue. However, as this question is important for understanding the ideas discussed in the following chapters, this section gives a brief and simplified introduction to the ancient Chinese worldview and discusses whether this Chinese worldview can be considered cosmopolitan, or could have laid the foundation for cosmopolitan thinking.

Imperial China existed in varying shapes and sizes and knew periods of multiple kingdoms competing to become the legitimate dynasty. Examples of China as a collection of competing kingdoms include the well-known warring states period (战国时代, *zhanguo shidai*) (ca. 475-221 BCE), when seven kingdoms fought for control over China, ending in the unification of China with the establishment of the Qin dynasty by emperor Qin Shi Huang (秦始皇). Another example is the lesser known period of the five dynasties and ten kingdoms (五代十国, *wu dai shi guo*) (ca. 907-960/979), during which many kingdoms competed for power and dynasties rapidly followed each other until the Song dynasty was established. However, in spite of its shifting borders and regular political fragmentation, China was, since its mythological creation, considered a single entity by its political and intellectual elite. As C. P. Fitzgerald (1964: 5) writes, “a vague but pervasive sense of unity long preceded the first effective political unification of the Chinese world. In later times this was

⁵ Ivo Spira (2010: 288) finds the term used by Liang Qichao (梁启超) in 1899.

interpreted as a memory of the long lost union which it was believed had been established at the dawn of time.” This union was created by a “widely shared sense of participation in a high culture” (Schwartz 1968: 277) and was ideally ruled by a single emperor endowed with a mandate from heaven to rule all under heaven. It was also generally accepted that history in the form of dynastic cycles repeated itself in a circular manner: unity was followed by disarray, dynasties rose and fell.

Although conceptually universal and eternally united, the perceptions and practice of how and where this union was bound have differed throughout history. During the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) China was defined in both ethnic and cultural terms as the civilized centre of the universe surrounded by inferior barbarians. As Edward Wang points out in relation to the Han dynasty, “even though the Han people made a claim of universalism about their culture, they were also aware that this universalism not only worked in a centre-periphery context but also reflected ethnic differences” (Wang, Q. Edward 1999: 292). By the time of the Tang dynasty (618-907) this perspective had shifted. Previous outsiders of other ethnicities became civilized and the distinction between the civilized ethnic Han ‘inside’ and uncivilized barbarian outside was generally less rigid. However, this period of time was short-lived, and from the late tenth century onwards the distinction between a cultured inside and barbaric outside was firmly established. This separation, nevertheless, did lose some of its ethnic dimension and at times seemed predominantly based on culture. Examples of this are the periods when non-Han peoples occupied China, successfully adapted to Chinese culture and customs and were ‘mandated’ to rule the civilized centre, like the Mongolian Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1911) (Wang, Q. Edward 1999).

In order to comprehend how the above is related to the discussion on cosmopolitanism in China, an understanding of what constitutes ‘the world’ in China is also necessary. There are several terms in classical Chinese that could be translated as ‘the world’, but do not match a modern conception of the world as it is perceived today. Words like ‘the four seas’ (四海, *sihai*), ‘the four corners’ (四方, *sifang*), ‘the ten thousand states’ (万邦, *wanbang*), ‘the five zones’ (五幅, *wufu*) and ‘all under heaven’ (天下, *tianxia*) can all be potentially translated as

‘the world’, but at the same time they principally referred to China, including or excluding the states on its periphery.⁶ If we take for example *tianxia*, which literally means ‘under heaven’ or ‘all under heaven’, it was considered to be the square-ish and flat known world with China occupying almost all of the space right in the middle.⁷ The term *tianxia* not only refers to this old conception of the world, but can also refer to ‘China’. As Yang Du (杨度) (1875-1931) wrote in 1907: “China was the world and the world was China” (quoted in Luo Zhitian 2007: 95). Reasons for this understanding could be that China at this time did not directly geographically boarder any known highly-developed civilizations and the barbarians outside of China were not considered to be on an equal footing.

Although China was well aware that it was not the entire world, it was the only part of the world considered relevant. One way in which this can be exemplified is the position of the Chinese Emperor as ruler of the entire world. As Benjamin Schwartz (1968: 277) writes, “[the Chinese world view] presupposes a hierarchical conception in which the universal king stands at the apex of the civilized *oikumene*.” However, he continues, “even if it existed as such it had no practical consequences ... When the empire was weak, the Chinese perception of the world had little effect on the course of events.” In this we see an unsynchronized ideal of *tianxia* as both China and the world and the Chinese emperor ruling the entire world, while at the same time recognizing that China was not the entire world and that there was more outside of it.

As a result, most Chinese philosophy was not particularly concerned with people from outside of *tianxia*. However, if *tianxia* equaled the entire world, this philosophy could supposedly be cosmopolitan by definition. However, *tianxia* was at the same time exclusive, excluding all things barbaric from outside the Chinese civilizational area. Therefore, it is hard to judge whether or not Chinese philosophy, even in its most cosmopolitan example of the Mohist⁸ ideal of *jian ai* (兼愛), which can be translated as ‘concern for everyone’, ‘impartial caring’,

⁶ Chang, Chishen (2009, 2011) has done a lot of research on the varying meanings of these words in different texts and at different times.

⁷ For a collection of Chinese maps see Richard J. Smith (1996).

⁸ Mohism is a philosophical school developed around 450 BCE, it is best known for its position against invasive wars and the *jian ai* principle. For more on Mohism see, for example, Carine Defoort and Nicolas Standaert (2013).

‘universal love’, is truly universal (Defoort 2013). When Mozi (墨子) (ca. 470-391 BCE) refers to what the world would be like if “everybody under heaven cared for one another” (天下兼相愛, *tianxia jian xiang ai*) (Mozi 4.1.4-5), does this then apply only to what lies directly under heaven, China, or are the barbarians on the periphery also included? Although Confucianism promotes a hierarchical system that does not show much resemblance to cosmopolitanism, the same question can come to mind when Confucius and Mencius promote benevolence (*ren*, 仁) and righteousness (*yi*, 義). Whether or not one chooses to consider certain strands of Chinese philosophy as cosmopolitan depends on how the Chinese worldview, which on a theoretical level was universal, but in practice was based on a division between a civilized core and a barbarian periphery, is interpreted. As will be discussed in detail later in this thesis, Zhao Tingyang holds that *tianxia* is in fact an all-inclusive universalizing principle binding the entire world together in a conceptual, political and moral whole.

In the 19th century the Chinese view of the world needed to be re-evaluated both conceptually and practically, because the world was overtaking China and its superiority was no longer evident. It was also during this period that the term *tianxia* lost its applicability to signify the whole world and the Buddhist term for ‘world’, *shijie* (世界), became dominant. According to Bao Yongling (2012), the shift from *tianxia* to *shijie* as ‘the world’ was set in motion earlier by missionaries, who came to China in the 16th century. In the translations they made and the dictionaries they composed they preferred the Buddhist term *shijie* to *tianxia*. The main reason was that its meaning was closer to ‘the world’ as the missionaries understood it. *Shijie* signified a three-dimensional, sphere-shaped and multi-temporal world, whereas *tianxia* was flat, square and static. Thus, the missionaries concluded *shijie* was closer to the world they knew, and so the shift began, which accelerated in the 19th century. *Shijie* has remained the most common word for ‘the world’ until today. When the foreign notion of cosmopolitanism was introduced in China, it was subsequently called *shijiezhuyi* (世界主义) rather than *tianxiazhuyi* (天下主义).⁹

⁹ The terms *tianxiazhuyi*, literally ‘all under heavenism’ or ‘tianxiaism’, and *xin tianxiazhuyi* (新天下主义), ‘neo-tianxiaism’, are at present used as terms for certain strands of ideology

It was within the context of re-evaluating the world and China's place in the world during the late 19th century that Kang Youwei wrote his *Datong Shu* calling for the world to be united. In the next chapter I will analyse within what context Kang Youwei positions his work, how he reconceptualises the ancient concept *datong* and what narratives he employs to do this. I will also analyse how his *Datong Shu* balances respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality, and what he envisions to be the most fruitful attitude between insiders and outsiders.

that are supposed to be based on the specific Chinese *tianxia* worldview. 'Neo-tianxiaism' in particular also carries certain nationalistic and imperialistic undertones. Spira (2010: 319-348), who compiled an overview of 1401 words ending with the characters *zhuyi* (主义), lists neither *tianxiazhuyi* nor *xin tianxiazhuyi*, this makes me believe that these are fairly new terms.

3 Datong Shu

During the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century China found itself in an uncomfortable situation. Its cultural superiority was being questioned and its political ideology challenged in the face of domestic rebellion and international encroachment. As a result, this period saw a flurry of debate amongst Chinese officials, scholars and artists - amongst which notably Sun Yat-sen (孙中山) (1866-1925), Liang Qichao (1873-1929) and Kang Youwei (1858-1927) - on how China was to transform in order to deal with its “civilizational crisis”, as Schoppa (2000: 3-37) calls it.

Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu* was written between 1884 and 1902 and offers an example of one of the many texts introducing new ideas during this period. In this chapter I analyse Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu* in relation to the research questions: first, I analyse within what context Kang positions his work: how does he reconceptualise the ideal of *datong* (大同) and make it relevant, what narratives does he employ to do this? Second, I look at how Kang's proposition balances respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality, and what relationship he proposes between insiders and outsiders. In order to provide some context I will first present some brief biographical information about Kang before exploring the research questions.

Kang Youwei was born in 1858 in Guangdong province. At this time the Taiping Rebellion was causing havoc internally, and China was losing the Arrow War, also known as the Second Opium War, to Britain and France. From his birth until his death in 1927 times were turbulent, and throughout almost his entire adult life Kang played an active role in politics. Most notably, he was one of the leading actors in the 100 days' reform in 1898. The 100 days' reform attempted to set in motion huge institutional reforms at a very high speed. The reform agenda was radical and was met with severe resistance. Only three months after its initiation, the reform period was put to a halt by means of a coup.

According to Schoppa (2000: 41-43), Kang's main concern was to preserve China as a country and his biggest contribution was to introduce the idea of progress to Chinese politics. He promoted his reform agenda by reinterpreting

Confucianism in works like *The Forged Classics of the Wang Mang Period* (新学伪经考, *xin xue wei jing kao*) (1891)¹⁰ and *Confucius as a Reformer* (孔子改制考, *Kongzi gaizhi kao*) (1897).¹¹

In 1884-5 Kang wrote the first draft of *Datong Shu*, or *the Book of Great Unity*¹², and the final version was completed in 1902. The *Datong Shu* was not a particular part of Kang's reform agenda and in some sections it conflicts with some of his other works. In this book he took a long-term approach, which transcended short-term and nationalist sentiments prominent in his time. The book was not written to be published, because Kang deemed his ideas too advanced for the time. In 1913, however, the first parts of the book were printed, but leaving out many of the most radical parts. In 1935, eight years after Kang's death, the book was published in its entirety (Thompson 2005 [1958]: 26-27).

