

## My teaching at University of Vienna

With regard to the “methodological” part of my philosophical research in political, practical as well as intercultural philosophy I focus on the theory of recognition, civilizational analysis/historical sociology and critical hermeneutics. I teach a few courses (seminars and lectures) on these subjects and have also published several related papers:<sup>1</sup>

*The Philosophical Foundations of Civilizational Analysis*

*Critical hermeneutics*

*Socialism intercultural*

*Honneth's Theory of Justice from an Intercultural Perspective*

With regard to “Chinese philosophy,” I teach for instance the following courses, to which I have also already published papers:<sup>2</sup>

*The Relevance of Chinese philosophy*

*Critical Theory and Chinese Philosophy in Conversation*

*Contemporary Chinese Political Philosophy*

*Introduction to Confucianism*

The descriptions of my courses as well as the (selected) reading list:

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1 See for instance:

- Dunaj, L.: “Jóhann Páll Árnason: A Pražák”. In: *International Journal of Social Imaginaries*, Brill, 2/2023, pp. 137–156.

<https://brill.com/view/journals/ijsi/2/1/ijsi.2.issue-1.xml>

- Dunaj, L. – Smith, J. – Mertel, K. C. M. (eds.): *Civilization, Modernity, and Critique: Engaging Johann P. Arnason's Macro-Social Theory*. London and New York: Routledge 2023.

<https://www.routledge.com/Civilization-Modernity-and-Critique-Engaging-Johann-P-Arnasons-Macro-Social/Dunaj-Smith-Mertel/p/book/9781032217727?fbclid=IwAR3ycbX5uL0Mj1BNAr94Y7VwMZfIKpy11y00FQPofTP4zeuSaZfXnv-dWWU>

- Dunaj, L. – Mertel, K. C. M. (eds.): *Hans-Herbert Kögler's Critical Hermeneutics*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022.

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/hansherbert-k%C3%B6glers-critical-hermeneutics-9781350228634/>

- “Beyond Ethnocentrism: Towards a Global Social Theory” (together with Hans-Herbert Kögler). In: Ananta Kumar Giri (ed.), *Social Theory and Asian Dialogues: Cultivating Planetary Conversations*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 69-106.

2 See for instance:

- Dunaj, L. – Sigurðsson, G. (eds.): *Imaginary Worlds and Imperial Power: The Case of China*. Albany: SUNY Press 2024 (forthcoming).

- “Revolution, Transformation, and the Role of the Subject. Critical Reflections on François Jullien's Book *The Silent Transformations*.” In: Edited by: Hans Feger, Xie Dikun, Wang Ge (eds.): *Yearbook for Eastern and Western Philosophy*, Volume 6 Issue 1, pp. 245-260. <https://www.degruyter.com/journal/key/yewph/6/1/html>

- Dunaj, L.: *Between Critical Hermeneutics and Chinese Philosophy: A Prolegomenon to a World Philosophy*. Lanham: Lexington 2025 (forthcoming).

- “从埃贡·邦迪 (Egon Bondy) 的本体论研究看中国 古代哲学的当代价值和影响力”. In: *Acadēmia Ethica 4*, Anqing Deng, (Ed.), Shanghai: Shanghai Educational Publishing House, 2018, pp. 250-262.