The concept *datong*, after which the book is named, stems from the a passage in the *Record of Rites* (礼运, *Liyun*) section of the *Book of Rites* (礼记, *Liji*) (Book of Rites 9.2).¹³ *Datong* is the name given to the perfect Confucian society. This perfect society is placed in an era before the not-perfect *xiaokang* (小康, moderately prosperous) came into being. The description of *datong* reads as follows:

When the Great Way was practiced, the world was shared by all alike. The worthy and the able were promoted to office and men practiced good faith and lived in affection. Therefore they did not regard as parents only their own parents, or as sons only their own sons. The aged found a fitting close to their lives, the robust their proper employment; the young were provided with an upbringing, and the widow and widower, the orphaned and the sick, with proper care. Men had their tasks and women their hearths. They hated to see goods lying about in waste, yet they did not hoard them for

¹⁰ The Wang Mang period (ca. 9-23 CE) is also known as the Xin dynasty. It is named after its only emperor Wang Mang (王莽).

¹¹ For a detailed account of Kang Youwei's life and philosophy see Hsiao (1975).

¹² Originally the book was to be titled *The Universal Principles of Mankind* (大类公理, *dalei gongli*).

¹³ The *Book of Rites* is a diverse collection of texts on several topics such as etiquette. There is no consensus about who the authors are or when the book was originally compiled (Riegel 1993: 293-296).

themselves; they disliked the thought that their energies were not fully used, yet they used them not for private ends. Therefore all evil plotting was prevented and thieves and rebels did not arise, so that people could leave their outer gates unbolted. This was the age of Grand Commonality [*datong*]. (translation by Burton Watson in De Bary and Bloom 1999 [1960]: 343)

The word *datong* can be translated in many different ways, for example, ‘grand commonality’, ‘great unity’, ‘great similarity’, ‘one world’, ‘the era of ‘world brotherhood’ and so forth (Thompson 2011 [1958]: 29-30). Kang Youwei’s *Datong Shu* (literally *datong* book) sets out how to reach this final stage of *datong* where, quite literally, the world would be shared by all, and everybody would be treated as if they were each other’s parents and children.

3.1 From Eternal Suffering to Complete Peace and Equality

Through the context within which Kang places his work he distinguishes himself from many authors around the world, arguing for different kinds of cosmopolitanism during the first half of the 20th century. What motivated other authors in the early 20th century, was that uniting the world politically was considered vital to prevent wars between states (Craig 2008). Kang discusses the horrors of warfare and gives them a prominent place in his argumentation for why the world should be united. However, the main emphasis in his work is placed on the general human suffering that he perceives everywhere, “it might be a widow thinking of her husband, a starving orphan child, an old man without clothing” and so forth (K’ang Yu-wei 2011 [1958]: 62). Kang’s emphasis on ever-present human suffering is reminiscent of the Buddhist notion of *dukkha*,¹⁴ yet Kang is a dedicated Confucian thinker and he does not propose to overcome this suffering through the Buddhist methods of transforming the self. Starting from principles

¹⁴ In his book Kang uses the Chinese character *ku* (苦) for suffering. This is also the same character as used for the Buddhist concept *dukkha*.

set forth by Mencius, that every human being is inherently compassionate and cannot bear to witness the suffering of others,¹⁵ he states: “being that I am a man, I would be uncompassionate to flee from men, and not to share their griefs and miseries” (ibid.: 65). Existence is suffering and Kang’s *Datong Shu* prescribes a system which, he believes, would rid the entire humanity of its suffering.

In his analysis of human suffering he finds that all suffering is caused by nine specific boundaries: national boundaries, class boundaries, racial boundaries, sex boundaries, family boundaries, livelihood boundaries, administrative boundaries, boundaries of kind and, finally, boundaries of suffering. In order to reach complete happiness, peace and equality these boundaries are to be abolished. This should begin with abolishing national boundaries and uniting the world, because “while states exist, to hope to bring about the perfection of human nature and to arrive at complete peace-and-equality is a self-contradictory proposal” (ibid.: 83). The process ends with abolishing boundaries of suffering and attaining utmost happiness.

What emerges after all boundaries have been erased are *datong* and ‘the age of complete peace and equality’ (太平之世, *taiping zhi shi*). Although these two terms have different origins, Kang uses them interchangeably to refer to the final stage of human existence. In Kang’s vision, this is a world where everybody is equal in every sense, there are no countries, there is only one race, there is no private property, there are no religions, there are even no more families, and because equality will extend to all living things, everybody would be vegetarian.¹⁶ Despite being a radical thinker and a radical reformer, he proposed a fairly long timeframe for the realization of *datong*, he estimated it would take approximately 200-300 years to materialise.

In essence, Kang almost fully reconceptualises the ideal of *datong*. Where originally *datong* is the perfect society located and locked in a mythical past, he

¹⁵ Mencius (孟子) (2.1.6) features the following two lines “He who has no compassion [literally other side of the heart] is not human” (无恻隐之心, 非人也) and “All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others” (人皆有不忍人之心) (translation by James Legge (1970 [1895]: vol. 2 p. 172-173)), this is also very close to the title of the first subsection of the *Datong Shu*.

¹⁶ “Equality will not be extended to the vegetable kingdom, for man must eat to preserve himself, and because these forms of life are not possessed of the cognitive faculty.” (K’ang Yu-wei 2011 [1958]: 273).

moves the ancient *datong* from being located in the past into the future and claims that rather than only learning from the sages of the past, we should take the present situation and look forward. Kang attempts to transform Confucian concepts, and to a small extent Buddhist concepts, freeing them from their cyclical and unobtainable nature. Although he draws from a Confucian vocabulary, he uses these terms to promote progress towards a final goal unlike anything traditionally considered Confucian.

Kang employs aspects from three distinctly different narratives in his work. The first one is the idea that life as we know it equals suffering. This, as I have already mentioned above, is very closely related to the Buddhist perspective on the nature of human existence. He combines this observation of life with the idea from Mencius that people cannot bear to witness the suffering of others. In order to address these two points he introduces a belief in progress akin to that prevalent in Europe and America since the Enlightenment era. However, Kang's idea of progress is not European, Kang's progress is Confucian. Kang claims that Confucianism actually was very much progress-oriented. He finds this in the *datong* passage, quoted on pages 29-30 of this thesis. He believes that society can equally progress from *xiaokang* to *datong* and that this was something Confucius also believed. He also finds his belief in Confucian progress confirmed in the idea of 'the three ages' (三世, *san shi*). The idea of 'the three ages' comes from the commentary by He Xiu (何休) (ca. 129-182 CE) on the Gongyang commentaries (公羊傳, *Gongyang zhuan*) on the classical text *Spring and Autumn* (春秋, *Chunqiu*), which is often attributed directly to Confucius.¹⁷ In this commentary to the commentary on the line "Winter, the twelfth month, Ji Bo came"¹⁸ an explanation of 'the three ages' is given (Pusey 1983: 29). 'The three ages' is the progression from the age of 'decay and disorder' (衰亂, *shuailuan*) to 'increasing peace' (升平, *shengping*) and, finally, to 'complete peace and

¹⁷ The *Spring and Autumn* tells the story of twelve dukes of the state Lu (魯) from 722 to 481 BCE. Until the 20th century the text was unequivocally ascribed to Confucius, now there are some doubts about this claim, but the text is still believed to have been written in Confucius's time (ca. 551-479 BCE). The Gongyang commentaries are a series of questions and answers to the *Spring and Autumn* and are believed to have existed in written form since ca. 400 BCE (Cheng, Anne 1993a: 67-68).

¹⁸ The original reads: “冬，十有二月，祭伯来。” (Spring and Autumn 1.1.2).

equality' (太平, *taiping*). Kang uses 'the three ages' in combination with *datong* to show that progress is a Confucian ideal, because *datong* can be followed by *xiaokang* and 'complete peace and equality' comes after 'increasing peace' and 'decay and disorder'. Thus, according to Kang, there is a clear line of progress present in Confucian thinking. According to James Reeve Pusey (1983: 15-47), this reading of 'Confucius' is somewhat contrived and serves primarily to enforce his personal belief in human progress.

Kang's narrative runs very much against both Buddhist teaching and the Confucian doctrine prevalent in 19th century China. For Buddhists suffering is inherent in the world and that the only path forward is to free oneself of suffering. Changing the nature of the world itself is, in this case, out of bounds. In addition, progress and regression occur within beings and not within the world as such. The prevalent Confucian ideals held that the world had its best days in ancient times, and the best one could hope for was to come close to this ancient ideal. On top of this, Confucianism is circular in its outlook on the world; good times are followed by bad and then back round again. Finally, traditional Confucian values emphasise the family and hierarchy, both of which Kang proposes to abolish. Even if Kang's *datong* is named after and presented as something Confucian, the ideas of progress towards a better future and complete equality, which are central to Kang's book, break with traditional ideas in China.

The idea of progress was to become a strong drive for China and remains so to this day. Although Keith Schoppa writes that it was Kang Youwei who introduced the concept of progress to China and, as discussed in section 1.5.1, there is a large influence attributed to his work, it was not his ideal of Confucian progress that made the biggest impacts in China. Imported ideas that included a strong belief in progress, but did not require the kind of signification Kang employed, were to dominate China during the 20th century. Communism had a massive impact on the course of modern Chinese history and contained a non-Chinese narrative for promoting progress.¹⁹ Even in the sphere of using

¹⁹ One could argue that Maoism is something specifically Chinese. However, I think Maoism is not indebted to traditional China. Maoism builds on a Marxist perspective on history and Leninist ideas of politics. Although certain aspects of the specificity within Maoist communism are about China, the ideas as how to deal with the specific Chinese situation are attributed to the person of Mao rather than Chinese culture or history.

Chineseness to promote new ideas Kang's rival Sun Yat-sen was far more successful at using the exact same *datong* passage, appropriating the slogan 'to hold the world in common' (天下为公, *tianxia wei gong*) and making it his own.

3.2 Universalism without Difference

How does Kang's *Datong Shu* balance respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality? The *Datong Shu* is not particularly concerned with respecting diversity and is fundamentally about the complete universalization of human existence. Kang prescribes the world to become one in each and every sense, as he considers separation and distinction as the cause of suffering in the world: the differences between races, religions and nations are to be nullified. Kang believes we cannot all be different and equal at the same time, and the only way to become equal is to become the same. In obtaining complete happiness for everybody there are sacrifices to be made of which difference is one.

As each community will be racially, politically, economically and religiously similar, there is no discussion on how insiders would treat outsiders, and what kind of relationships groups who identify themselves as different would have. There is also no discussion on how to treat those that do not wish to become part of 'the age of great peace and equality', simply because Kang's whole view is founded on the idea that there should be no distinction between anybody and nobody is left outside. In several aspects Kang's work is even intolerant towards other cultures and peoples. He writes that black and red skinned people are inherently inferior to whites and Chinese, but he does not propose to exclude them: he suggests racial barriers are to be overcome through interbreeding. After darker skinned peoples have been moved to milder climates and are interbred with whites and Chinese, a single equal whitish race can emerge. This perspective of possible inclusion of inferior people is closely linked to the traditional idea of being able to civilise barbarians on the peripheries of *tianxia*, a similar idea is employed by Zhao Tingyang and will be discussed in further detail in chapter 5.

It should be clear from the analysis above that from the perspective of the questions posed in this thesis the value of this text does not lie within its specifically proposed solutions to the problems of the world as Kang perceives it. These solutions are universalizing in an almost oppressive manner. One thing that this text does manage to do is to identify core problems which cosmopolitanism attempts to address. The main problem is that in spite of being connected as humans, our existence is separated by boundaries, which we have not consciously chosen and do not serve any morally justifiable purpose. Constructed national, class and racial boundaries create inequality and oppression amongst people and these can be deconstructed. However, Kang does not seem to believe that there is a workable way to organize difference through non-oppressive means. In spite of offering a comprehensive solution to the problem of global inequality in his suggestions of complete and total equality through sameness, Kang neglects a deep human desire to define oneself in relation to others, to create different groups and personal identities and to freely organize politics suited to local circumstances.

4 Harmony with a Difference

In this chapter I analyse five articles that deal with the concept ‘harmony with a difference’ (和而不同, *he er bu tong*), or ‘harmonious but not the same’. I analyse what narratives they use to reconceptualise this idea in order to promote some form of cosmopolitanism, how they suggest to balance respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality, and what kind of relationship they propose between insiders and outsiders. Before addressing these questions, I will first present some basic background information on the concept ‘harmony with a difference’.

The idea of ‘harmony with a difference’ stems from a passage in the Confucian *Analects* (论语, *Lunyu*)²⁰, which states that “The gentleman finds harmony without uniformity, the petty person conforms but is not harmonious.”²¹ The idea that harmony is reached through diversity was already emphasized before Confucian times. As early as the western Zhou period (1066-771 BC) Shi Bo (史伯) wrote: “A single sound is nothing to hear, a single colour does not make a pattern, a single taste does not satisfy the stomach, and a single item does not harmonize” (quoted in Li, Chengyang 2006: 584). This notion that harmony comes from difference is further elaborated on in, for example, the Zuo commentary (左传, *zuo zhuan*)²² on a section of *Spring and Autumn* (20.3). In this

²⁰ *The Analects* is supposed to be a compilation of quotations attributed to Confucius, which were written down by his disciples and compiled sometime after his death in ca. 479 BCE. However, most historians believe the work was compiled by many people over a longer period of time and might not have been put into its present form until as late as 100 CE (Cheng, Anna 1993b: 313-319).

²¹ The original reads: “君子和而不同，小人通而不和” (The *Analects* 13.23). There are many different translations of this passage, for example: “The gentleman harmonizes, and does not merely agree. The petty person agrees, but he does not harmonize.” (Slingerland 2003: 149), or: “The gentleman, although he behaves in a conciliatory manner, does not make his views coincide with those of others; the small man, although he makes his views coincide with those of others, does not behave in a conciliator manner (Dawson 1993: 52).

²² The Zuo Commentary is a text supposedly written by Zuo Qiuming (左丘明). It is possible that the text previously existed independently from the *Spring and Autumn* and was later redirected as a commentary it. Estimates of the date of this commentary range from 500 BCE to 100 BCE (Cheng, Anne 1993: 276).

commentary an analogy is drawn between mixing ingredients of different flavours to create a tasty soup, making harmonious music by not all playing exactly the same thing and political consultation being more than just yea-saying. According to Li, Chenyang (2006) ‘harmony with a difference’ can be seen as a phrase that captures the essences of the idea of harmony in ancient China. This Chinese concept of harmony stresses the superiority of non-conflicting diversity in order to create harmony over simple uniformity or direct conflict.

Harmony with a difference has been a popular concept for explaining the Chinese reunification with Hong Kong, for guiding China’s foreign policy and in dealing with the issues that come along with being a multi-ethnic state like China (Callahan 2004: 590). There is not one particular person who has been the main driver of the interest in ‘harmony with a difference’, and this chapter does not attempt to offer a comprehensive overview of everything related to ‘harmony with a difference’. Instead, this chapter offers a close reading and narrative analysis in relation to the questions above of a small selection of different types of influential uses of the term. As mentioned in the methodology section, I have chosen these texts based on their relation to cosmopolitanism and the amount of citations they have received.

First, I will analyse two published speeches given in 2000 by the late Fei Xiaotong (2000, 2001) and an article by Cai Tuo and Sun Qi (2009), which both propose using ‘harmony with a difference’ as a practical and conceptual tool for dealing with different consequences of recent globalization. I then analyse an article by Wang Yiwei (2007) and one by Jin Zhengqun and Qiao Xuan (2007), which both deal with ‘harmony with a difference’ as a guiding principle for conducting international relations.

4.1 Harmony with a Difference, Cultural Awareness and Globalization

In 2000 anthropologist and sociologist Fei Xiaotong (1910-2005) gave two speeches of interest to this thesis: one entitled “A Century of Changes in Chinese

Society and ‘Cultural Consciousness’ in the Process of Globalization” (Fei Xiaotong 2000) and the other “Creating a Harmonious but Different World Society” (Fei Xiaotong 2001). These speeches, published in the *Journal of Xiamen University* (厦门大学学报, Xiamen daxue xuebao) and *The Ideological Front* (思想战线, sixiang zhanxian) respectively, chronicle different aspects of China’s century of modernization, that Fei Xiaotong, 90 years of age at the time, witnessed a large part of. In both speeches he argues that there is a need for the Chinese concept ‘harmony with a difference’ in the whole world to secure peaceful modernization and globalization and to relieve ethnic tensions. These talks are of interest to this thesis, because in them Fei argues that the traditional Chinese notion ‘harmony with a difference’ can be applied globally to ensure harmonious coexistence between all the different peoples and cultures of the world, and in doing ethnic conflicts and wars can be avoided.

4.1.1 Creating a Harmonious but Different World Society

In the speech entitled “Creating a Harmonious but Different World Society” (Fei Xiaotong 2001) Fei Xiaotong draws from and interweaves two different narratives, one is China’s historical development starting from 5000 BC to the present and the other is his own personal life as an anthropologist. Fei divides China’s historical development into three different phases: first, China’s feudal society, then the period of industrialization, during which, Fei believes, China learnt from the west and modernized, and finally the current third phase, when China moves into the information age. According to Fei, contemporary Chinese society can be traced back 7000 years, in the region where he is from this would later manifest in the Neolithic Liangzhu culture (良渚文化, *Liangzhu wenhua*) of the Yangtze River Delta (approximately 2900-2100 BCE (Pearson and Underhill 1987: 811)).²³ In this period, he says, different villages strongly varied culturally and formed the basis of a form of multiculturalism that, he believes, still exists in

²³ At present there seems to be a consensus amongst archaeologists that birth of Chinese civilization was a result of the interaction between many different cultures starting in approximately 4000 BCE (e.g. Allan 2005, Chang, Kwang-chih 1986 [1963]).

China today. As the different cultures progressively interacted they formed the foundation for what Fei calls ‘multiple elements in one whole’ (多元一体, *duoyuan yiti*) (ibid.: 3).

Thousands of years later in the era of modernization the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was founded. At this time the dynamics between ethnic groups were altered by the implementation of new ethnic policy. Fei writes that “in order to achieve equality between the ethnic groups within the political system, the National People’s Congress was created, in which every ethnicity was represented in the common participation in the highest political organ”²⁴ (ibid.). Through chronicling China’s modern history, Fei also refers to events he partook in and ideas he obtained during his personal life. For example, he notes that he himself was part of a ‘national visit the minorities team’ (中央民族访问团, *zhongyang minzu fangwen tuan*). These teams were made up of ethnographers, sociologists, historians, linguists etc., who travelled through China during 1950-1952 to help identify and classify the different minorities in China.²⁵

For Fei Xiaotong his most important realization came in 1998 in Hong Kong when he put forward the previously mentioned concept ‘multiple elements in one whole’. He believes this is still the best term to describe the Chinese nation that consists of over a billion people and 56 ethnicities living together in a single nation. Not only does it describe China’s present state, but it also captures the process of development that was set in motion 7000 years ago. At the same time, this concept is also the final conclusion of the extensive anthropological and sociological research on Chinese society that he conducted throughout his life.

After presenting this overview of how Chinese society embraced the notion of ‘multiple elements in one whole’ in 5000 BC, how this same idea was present in Chinese ethnic policy and set in motion in the 1950s, and is currently deeply embedded in Chinese city life, Fei moves on to explain why he believes this whole story is relevant today. Since the end of the cold war globalization has caused problems such as cultural conflicts, ethnic tensions, wars and food

²⁴ The original reads: “为了实现民族平等，在政治体制上我们成立了一个由各民族代表共同参加的最高权力机关，即人大表大会。” (Fei Xiaotong 2001: 3).