## ***The Philosophical Foundations of Civilizational Analysis***

The term “civilizational analysis,” used by Said Amir Arjomand and Edward Tiryakian, is intended to emphasize the combination of theoretical and historical approaches to the comparative study of civilizations. In particular, the focus is on the constitutive patterns and long-term dynamics of civilizations – understood as macro-cultural, macro-social, and macro-historical entities – and on the question of their more or less active participation in modern transformations. According to Johann P. Arnason, civilizational analysis does not attempt to summarize all levels of socio-historical reality under civilizational categories, but to properly address important phenomena previously neglected by the humanities. Such a task involves linking ontological or cosmological visions (interpretive frameworks) to the main spheres of social life, i.e., institutionalized forms of social action and interaction. The two key components that link the socio-historical sphere (interpretive frameworks and institutionalized forms of social action) relate mainly to the power structures in which specific cultural orientations are reflected. While this civilizational dimension is by and large implicit or latent in society, it is nevertheless an important determinant of social life that must be taken into account. While “civilizational analysis” has been established more as a “subdiscipline” of sociology or historical sociology, the lecture will attempt to reconstruct its philosophical roots and discuss authors such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jan Patočka, and Cornelius Castoriadis in more detail.

### **Reading List**

- ARJOMAND, S. A. & TIRYAKIAN E.A. (eds.): *Rethinking Civilizational Analysis*. London: SAGE, 2004.
- ARNASON, J. P.: *Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Traditions*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.
- ARNASON, J. P.: *The Labyrinth of Modernity: Horizons, Pathways and Mutations*. Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Rowman & Littlefield 2020.
- CASTORIADIS, C.: *The Imaginary Institution of Society*. Cambridge: MIT Press 1997 [1987].
- HUNTINGTON, S. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York, Touchstone 1997.
- MERLEAU-PONTY, M.: *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. by Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, and London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962); trans. revised by Forrest Williams (1981; reprinted, 2002); new trans. by Donald A. Landes (New York: Routledge, 2012)
- MERLEAU-PONTY, M.: *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes* trans. by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).
- MORRIS, I.: *Why the West Rules—for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2010.
- PATOČKA, J.: *La surcivilisation et son conflit interne*. In: *Liberté et sacrifice*, ed. E. Abrams, Grenoble: J. Millon, 1990, S. 99–177.
- WOLF, H. (Hrsg.): *Das Imaginäre im Sozialen: Zur Sozialtheorie von Cornelius Castoriadis*. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2012.

### ***Critical Hermeneutics***

In 1967, in the context of a discussion on the methodology of the social sciences, Jürgen Habermas criticized Hans-Georg Gadamer’s hermeneutics and developed the initial conception of a “critically enlightened hermeneutics.” Habermas’s critique sparked a confrontation that included responses and rejoinders from both major figures, as well as contributions from Karl-Otto Apel, Albrecht Wellmer, and Paul Ricoeur (among others). Habermas’s seminal work on the idealist features of

hermeneutics later led to a new critical strand of hermeneutic thought. Paul Ricoeur generalizes this core idea by reconstructing the hermeneutic experience as one that opens a gap between one's own context and the context of the other through the mediation of the text. More recently, critical hermeneutics has integrated poststructuralist thought into this tradition by reinterpreting preunderstanding and dialogic disclosure with a Foucauldian approach to discourse and power. While any interpreter necessarily aims at a dialogic understanding of content, hermeneutic preunderstanding is understood as symbolic presuppositions structured and maintained by social power. The seminar will focus in its first part on the original dispute between Habermas and Gadamer. In the second part, contributions by Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty will shed light on further developments, and Habermas' reaction will be discussed. At the end of the semester, current debates will be discussed with a focus on Hans-Herbert Kögler's interpretation and its relevance for an intercultural philosophy.

### **Reading List**

- APEL K.-O./BORMANN C./BUBNER, R./GADAMER, H.-G./GIEGEL H.-J/HABERMAS, J.: Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1980.
- DREYFUS, H. L. – RABINOW, P.: Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1983.
- FOUCAULT, M.: L'Ordre du discours, Paris: Gallimard 1971.
- FOUCAULT, M.: Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- HABERMAS, J.: Truth and Justification. Cambridge, UK – Malden, USA: Polity, 2003.
- KÖGLER, H.-H.: The Power of dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics after Gadamer and Foucault. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1999.
- KÖGLER, H.-H. – PECHRIGGL, A. – WINTER, R.: Enigma. Agency. Macht. Widerstand. Reflexivität. Bielefeld: transcript, 2019.
- RORTY, R.: Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- TU, C.: Chinese Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective. Interpretation and Intellectual Change. London and New York: Routledge 2005, S. 297-310.