²⁵ For more on the history and process of classification of China’s ethnic minorities see Mullaney (2010).

shortages. He believes that existing western thinking cannot provide an answer to these problems, but Chinese thinking and China's traditional experience can, because they are in accordance with the logic of peaceful coexistence (ibid.: 5).²⁶

In the final section of his speech Fei Xiaotong presents a string of traditional Chinese terms that he connects with his own concepts and presents as an ideational basis for the success of China's realization of 'the multiple elements in one whole' and the path that the world should take if it is to achieve harmonious coexistence. Fei starts by saying that basic Chinese values have been shaped by the principle of *zhonghe wei yu* (中和位育). This principle literally means 'all things are nourished when the harmonious middle way finds its position',²⁷ and, according to Fei, it is one of the foundations of Confucian culture. Fei posits that from a cultural perspective *zhonghe* equals tolerance towards cultures and that sharing of cultures and anthropology is inherently part of *zhonghe wei yu* in that it seeks to contribute to the mutual understanding between cultures and mutual coexistence of the world's cultures. Then Fei brings up a slogan in classical Chinese that he invented himself and presented on his 80th birthday in 1990. This saying is supposed to capture the idea that each person should first understand and appreciate his or her own culture and then learn to understand and appreciate the cultures of others, this mutual understanding and appreciation equals 'the great unity under heaven'.²⁸ To express this great unity under heaven he uses the term *tianxia datong* (天下大同), which should be familiar to the reader by now. He then says that all these terms and sayings are also captured in the idea of 'harmony with a difference', which has also always been emphasized in China. On top of that, Fei also throws in another ancient

²⁶ Reformulated to reflect this direct quote: “这个问题，看来原来已有的西方的学术思想里还不能解决。而中国的传统经验以及当代的民族政策，都符合和平共处的逻辑。” (Fei Xiaotong 2001: 5).

²⁷ The term *zhonghe* (中和) comes from the first passage of the Confucian book the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸, Zhongyong) and refers to the middle way and Confucian harmony (Luo Zhufeng 1986-1994: vol. 1 p. 593).

²⁸ His saying can be translated as follows: “If each beauty understands its own beauty and understands the beauty of beautiful people, then all the beauty is shared, this is the great harmony under heaven.” (各美其美，美人之美，美美与共，天下大同。)(Fei Xiaotong 2001: 5).

Chinese term that describes ‘the unity between heaven and people’ (天人合一, *tian ren he yi*). He says this unity is characterized by ‘harmony’ (和, *he*), expressed through ‘harmony with a difference’, which is almost equal to his idea of ‘multiple elements in one whole’, and thus the circle is round. The final paragraph of his speech is as follows:

Our world has already entered the globalizing world system... the non-west should apply and respond to globalization through the specific character of their own cultures. ... Cultural self-determination and awareness is necessary in our times. This means that people who live in a certain culture should have an understanding of one’s own culture and have a full understanding of the course of its development and its future. In some ways, cultural awareness is a specific manifestation of the concept of ‘harmony with a difference’ within the global framework. I believe that the Chinese concept of ‘harmony with a difference’ can bring new meanings to these discussions [on globalization and cultural awareness]. (Fei Xiaotong 2001: 5, 16)

4.1.2 A Century of Changes in Chinese Society

Fei’s speech “A Century of Changes in Chinese Society and ‘Cultural Consciousness’ in the Process of Globalization” (Fei Xiaotong 2000) follows a pattern similar to the speech described above. Fei talks about his life, historical developments in China and ends by proposing ‘harmony with a difference’ as a solution to the world-wide cultural problems caused by globalization.

The developments in China that he focuses on in this speech are different from the ones in the previous speech. Fei starts by mentioning the problems in society at the turn of the new century, “the economy, the environment, culture etc.” (ibid.: 6), and then says that as he is already 90 years old he should perhaps talk about China’s history first. In the 19th century China went through a transition from keeping everything foreign out of China to learning from foreigners, culminating in the New Culture Movement (新文化运动, *xin wenhua yundong*) in the 1920s. However, throughout this period China was always a rural or ‘earthbound’ society, and as China industrialized it was inextricably linked to the

specific characteristics of China's 'earthbound' society.²⁹ Apart from that, the complex relationship between cities and villages and the different cultures across China also played an important role in Chinese industrialization. China did not develop in a single linear fashion, but rather in a unique multi-tracked way.

Although Fei is very proud of the research he conducted in the middle of the 20th century, he feels that the village-centred approach he applied at that time cannot fully explain the significant changes that have taken place. In order to understand China as a whole, one should take a step back and see the pattern of the 'multiple elements in one whole'.

Fei also spends a large part of his speech talking about how more recently China entered the era of the 'information age', where information technology plays an increasingly important role. Despite saying that he has absolutely no computer skills, Fei is aware of the impact information technology is having on China and the world. The information age and globalization processes have raised new questions, including how to deal with the different cultures across the globe. The best way to do this would be to take 'harmony as a difference' as a point of departure, which would mean learning about one's own culture and respecting the cultures of others. The final sections of the speech are very similar to the concluding part of his speech discussed above. Fei equates 'harmony with a difference' to his personal idea of 'the multiple elements in one whole' and his expression about respecting the beauty of other cultures. He argues that the Chinese experience can serve as a leading example of how to globally deal with the challenge of cultural self-determination and peaceful coexistence of cultures around the world.

4.1.3 Chinese Harmony as an Example for the World

Fei's two speeches employ narratives that mix episodes from Chinese history with insights he developed during his life and with experiences he had. The main thread in his speeches is that China, in the very broad, almost *tianxia*-like sense,

²⁹ Here Fei is referring to research he conducted in the 1930s and 1940s, where he describes peasant life in China. This research has been published as the books *Peasant Life in China* (Fei, Hsiao-tung 1976 [1936]) and *Earthbound China* (Fei, Hsiao-tung and Chang, Chih-I 2013 [1949]).

dating back 7000 years and including all the different Chinese ethnicities, has been constantly changing. Throughout these changes, however, there has always been the commonly-shared idea of ‘harmony with a difference’ amongst all the different peoples, so that they would make up a singular entity, ‘the multiple elements in one whole’. In order to support his claim, Fei takes examples from the Neolithic Liangzhu culture, changes in 19th century China, contemporary ethnic policy and examples of developments that have occurred since the 1980s, such as urbanisation and the influx of information technology. All this is accompanied by anecdotal pieces of information from his personal life and about his achievements.

As the world has become globalized it bears the characteristics of a single entity, yet with many cultural differences, like China always had. Therefore, Fei believes his personal notion of the ‘multiple elements in one whole’ and the ancient Chinese principle ‘harmony with a difference’ can be used as effective approaches for dealing with issues such as cultural conflicts in the globalized world. He also mentions other issues, such as environmental concerns and the global economy, but his main focus is on cultural difference. Most of Fei’s examples of how this can be implemented serve more as historical legitimizations for his ideas rather than practical guidance. His reference to the Neolithic Liangzhu culture, for example, does not directly provide applicable information for how our societies could be helped today.

Fei’s discussion of China’s ethnic policy is an example that can shed some light on what ‘the multitude in the whole’ and ‘harmony with a difference’ can mean in terms of contemporary policy and practice. This example can also be used to see how universality, or in this case dominant Chinese culture, can be balanced with difference, or minority cultures and religions, and how insiders and outsiders treat each other. In spite of the many instances where Fei talks about the importance of understanding and respecting oneself and the other and the importance of harmonious coexistence, Chinese ethnic minority policy is perhaps a poor example of a method of implementing ‘harmony with a difference’. Formally, ethnic minority cultures are protected in China, have a say in China’s decision-making process and, as Fei points out, they are represented in the National People’s Congress. Nonetheless, it is perhaps slightly overenthusiastic to make the claim that China’s ethnic policy has been a great success and can serve

as an example for the world. Obvious examples of where ‘the multitude in the whole’ is far from being ‘harmonious yet different’ are in Tibet and Xinjiang. Chinese policy in Tibet has been a contentious issue for decades.³⁰ In respect to Chinese policy in Xinjiang, David Bachman (2004: 156-157) argues that many aspects of this “can only be seen as Han economic imperialism in Xinjiang” and as “economic colonialism”. Xinjiang has also been the stage for violent conflict between discontented Uyghurs and the Chinese state (Bovingdon 2013). These examples raise the question as to how China’s ethnic policy would successfully be applied to other areas of cultural conflict throughout the world when its implementation in China is far from ideal.

Another example Fei Xiaotong gives that can provide some insight into how the relationship between insiders and outsiders is constructed is the Chinese city. Fei presents the modern Chinese city as a place where people from all over China come together and coexist in harmony. Chinese cities have indeed seen rapid growth in numbers of people coming from rural China to earn a living and many different local dialects are spoken within them. Cultural diversity is not something exclusively found in Chinese cities, most of the world’s large cities have residents from all over the world. For example, in Amsterdam 12% of the registered population does not hold a Dutch passport and there are residents from 178 different countries in the city (iAmsterdam 2012). In addition, in Chinese cities, ‘outsiders’, rural immigrants who do not ‘belong’ to the city and do not hold a household registration permit (户口, *hukou*) are excluded from social welfare, education and health services.³¹ Similarly, in many cities around the

³⁰ There is a massive amount of literature on political and social developments in Tibet. Some examples: Warren W. Smith Jr. has written about Chinese propaganda and the use of history concerning Tibet (Smith 2003) and about demonstrations in Tibet in 2008 (Smith 2010). Andrew Martin Fischer (2013) has explored the dynamics of development, inequality and ethnic conflict in Tibet over the past 20 years.

³¹ At present approximately two thirds of Chinese urban residents do not have a urban household registration. The past years the household registration system has been gradually reformed and city residents with a rural registration are in the process of receiving more rights. In the beginning of 2014 the Chinese government announced that in the future there would be an opportunity to exchange a rural registration for an urban one in certain cities (The Economist 2014). However, when Fei gave his speech in 2000, the household registration system was the cause of a very big discrepancy between the rights and privileges of urban residents with different backgrounds.

world illegal immigrants do not have access to these services and live in fear of deportation, but the sheer number, approximately two thirds (The Economist 2014), of people without a household registration permit for the city in which they work and live makes Chinese cities unique. To have such a large number of urban inhabitants as ‘outsiders’ and treated like second-rate citizens, leads me to conclude that the Chinese city cannot necessarily be a guiding example of harmonious coexistence between people when compared to the less-exclusive realities of other cities around the world. It could be a good example of harmonious coexistence in the face of class separation, giving ‘harmony with a difference’ a very sinister meaning, but I believe that this is not how Fei himself sees the idea of ‘harmony with a difference’. How the Chinese city is supposed to be a model for the rest of the world, thus, remains fairly unfounded.

In sum, Fei Xiaotong’s narrative presents China as a country with a long history of cultural difference that has been managed through the framework of ‘harmony with a difference’, and is expressed through the notion of ‘the multiple elements in one whole’. Fei says the insights obtained through China’s unique history and culture can serve as a model for solving present-day global conflicts in various fields, and particularly for aiding cultural conflicts. Although Fei says that China harbours a globally-applicable harmonious solution that would respect cultural diversity and increase mutual understanding, I find his examples to undermine rather than support his case.

4.2 Cultural Globalization and Social Constructivist Theory

Cai Tuo and Sun Qi, both researchers from the China University of Political Science and Law in Beijing (中国政法大学, *Zhongguo zhengfa daxue*), place their discussion of ‘harmony with a difference’ within a framework of cultural globalization and social-constructivist theory (Cai Tuo and Sun Qi 2009). In the introduction they write that cultural globalization is not a matter of a global (western) culture replacing local culture, but it is an interaction between the global

and the local. Within this interaction, they believe that Chinese traditional culture, in the form of Confucianism and the idea of ‘harmony with a difference’ in particular, can offer a meaningful and necessary contribution to dealing with the consequences of globalization. They write that the merger of Chinese tradition with western principles like democracy, freedom and equality can become an ultimate source for spiritual wealth in the world at large. Not only could it offer a useful contribution to the framework of cultural globalization, but it is also vital if China, as a powerful nation (大国, *daguo*), wishes to be a part of the world.

One of the key ingredients that China has to contribute to the study of cultural globalization, they argue, is ‘harmony with a difference.’ ‘Harmony with a difference’ for them means creating unity out of diversity. This unity is created through the interaction of different cultures and civilizations that then learn from each other. and The authors also mention that, according to Confucian doctrine, learning is the best way to improve oneself. This learning consists of copying good things from others and disposing of bad things within you, and so moving to a higher and unified platform. Although we should seek to find unity, we should also respect cultural differences and not infringe on each other’s freedoms and rights (自由和权利, *ziyou he quanli*). They write that in practice this means that China will not follow a western development path, nor will it impose its culture on others. The article concludes by stating: “through harmony with a difference it is possible to realize the dialectic unity between the one and the many” (Cai Tuo and Sun Qi 2009: 85).

The article by Cai and Sun is not particularly detailed, slightly contradictory and very repetitive. Its main argument is in favour of searching for shared values across cultures and respecting diversity in the face of globalization. In making this point the authors use the Chinese traditional concept ‘harmony with a difference’, and modern western terminology like freedom and rights to explain it. This text is thus a product of the mixing of ideas that it describes. What the authors also do, is combine different narratives and ask different questions. The first narrative enforces the idea that cultures develop by learning from one another and through this process collective progress is achieved throughout the history of the world. This story provides a set up for the next step which is the narrative of China as an up and coming economic and political power that needs

to develop and promote its cultural powers. However, the authors limit this promoting of China's cultural powers to the introduction of the concept 'harmony with a difference'. However, concrete examples of how difference or harmony are manifested or in what aspects, other than 'harmony with a difference' as a phrase, global culture can learn from the Chinese remain absent. The main point about what can be learnt from China, which implicitly comes through in the article is the ability to learn from others. Being able to learn from others and being open to what others have to offer is in itself a valuable position, yet much like their lack of operationalization of 'harmony with a difference', the authors do not elaborate on this issue in much detail.

The authors of this text clearly state that there should be a balance between a common universal set of rights and freedoms, and at the same time they also demonstrate a keen adherence to respecting what is culturally unique or different. Although Cai and Sun write that we can learn from each other's differences and reach a greater unified whole, they tend to lean more strongly towards holding on to difference and the right to be different rather than finding common ground. Besides, there seems to be an emphasis on the need for China to be different, rather than to conform. Cai and Sun, however, provide very few hints to how this could practically manifest itself.

As to the relationship between insiders and outsiders, they propose a system of respect and not infringing on each other's freedoms and rights. When rights and freedoms conflict, mutual accommodation should be the way forward. The text clearly states that differences can coexist harmoniously. What is very much lacking is consideration of how this type of harmony works when concrete conflicting interests come into play and simply learning from each other no longer solves the problem.

To sum it up, I find that this text draws on a mixture of specifically Chinese and western vocabularies and narratives to present its argument, mixing social constructivism theory with the idea of 'harmony with a difference', and drawing on both notions of China as a strong nation and western ideals in the form of rights and freedoms. This mixture is interesting and the premises they present are compelling. However, when taking a closer look into how this mixture of ideas would come into practice to pragmatically and effectively solve the

conflicting nature of interests and cultures around the world, the questions related to universality and difference, and the relationship between insiders and outsiders, the text remains silent and leaves us guessing as to how ‘harmony with a difference’ can practically solve these questions.

4.3 Harmony with a Difference in International Relations

This section analyses ‘harmony with a difference’ in one article by Wang Yiwei (2007) and one by Jin Zhengqun and Qiao Xuan (2007). Both articles discuss how ‘harmony with a difference’ is used as a leading concept in Chinese international relations theory and practice. Although academic articles on international relations concepts might seem slightly out of place in this thesis, international relations as a field of study takes an approach that often is universal, mapping the dynamics between the largest-scale political units in which people are collectively represented. The field of international relations is to a large extent based on the recognition of other states and is a form of interaction that happens on a global stage. This section also compliments the previous section by offering a different kind of perspective on how ‘harmony with a difference’ can be applied as a guiding principle for interaction between people all over the world. By studying these texts I hope to shed more light on how the ancient Chinese concept ‘harmony with a difference’ is promoted as a globally-applicable value, how the universality of this concept is balanced with difference and how this concept can shape the attitudes between insiders and outsiders.

4.3.1 A New (Old) Concept of Modern Chinese Diplomacy

In the article “On New Concepts of Modern Chinese Diplomacy” Jin Zhengqun and Qiao Xuan, both researches from the international relations department of the People’s University in Beijing (人民大学, *Renmin daxue*), discuss four guiding

concepts in Chinese diplomacy introduced since the 1990s: ‘take people as the basis’ (以人为本, *yi ren wei ben*), ‘harmony with a difference’ (和而不同, *he er bu tong*), ‘achieving something’ (有所作为, *yousuo zuowei*) and ‘the harmonious world’ (和谐世界, *hexie shijie*). These are each large concepts with different origins, meanings and connotations. I look deeply into their discussion of ‘harmony with a difference’, but only briefly touch upon the other three concepts, to an extent that will be sufficient to understand the context within which ‘harmony with a difference’ is discussed by Jin and Qiao.

‘Take people as the basis’ is a concept primarily associated with former president Hu Jintao’s ‘scientific outlook on development’ (科学发展观, *kexue fazhan guan*). The phrase is also mentioned in the *Guanzi* (管子) (23.5), an encyclopaedic text from the Spring and Autumn period (春秋, *chunqiu*) (ca. 771-476 BCE) associated with the Chinese philosophical tradition known as ‘legalism’ (法家, *fajia*) (Jin and Qiao 2007: 87-88). According to Daniel C. Lynch (2007: 14-15), this slogan could also be linked to the Confucian humanist principle of being ‘people-based’ (民本, *minben*). However, Lynch (*ibid.*) also shows that CCP party school philosopher Pang Yuanzheng (2005) says that the term does not really have anything to do with ancient history, instead it is concerned with China’s on-going contemporary development project, and the term is better understood as ‘take *the people* as the basis’ (以人民为本, *yi renmin wei ben*) giving it a more socialist ring. Jin and Qiao only briefly touch upon the ancient use of the term, but dive deeper into the contemporary use of the term as an aspect of the ‘scientific outlook on development’. In the case of international relations they refer to multiple speeches where ‘take people as the basis’ was mentioned and how it has been the conceptual basis for “fruitful work” (卓有成效的工作, *zhuoyou chengxiao de gongzuo*) (*ibid.*: 88) in the fields of institution building, making the international relations policy process more transparent, taking the people’s wishes into consideration, assisting Chinese citizens abroad, promoting international human rights and, finally, in the comprehensive human-centred developmental work within the UN framework.

In the 1980s Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) put forward the new principle ‘keeping a low profile and achieving something/getting things done’ (韬光养晦、有所作为, *taoguang yangyui, yousuo zuowei*) to guide international relations. When this principle was first introduced, its first half, ‘keeping a low profile’, was the most important aspect. However, in the nineties this emphasis began to shift and ‘achieving something’ started to become more important. In the 21st century, Qiao and Jin write, ‘achieving something’ is a guiding principle in Chinese international relations. This has practically meant the establishing of Confucius institutes, organizing years of cultural exchange with other countries, becoming more active within the United Nations, increasing cooperation in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, dispatching peacekeeping troupes and engaging in international relief efforts after disasters. All of these, Jin and Qiao argue, are contributing to China becoming a more mature and open-minded player on the world stage (ibid.: 89-90).

In September 2005 Hu Jintao presented his vision of the ‘harmonious world’ during a speech at the United Nations headquarters. The ‘harmonious world’ is a global version of Hu’s ‘harmonious society’ (和谐社会, *hexie shehui*) slogan put forward some years earlier as a means to emphasise that development should be ‘harmonious’. In their text Jin and Qiao present how the ‘harmonious world’ will serve as an ideological framework for China’s foreign policy. They write that the ‘harmonious world’ principle is aimed at obtaining peaceful coexistence and development, mutual respect, maintaining diversity and promoting democracy (ibid.: 90-91).

‘Harmony with a difference’ is situated amongst these three foreign policy principles. Jin and Qiao attribute the introduction of this concept to foreign policy to former president Jiang Zemin in the nineties and observe that the term was then firmly established in the early 2000s. According to the authors, Jiang Zemin used the concept of ‘harmony with a difference’ as a means of actively seeking points of shared interests between different countries and cultures, while acknowledging the varieties in the world, expanding common understandings amongst nations, promoting the democratization of international relations conduct and

multilateralism, protecting peace and development in the world and advancing harmonious progress of international society.

In order to indicate the ancient origins of ‘harmony with a difference’ Jin and Qiao briefly refer to the passage from *The Analects* discussed at the beginning of this chapter and to a line from the *Book of Changes*, also known as the *I Ching* (周易, *zhouyi* or 易经, *yijing*), that reads: “While he searches for consensus the gentleman admits to diversity.”³² Besides this very short introduction to the use of these terms in ancient history, no further attention is paid to this aspect in the article. The main emphasis is on recent usage of the phrase as a foreign policy philosophy in the People’s Republic of China.