### ***Socialism intercultural***

The year 2021 marks thirty years since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, triggered by the collapse of the Soviet-style socialist regimes in the East-Central European states in 1989. Socialism seemed dead as a political concept at least until 2008, and the advent of the economic and financial crisis in these countries. At the same time, the 1990s and 2000s were marked by diverse critiques of capitalism worldwide that were not satisfied with Western liberal-democratic "triumphalism" and sought alternatives to (neo-)liberal democracies. In 2015, Axel Honneth updated this idea with his book on socialism, which triggered numerous reactions and broad discussions. His book therefore forms the starting point of this lecture. However, it will be less about a detailed reconstruction of this debate within the Western framework, but rather an attempt to look at the perception of the concept of socialism today from other civilizational or cultural perspectives and contexts. The focus will be on two case studies: (A) East-Central Europe, which, with its continuous alternation between eastern and western orientation, has strongly challenged liberal democracy in individual cases (Hungary, Poland) and, in addition to conservative and right-wing reactions to the crisis, has reopened the debate on socialism, which, however, tends to be a marginal phenomenon. (B) China, which, with its decade-long "sinification" of Marxism, has presented its own concept of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which has survived the liberal turn in 1989.

The lecture will focus on the question of whether, by looking at these contemporary non-Western reflections on socialism, it is also possible to draw “normative lessons” that can be productively taken up for Western philosophical discussions.

### **Reading List**

- ANGLE, S. A. (2012b): Contemporary Confucian Perspectives on Social Justice. In: M. Palmer (ed.): Companion to Religion and Social Justice. New York, Blackwell, pp. 93–109.
- ARNASON, J.: The Future That Failed: Origins and Destinies of the Soviet Model. London & New York, Routledge, 1993
- BAUER, W.: China und die Hoffnung auf Glück. Paradiese, Utopien, Idealvorstellungen in der Geistesgeschichte Chinas. München: Carl Hanser 1971
- BERANKOVA, J. N. – HAUSER, M. – NESBITT N.: Revolutions for the Future: May '68 and the Prague Spring, Suture Press, 2020.
- BUDEN, B.: Zone des Übergangs: Vom Ende des Postkommunismus. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 2009.
- CHAN, J. – SHIN, D. C. – WILLIAMS, M. S.: East Asian Perspectives on Political Legitimacy. Bridging the Empirical-Normative Divide. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- GHODSEE, K. – ORENSTEIN, M.: Taking Stock of Shock: Social Consequences of the 1989 Revolutions. New York: Oxford University Press 2021.
- HABERMAS, J.: Die nachholende Revolution: Kleine Politische Schriften VII. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1990.
- HONNETH, A.: The Idea of Socialism: Towards a Renewal. Cambridge, UK – Malden, USA: Polity, 2017.
- KRAPFL, J.: Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989–1992. Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2013.
- KRASTEV, I. – HOLMES, S.: The Light That Failed: Why the West Is Losing the Fight for Democracy. Berkeley and Oakland: Pegasus Books 2020.
- KUNDERA, M.: Testaments Betrayed: An Essay in Nine Parts. New York: HarperCollins 1995.
- LIEHM, A. J.: The Politics of Culture. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1971.
- MLYNÁŘ, Z.: Nightfrost in Prague: The end of humane socialism. New York: Karz Publishers 1980.
- MŇAČKO, L.: Verspätete Reportagen. Wien: Molden 1971
- NEGT, O.: Modernisierung im Zeichen des Drachen: China und der europäische Mythos der Moderne. Göttingen: Steidl 2007.
- SCHUMPETER, J.: Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy. Sublime Books: 2015.
- SIMECKA, M.: The Restoration of Order. The Normalization of Czechoslovakia. London: Verso 1984.
- TAMÁS, G. M.: Kommunismus nach 1989. Beiträge zu Klassentheorie, Realsozialismus, Osteuropa. Wien: mandelbaum kritik & utopie 2015.