Foreign policy in contemporary China begins with Zhou Enlai (周恩来)³³, and Jin and Qiao point out that he also had a principle similar to ‘harmony with a difference’ called ‘seeking common ground while preserving differences’ (求同存异, *qiutong cunyi*). Next comes Deng Xiaoping (邓小平) and his idea of ‘shelving disputes and seeking common development’ (搁置争议, 共同开发, *gengzhi zhengyi, gongtong fazhan*), which was the foundation for peacefully solving territorial disputes between nations,³⁴ and formed the basis for ‘harmony with a difference’ as an international relations principle. Later Jiang Zeming took these concepts to the next level and termed it ‘harmony with a difference’. Finally, Jin and Qiao discuss Hu Jintao’s use of the concept. In several speeches Hu Jintao reiterated the ideas behind ‘harmony with a difference’ stating that diversity is the basic characteristic of world civilizations and that diversity in the world should be protected and respected.

Jin and Qiao summarize that on a macro level ‘harmony with a difference’ is an international relations philosophy, but it is also operational on a micro level and has had deep impacts in: respecting the realities of international society, conforming to trends of historic development, promoting democracy in

³² The original reads: “君子以同而异” (*junzi yi tong er yi*) (The Book of Changes 32.1).

³³ Zhou Enlai (1898-1976) was prime minister and minister of foreign affairs of the People’s Republic of China from 1949 to 1976.

³⁴ Perhaps temporarily ignoring would have been a more appropriate term for many of these cases, but Jin and Qiao nevertheless refer to it as ‘peacefully solving’ (平和解决, *pinghe jiejie*) (Jin Zhengkun and Qiao Xuan 2007: 88).

international relations, protecting peace in the world, stimulating multilateralism, common development, peaceful development and cooperation, stimulating voluntary trade and creating a greater global understanding of ‘harmony with a difference’. Jin and Qiao find that all in all “‘harmony with a difference’ has been a successful step in Chinese international relations”³⁵ (ibid.: 88).

As the title of the article suggests, Jin and Qiao are primarily concerned with new concepts of Chinese international relations policy and discuss four of them in detail. As they are focusing on new directions in Chinese diplomacy, the fact that two of the concepts they discuss are actually very old is not very important to Jin and Qiao. All the concepts they discuss are hailed as being very successful and point towards China playing a constantly improving role on the international stage. Between all the concepts a line of continuity is drawn from previous leaders like Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping to Hu Jintao, who was the president at the time the article was written. It is also in this line of linear development from leader to leader that the last topic Jin and Qiao discuss is Hu’s very own ‘harmonious world’ concept.

One position this article articulates on how insiders and outsiders should ideally relate to one another, can be found in that ‘harmony with a difference’ should lead to increased democratization of international relations, this implies that smaller players should have an equal say in the world and should not be excluded from the international process. ‘Harmony with a difference’ is presented as a means to balance the proposed shared universal values of development, peace, cooperation and democracy in international relations, while at the same time respecting the differences between countries and cultures. Through ‘harmony with a difference’ differences can be temporarily put aside, and global values, of which the most prominent one in the article is development, can be achieved.

³⁵ The original reads: “近期中国具体的外交实践印证了‘和而不同’外交理念的证确性。” (Jin Zhengkun and Qiao Xuan 2007: 89).

4.3.2 Three Dimensions of the Harmonious World

The main focus in the article “Three Dimensions of the Harmonious World” is not ‘harmony with a difference’, but it is the ‘harmonious world’. However, in this article Wang Yiwei, from the department of American studies at Fudan University (复旦大学, *Fudan daxue*) in Shanghai, writes that ‘harmony with a difference’ is in fact an integral part of the ‘harmonious world’.

Wang begins his article with an introduction to the changing position of China in the world during the past few decades. His article is set against the backdrop of the rise of China (中国崛起, *Zhongguo jueqi*) on the global stage. Wang states that developments in China now concern the whole world and resonate everywhere. In spite of some previous misassumptions in international relations theory about the ‘China threat’ (中国威胁, *Zhongguo weixie*), China is actually going through a ‘peaceful rise’ (和平崛起, *pinghe jueqi*) and the idea of the ‘harmonious world’ is an integral part of this process (Wang Yiwei 2007: 67).

As discussed earlier the ‘harmonious world’ concept is an extension of the idea of ‘harmonious society’, which is part of the broader political agenda captured within ‘scientific outlook on development’. After having presented the ideas about a rising China, Wang elaborates on the ‘harmonious world’: what ideas run parallel to it, how it is divided into different concepts and positions and what kind of international policy it stands for. Some of the ideas that run parallel to it are the ‘harmonious society’ and ‘seeking common ground while preserving differences’. In the article by Jin and Qiao this last phrase was attributed to Zhou Enlai, but here it is mentioned without this context, and the ‘harmonious society’. Sub ideas include harmonious coexistence and ‘harmony with a difference’. Practical international relations policy positions include: respecting state sovereignty, promoting development in developing regions, recognizing more than one developmental path, promoting unilateralism and so forth. The three dimensions of the ‘harmonious world’ mentioned in the title of the article are order, power and values.

In Wang Yiwei’s article ‘harmony with a difference’ is one aspect of the many elements that compose the ‘harmonious world’. He does not discuss the ancient origins of ‘harmony with a difference’, but only links it to the

‘harmonious world’, with particular emphasis on the values dimension of the ‘harmonious world’. In explaining what it means, Wang basically lists many of the same aspects as Jin and Qiao do, namely, democratization of international relations, recognition of different religions, cultures, nations and different developmental paths, mutual respect and so forth.

In the introduction this article posits that China’s problems have become the world’s problems and China’s outlook has become the world’s outlook. However, just because China’s outlook has become the world’s outlook does not mean that China’s outlook is anything different from accepting the world as it is and stimulating development. One could argue that ‘harmony with a difference’ in international relations means that only through respecting difference there can be such a thing as global harmony. There does not seem to be any particular intention in this article to explore anything truly universalising besides the United Nations charter and the principle of peaceful coexistence. The only narrative aspect in this article is the introduction that deals with China’s peaceful rise, while the rest of the article does not really tell a coherent story, but instead lists terms, concepts, principles and policy goals without any guiding narrative to tie these ideas together.

5 The Tianxia System

In this chapter I will analyse how Zhao Tingyang's 'tianxia (all under heaven) system' balances respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality and what relationship between insiders and outsiders Zhao proposes. I will also shed light on the context in which he positions his theory, how he reconceptualises ancient concepts and what narratives he employs to do this. Before doing so, I would first of all like to point out that there is a difference between *tianxia* as discussed in chapter 2 and *tianxia* as discussed in this chapter. Chapter 2 was a short introduction to how, according to certain historians, the world was perceived in ancient China, and how *tianxia* was part of this worldview. This chapter is primarily concerned with Zhao's personal reinterpretation of the word *tianxia* and the theory he has built around it in his books and articles.

In the books *The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution* first published in 2005, *Investigations of the Bad World: Political Philosophy as First Philosophy* from 2009 and a series of articles in both English and Chinese, Zhao sets forth what he calls a philosophical foundation for a world system rooted in China's ancient past. He calls this 'the *tianxia* system'. Zhao believes this system is capable of uniting the world and solving one of the biggest contemporary challenges: the failed world. His philosophy is based on his interpretation of the Chinese word/concept *tianxia*.

As discussed earlier, the word *tianxia* is quite hard to translate, literally it means 'under heaven' or 'under the sky' and in pre-modern times it referred to the Chinese cultural sphere or the area, which was ruled by the emperor, but it can also be translated as different concepts like 'the world', 'the whole nation' or 'China'. Besides *tianxia* simply being a word, it is sometimes also attributed different qualities, for example, historian Wang Gungwu (2013: 133) calls *tianxia* "an abstract notion embodying the idea of a superior moral authority that guided behaviour in a civilized world."

Zhao's particular reinterpretation of *tianxia* is based on a selective reading of Daoist and Confucian classical Chinese texts. Although he claims there is an

unbroken historical linkage between his ideas, ancient Chinese philosophy and history, this claim is debatable. For example, Zhang Shuguang (2006) poses seven big question towards Zhao's work highlighting many problematic aspects of his theory. The last question from Zhang is: "when using historical documents do you only use those things which are to your own advantage, and when they are not do you choose to make far-fetched interpretations or even distort these things?" (Zhang Shuguang 2006: 256-257). Zhang highlights several points where Zhao ignores aspects of Confucianism and Daoism that go against his '*tianxia* system' and connects and restructures certain parts of ancient texts to fit his own ideas. Zhang also contests Zhao's presentation of how China conducted international relations during the Song, Liao and Jin dynasties (ca. 907-1279). Although it would be interesting to go into further detail on whether or not the word *tianxia* has historically embodied deeper philosophical or practical principles and what these might have been, for the purpose of this thesis it is not particularly important. However, it is important to be aware of the fact that Zhao's use of traditional sources is contested and that he is reinterpreting Chinese culture and history for his own purposes.

5.1 How to Solve the Problem of the Non-World

Zhao starts his discussion of the '*tianxia* system' with the question "Why must we discuss China's world view?" (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 1). He goes on to answer the question by stating that China's economic success has made it a leading economic power, but it "has not become a leading nation in the production of knowledge" (ibid.)³⁶, thus, the challenge for China is to accompany its economic influence with knowledge production and cultural influence. Only after having thoroughly explained that it is important for the sake of China to increase its cultural capital does Zhao find a global problem that China can solve, and so make its mark in the world. The initial question Zhao's work addresses is how

³⁶ The original reads: "不是知识生产大国" (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 1).

China can produce meaningful global knowledge, actually solving ‘the problem of the world’ appears to be secondary to China’s own present concern.

The main problem we face today that Chinese thought can solve is that of the poor state of the contemporary world.³⁷ According to Zhao, the world today is in ‘a state of chaos’ (无序状态, *wuxu zhuangtai*), ‘a non-world’ (非世界, *fei shijie*) and ‘a world of disorder’ (乱世, *luanshi*) (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 14). The underlying cause for this dire state of the world is that the world is perceived as a set of individual countries, and a comprehensive worldview that perceives the world as a whole is missing. Because the world is neither conceptually nor politically united, mankind cannot solve its global problems. Although Zhao writes that these problems are very important, he is not very concrete about what they actually are. One example he does mention is “the developed countries used up too many recourses and are creating too much pressure on the world etc.” (Zhao Tingyang 2011: 2). Particularly telling for the lack of precise examples of the failed world problem is a section in one of his English articles entitled “relevance to contemporary problems”. Stipulation of such “contemporary problems” in this section does not go further than the United Nations not functioning and the American empire leading us all towards “the death of world”, which would indeed be of concern, but Zhao is not clear as to how that would happen (Zhao Tingyang 2009b: 16-17).

Zhao writes that the problem of living in a failed world cannot be overcome through western thinking, western thinking is in fact an integral part of the problem. According to Zhao, the problem could be solved, if we managed to adopt the ancient Chinese *tianxia* principle. For Zhao *tianxia* is captured in three parts: first, it is the world as a geographical whole, secondly, it refers to all the people in the world or ‘the hearts of the people’ (民心, *minxin*) and finally the political world. In essence, for Zhao realization of his *tianxia* ideal would mean to unify each of these three aspects of *tianxia* and create a holistic world. In order for these three aspects of *tianxia* to be united, it is first of all necessary to view the

³⁷ Not coincidentally ‘the bad world’ (怀世界, *huai shijie*) is part of the title of one of Zhao’s books (Zhao Tingyang 2009a).

world as a whole, or as Zhao quotes from the *Daodejing* (道德经)³⁸ multiple times: “the world [*tianxia*] should be viewed as the world [*tianxia*]” (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 32).³⁹ He argues that our current perspective of the world is based on the western notion of the individual. Not only does our thinking start from an individual perspective, it also incapable of transcending the perspective of nation states. Although Zhao mentions Kant’s ideas contributing to the realization of international law and the existence of world federalism (世界联邦, *shijie lianbang*) in the west, he is quick to dismiss these ideas as overly centred on the individual (ibid.: 16-17). After this single paragraph there is only one mention of a cosmopolitan thinker outside of China. Three pages before the end of the book Zhao quotes from a speech (not his book *One World*) by moral philosopher Peter Singer, where he says that the UN should remain the basis for the international order in spite of its problems, as another example of how western thinking adheres to state-centric models (ibid.: 104). Thus, in order to overcome the problem of the failed world, a *Chinese* holistic worldview, which makes us approach the world as a whole and move beyond a purely national or individual perspective, should be applied. After this first step of “viewing the world as the world” has been taken, the other two aspects need to be realized. The hearts of the people should be united and a world political institution established.

The world institution Zhao proposes would be an institution which governs the entire globe, a world government. Zhao is not very precise on what this government would be like but he is clear on what it should not resemble. It should not be like the imperialist Roman or British empires and neither should it be similar to contemporary state-centric international models like the United Nations

³⁸ The *Daodejing*, also known as the *Laozi* (老子), is a work supposedly written by Laozi (literally: old man). Whether it is a single author work or a layered composition compiled over a long period of time remains debated, the text is believed to have come into its present form at the end of the third century BCE (Boltz 1993: 269-271).

³⁹ Zhao (2011 [2005]: 32) writes: “以天下观天下” (*yi tianxia guan tianxia*). As Zhang Shuguang (2006: 256) points out, the *Daodejing* (54) reads: “a person is viewed as a person, a family is viewed as a family, a village is viewed as a village, a kingdom is viewed as a kingdom, and the world is viewed as the world” (故以身观身，以家观家，以乡观乡，以国观国，以天下观天下). Zhao ignores the fact that this sentence (which, of course, also has a context of its own) starts by perceiving the individual as the individual and moves to progressively larger units from there. This particular line has the same starting point that Zhao finds the contemporary dominant western perspective of the world to be wrongly based on.

or the European Union. This institution should be based on a close connection with the hearts of all the people. Being close to the people does not happen through democratic means like elections, because people can be fooled and manipulated by those who do not have their best interest at heart. Therefore, an enlightened leadership that is in touch with the interests of the people will rule. This idea is linked to the ideal of an emperor possessing the ‘heavenly mandate’ (天命, *tianming*) to rule. As Zhao also points out, if the emperor (or son of heaven, 天子, *tianzi*), or in this case a group of enlightened world rulers, lose their connection to the hearts of the people, then they will lose their mandate to rule. Zhao does not mention that traditionally losing the ‘mandate of heaven’ came at times of extreme poverty, famine, civil war or conquest by foreign armies, and losing ‘the hearts of the people’ can be a very violent affair.

In order to further elaborate on the ideal of *tianxia*, Zhao writes that *tianxia* starts from the family. The family should be the smallest basic unit from which *tianxia* comes. The family then extends outward to states and then to the whole world (天下-国-家, *tianxia-guo-jia*) (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 11). He also uses the understanding of *tianxia* as a family to elaborate on the idea that there is neither an outside nor others in *tianxia*.

5.2 No Outside

“The son of heaven knows no outside, he considers the whole world as his family” (Zhao Tingyang 2009a: 90).⁴⁰ This is one of the many quotes that Zhao Tingyang uses to underline that the ‘*tianxia* system’ knows no outside. Both in *The Tianxia System* and in *The Bad World*, Zhao (2011 [2005]:33-41, 2009a: 87-95) devotes considerable space to the idea of ‘no outside’ (无外, *wu wai*). What exactly does ‘no outside’ mean and what implications does this have in defining insiders and outsiders?

To put it simply, the idea of ‘no outside’ means that everybody is included and there are literally no outsiders. As Zhao puts it, “every person, every family

⁴⁰ The original reads: “天子无外，以天下为家” and comes from the *Du Duan* (独断) (1.6).

and every state become internal members of the *tianxia* family” (Zhao Tingyang 2009a: 90). To reiterate his point Zhao (ibid.: 90) quotes large numbers of ancient texts like the sentence above, the slogan “the world is held in common” from the *datong* passage popularized by Sun Yat-sen and lines from the *Book of Rites*. There are no outsiders as such in neither Zhao’s *tianxia* nor in his ideal of ancient China. However, Zhao recognizes that even in all its perfection, in ancient China there were in fact people who did not belong to the Chinese realm:

Although the principle of ‘no outside’ rejects the hypothesis of incompatible ‘others’, this close connection between different people actually only exists in theory, there were the barbarian tribes in the west and north [蛮夷戎狄, *manyi rongdi*] who lived within the five zones [五服, *wufu*]⁴¹. Given that the four seas and foreign kingdoms were within *tianxia*, some people did not interact because they were too distant; with others, who were closer, there were sometimes conflicts, however, close or far, none of these people held hostile ideas that could not be integrated. When it comes to the long- and short-term advantages and disadvantages of the co-existence of different cultures, it is something that can be discussed and learned from. (Zhao Tingyang 2009a: 91)⁴²

In this passage Zhao, first of all, recognizes that in spite of the ‘no outside’ ideal there were ‘barbarians’ who existed outside the Chinese realm. As to including them into the realm, he refers to the view that barbarians can be transformed and incorporated into the ‘*tianxia* system’, suggesting that those who initially do not conform to the ‘*tianxia* system’ can always be assimilated and made to fit.

Although Zhao writes that mutual learning is possible between cultures, within any type of mutual learning China has historically been dominant and more a transmitter of knowledge and culture than a learning partner. The same can be

⁴¹ In ancient China the world was divided into five zones, the emperor ruled over the inner zones and the outer zones were inhabited by barbarians (Smith 1996: 8-9). ‘The five zones’ is similar to words like *tianxia* and ‘the four seas’.

⁴² Zhao’s original text: “按照“无外”原则，既然它拒绝了不可兼容的“他者”假设，亲疏远近关系就只是存在论上的关系，蛮夷戎狄仍在五服之中，即使四海番邦也在天下之中，有的由于遥远而没有来往，有的在近旁而或有摩擦，但远近亲疏并不蕴含任何不可化解的敌人概念，至于不同文化的长短得失也是可以争议和借鉴的。” (Zhao Tingyang 2009: 91).

said about times when non-Han dynasties ruled China. They adopted many aspects of Chinese custom and tradition, and cultural learning leaned heavily towards cultural teaching from the Chinese part. If I view this idea within the broader context of Zhao's work, his interpretation of how 'no outside' incorporates everybody is itself heavily reliant on a singular Chinese culture that rejects western ideas. The notion of 'no outside' seems to be based on a complete universalization of a Chinese (or perhaps more accurately Zhao Tingyang's) value system and in this sense does not differ from the contemporary American imperialism Zhao is reacting against.

In another passage Zhao (2011 [2005]: 36) further elaborates on there actually being outsiders in ancient China. He writes that in ancient China there was both the notion of 'no outside' and the notion of 'inside and outside' (内外, *neiwai*), these two ideas could exist simultaneously because the word 'outside' (外, *wai*) operates on different levels within the two notions. When speaking of 'no outside', the word outside was related to the world system (世界制度, *shijie zhidu*) and the idea that 'the four seas [or the world] are one family' (四海一家, *sihai yi jia*) and everybody is included. When speaking of 'inside and outside', the word outside referred to the practice of international relations. Although the world was conceptually united, not all land was controlled by the emperor and relations needed to be maintained between the inside area that was controlled by the emperor and the area which fell outside of it, these two places constituted the 'inside and outside'. Nevertheless, because of the idea of 'no outside', the barbarians were not discriminated on the basis of ideology of race, but instead were viewed as competitors with similar interests (利益竞争者, *liyi jingzhengzhe*). Thus, through the principle of 'no outside' within the ideal of *tianxia* everything could be objectively discussed and cultural fundamentalism could be avoided (Zhao Tingyang 2011 [2005]: 36).

In this explanation of how the relationship between insiders and outsiders is constructed in a system that, in theory, knows no outsiders Zhao seems to effectively undermine most of the benefits he previously associated with his 'tianxia system'. In spite of a shared perception of the world, tribes outside of the system are still competitors in a battle of interests. If this is so, then how does the

'*tianxia* system' differ from the contemporary international system, where the primacy of self interests of national interests lead to a world of chaos? Although not directly linked to this passage, this should be one of the reasons why, according to Zhao, the world should not only be conceptually united, but also politically and practically. Otherwise there are no real benefits of only having a theoretical holistic worldview. The failure of ancient China to practically implement the '*tianxia* system' does not deter Zhao from arguing in favour of it. Zhao also clearly acknowledges that his system faces many practical challenges.

Studying Zhao's work leads me to conclude that, like Kang Youwei before, Zhao is not interested in balancing universality with diversity, but is primarily concerned with promoting a singular global political and ethical system based on a mixture of Confucian and Daoist values. Some examples include: taking the family (hierarchically organized) as the basic foundation for political and social structures and exchanging the present individual rights based approach to ethics for a social obligations based approach.⁴³

5.3 Summary of Findings

Zhao Tingyang's '*tianxia* system' is a project Zhao has been working on for many years. In his book *The Tianxia System* Zhao places his work, first of all, in the context of China as an economic power that has failed to become a great nation in the field of knowledge production. The next point on his agenda is the problem of the failed world. According to Zhao, the world at present is a non-world mainly because of the failure to perceive the world as a whole inherent to western thinking, and all the problems which this failure creates.

Zhao practically ignores cosmopolitanism outside of China, most probably because the purpose of his work is to promote a Chinese perspective of the world and not to compare or critically analyse various strands of cosmopolitanism in China and abroad. The actual problem of the failed world is not discussed in much detail in Zhao's work. A large parts of Zhao's work consists of quotations from

⁴³ Zhao Tingyang (2006b) published an article in which he elaborates in detail on his idea of 'credit human rights' that could replace the presently dominant ideas on human rights.

many ancient Chinese texts like *The Daodejing*, *The Analects* and *The Book of Rites* in order to legitimize, enforce and lend cultural significance to his ‘*tianxia* system’.

When it comes to balancing universality with respect for difference, Zhao’s system does not really balance, but instead promotes a single universal cultural, ethical and political system of thought, which does not leave much space for anything from outside of the Chinese realm, as admitting to alternative views of the world would undermine the entire point of having a single comprehensive worldview, moreover, recognising non-Chinese ideas would undermine Zhao’s purpose of presenting a specifically Chinese contribution to the production of knowledge in the world. In relation to insiders and outsiders Zhao writes that his theory does not allow for there to be outsiders, and the entire humanity is included into one family. Similar to ancient China, those that are presently outside of the ‘*tianxia* system’ can learn from the civilized core and be absorbed into it, irrespective of their race or cultural beliefs.

6 Conclusion

The initial purpose of this thesis was to explore several questions fundamental to our shared experiences of existence as human beings. In order to do this, I chose to take cosmopolitan thought in China as my point of departure. I further narrowed my research topic down to Chinese cosmopolitanism, which clearly recognizes its cultural and historical roots and explicitly takes these as its foundation. My search for texts that would fit these criteria led me to Kang Youwei's *Datong Shu*, a selection of articles on 'harmony with a difference', and the 'tianxia system' as proposed by Zhao Tingyang. The aim of this thesis was not to make a comparative analysis, but rather to explore these three distinct subjects as separate works with one overlapping theme. In doing so I hoped to contribute to the broader understanding of how specifically Chinese cosmopolitanism is constructed, both from the perspective of cosmopolitan theory in general and from the perspective of creating culture-specific narratives to promote ideals in modern China.

As each of these three subjects placed such a heavy emphasis on history, the thesis also explored some theoretical ideas on processes related to the formation of historical consciousness and how history is used to promote future ideals. With these theoretical insights by my side I applied a narrative analysis to the selected texts in order to understand within what contexts the theories are positioned, how ancient concepts are made relevant and reconceptualised and what narratives are employed to do this.

This thesis has shown, strange as it might sound, that history is flexible. The same events, texts and phrases are picked up to answer different questions and promote different ideals. Even within a single theme and a limited number of texts there was lots of diversity. The texts studied in this thesis have provided insight into how distinct narratives based in history promote a certain agenda and as such has offered a small glimpse into how people try to influence the process of renegotiating and reconfiguring historical consciousness.

Kang Youwei placed his theory in the context of a solution to relieve the world of suffering. To do so, Kang suggested to abolish the nine boundaries, which he claimed were the root-cause of all suffering in the world. After these boundaries had been erased the world would reach the final stage of *datong* and ‘complete peace and equality’. He used a narrative that gave linear progress in the development of the world a central position. In order to support his ideals and introduce the idea of progress into China, he went through great lengths to prove that his vision was originally shared by Confucius.

Fei Xiaotong spoke of his own life mentioning the ideas he developed and the experiences he had. He linked his personal history with the great achievements of contemporary China such as successful ethnic policy and the transition from an earthbound agricultural society to an advanced civilisation that is entering the information age. By presenting the unbroken historical line of ‘harmony with a difference’ and the ‘the multitude in the whole’, Fei Xiaotong showed how these ideas have always been an integral part of Chinese culture, tradition and practice.

Cai Tuo and Sun Qi placed their ideas in the context of a constant process of mutual learning and global improvement and of ‘harmony with a difference’ as a concept that the world could use in this process. The two texts on international relations praised China’s progress in its role on the global stage. Here the emphasis was on the most recent developments in the theoretical perspectives of China’s international conduct and the practical achievements these facilitated. Long-term historic continuity did not play a particularly big role in the narratives of these authors, but the historical continuity since the founding of the People’s Republic of China did.

Finally, Zhao Tingyang set out to find a way for China to make an intellectual contribution to the global cultural sphere. In order to do this, Zhao painted the picture of a failed world, caused by the failure of western thinking. By drawing on large amounts of ancient Chinese texts he showed how to save the world by adopting the ancient Chinese *tianxia* worldview. He claimed his ideas are so deeply engrained in Chinese history and tradition, that even during the Shang dynasty (ca. 1600-1046 BCE) the Chinese possessed this holistic global outlook.

Besides the different types of emphasis and approaches, all these narratives, with the exception of the international relations ones, gave China, as an entity with a long and rich history, a central position. For all the authors the answers to their questions could be found in Chinese thought and history. This recognition of Chinese tradition and heritage can serve many functions. In narratives presenting continuity it can serve as a means of making sense out of the constant changes in society, and a means of coping with the destruction of actual history, these are things that Fei Xiaotong seemed to be doing in his speeches. Narratives of historical continuity can also serve as historical legitimization for future ideals like those found in Kang Youwei's and Zhao Tingyang's works. I find that the following quote from Gergen (2006: 116) nicely captures another driving rationale behind the Chinese narratives: "to lend intelligibility to a tradition is to lend affirmation to the sense of the good that it embodies". In essence, what all these texts set out to do is to find and draw attention to the perceived 'good' that Chinese tradition, and as such China at present and in the future, can harbour.

There is most definitely a need to recognize the background from which any ideas come, and being explicit about this can be viewed as a strength, especially when authors lay a universal claim to their ideas. However, a too strong emphasis on national cultural heritage can have its disadvantages. In all of the texts analysed I found that emphasizing Chineseness sometimes became an obstacle to presenting a balanced view, coherent ideas or good examples. I found that an overly positive outlook on China, purely focused on recognizing 'the good', lead some authors to overlook several important issues.

For example, Fei praised the Chinese cities for their 'harmony with a difference' and did not compare Chinese cities to cities elsewhere in the world, which could have led him to reconsider how harmonious Chinese cities actually are. He further found the need to date the Chinese origins of 'the multitude in the whole' back 7000 years. For an outsider like myself, and perhaps also for people who are particularly interested in the origins of culture, this kind of information seems irrelevant, if not contrived. Similar problems occurred in Zhao Tingyang's work, he employed a strong east-west dichotomy, heavily emphasising the greatness of all that is Chinese and the destructiveness of all things western, and reduced his supposedly all-inclusive worldview to a celebration of the advanced

ideas of Chinese philosophy. As a means of legitimizing his ideas, Kang Youwei did his best to present the idea of progress, which has very little connection to mainstream interpretations of Confucianism, as fundamental aspect of Confucian thought. In this manner Kang might actually have made his theory appear overly forced, rather than making it accessible to its Chinese audience. In sum, although the use of China-specific narratives has several specific functions, it can also get in the way of the texts in many ways.

Besides analysing the narratives driving the texts and understanding how they use history, I also set out to understand how these texts approach certain challenges that are inherent to cosmopolitanism, which I have defined as ideas pertaining to bind humanity in a single community. By conducting a close reading of selected texts I highlighted how these theories balanced respecting sensitivity towards cultural diversity and promoting all-inclusive universality, and how they envisioned the relationship between insiders and outsiders. Kang Yowei's *Datong Shu* did not seek to balance universality with diversity, because boundaries of difference were the root-cause of the problem of suffering that he was trying to solve. He also did not address the issue of how insiders and outsiders would relate to one another in his 'age of complete peace and equality', because everybody would be the same in every possible way and there would be no distinctions to make up an inside or an outside.

As one of the basic principles of 'harmony with a difference' is harmonious coexistence between differences, I expected the texts on this topic to emphasise this point, which they did. Although these texts did stress that diversity should be respected and mutual understanding encouraged, very few theoretical or practical examples were given to elaborate on how that would work in practice. One of the main reasons for this could well be that for this section I chose to analyze a selection of fairly short articles, rather than a large monograph, leaving little space for the authors to expand on their ideas. Originally the motivation for this approach was to offer a broader insight into the many types of uses of 'harmony with a difference' and also have diversity amongst the types of sources used throughout the thesis. In hindsight this did not work out as anticipated. However, the texts on international relations did provide some brief examples, like putting cultural differences and boarder conflicts aside in order to promote

mutually beneficial development. Fei Xiaotong also mentioned some ways in which 'harmony with a difference' is manifested, like in anthropology, in Chinese ethnic policy and in Chinese city life. However, without a detailed explanation of why these are good examples, I could not help but view them as negative examples of 'harmony with a difference' undermining Fei's otherwise apparent diversity respecting position.

Among all of the works I analysed Zhao Tingyang presented the most detailed elaboration on the cosmopolitan issues central to this thesis. His idea of the relationship between insiders and outsiders was based on the idea that *tianxia* has no outside and everybody belongs to a single family, there being no outside was essential for his comprehensive approach. He also discussed how in ancient China outsiders could adopt to Chinese customs and ideals to become insiders and that this happened on the basis of voluntary submission. Balancing universality with difference was not on Zhao's agenda, his '*tianxia* system' was based on a singular cultural understanding of the world and was not open to difference.

Although all of the texts discussed in this thesis address universal issues, they all take different starting points for their discussions and have different focal points. Focussing on how to rid the world of suffering, how to manage the global interaction between cultures, or how China can offer an intellectual contribution to the world, lead all of the authors to propose cosmopolitan solutions. However, while proposing their universal systems most authors ignore questions that inherently follow propositions on any form of universality. In a way this could be considered a weakness in my research question, I could have known that applying a set of questions to texts that do not seek to address these particular questions might lead to a lack of information to fully answer these questions. At the same time, the key questions I posed in this thesis are some of the first stumbling blocks anybody comes across when considering cosmopolitanism. In this sense the fact that many of the texts studied in this thesis did not explicitly discuss these issues can be considered just as much a weakness in their theories as in my research set up.

On a final note I would like to come back to the paradoxical nature of cosmopolitanism. Over the past centuries many people have sought to theoretically bind humanity into a single community. However, nobody has been

able to find a lasting method to solve the questions of how to practically balance universality with difference, or to find a permanent means to form a good-natured basis for the relationship between insiders and outsiders. Although these questions will most likely never produce a single conclusive answer, this does not mean they are not worth asking.

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