### ***Honneth's Theory of Justice from an Intercultural Perspective***

In his magnum opus, “Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life,” Axel Honneth draws attention to one of the greatest limitations from which contemporary political philosophy suffers. It is about its disconnection from social analysis and thus its fixation on purely normative principles, which today are mostly designed in isolation from the morality of given practices and institutions, only to be secondarily “applied” to social reality. He criticizes the dominant Kantian (or, in English speaking world, Lockean) theory of justice, in which the normative principles by which the moral legitimacy of the social order was to be measured were not allowed to develop out of the existing institutional structure, but only independently of it, freestanding. In its first half, the seminar will take a closer look at Honneth's theory with reference to his earlier works, as well as

other authors' reactions to his book. In the second part of the semester, an attempt will be made to bring Honneth's theory of justice to a cross-cultural level in order to examine the extent to which this theory is capable of addressing global challenges. As the main perspective for such an examination, the so-called "civilizational analysis" has been chosen, especially as interpreted by Johann P. Arnason as well as Amy Allen's book *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*.

### **Reading list**

ALLEN, A. *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

ARNASON, J. P.: *Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Traditions*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

ARNASON, J. P.: *The Labyrinth of Modernity: Horizons, Pathways and Mutations*. Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Rowman & Littlefield 2020.

FRASER, N. – HONNETH, A.: *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange* London & NYC: Verso, 2003.

HONNETH, A.: *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996.

HONNETH, A.: *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

HONNETH, A.: *The Idea of Socialism: Towards a Renewal*. Cambridge, UK – Malden, USA: Polity 2017.

SCHLETTE, M.: *Ist Selbstverwirklichung institutionalisierbar?: Axel Honneths Freiheitstheorie in der Diskussion*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2018.

### ***The relevance of Chinese philosophy***

There are several reasons for dealing more intensively with the Chinese philosophical tradition today. The lecture will focus primarily on three of them: First, to the increase in global interactions in recent decades, which require global solutions to a variety of social and environmental problems. As an emerging superpower, China arguably occupies the most important position among non-Western countries. Consequently, it is necessary to understand the most influential philosophical traditions of such an important "global player" as well as those of the so-called "Far East Asian civilizations" in order to better grasp the dynamics of the globalized world. Second, to the critique of the Eurocentric interpretation of the history of philosophy, which one could argue is still present in Western philosophy today. Consequently, a critique of Eurocentrism is a strong motivation for the study of Chinese philosophy and can be a source of self-criticism for Western philosophy. Third, to the fact that Chinese culture and its spiritual and philosophical heritage are among the oldest in human history. In fact, traditional Chinese philosophy offers many autochthonous philosophical ideas that are still alive and enjoying growing attention in Chinese social and political discourse. As a result, the debate should be opened whether these ideas could be productive for the Western as well as global philosophical problems.

### **Reading list**

ALLISON, G.: *Destined for War: Can America and China escape Thucydides's Trap?* Boston – New York: Mariner Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), 2017.

ANGLE, S. C.: *Sagehood. The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

BELL, D. A.: *The China Model: Political Meritocracy and the Limits of Democracy*. Princeton University Press, 2016.

BIN WONG, R.: *China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000.

CHENG, A.: *Histoire de la pensée chinoise*, Paris, Seuil, 1997.

JENSEN, L. M.: *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions and Universal Civilization*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998.

LEIBNIZ, G. W.: *Writings on China*. Chicago and LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court 1994.

METZGER, T. A.: *A Cloud Across the Pacific. Essays on the Clash between Chinese and Western Political Theories Today*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005.

MORRIS, I.: *Why the West Rules—for Now: The Patterns of History, and What They Reveal About the Future*. Picador, 2011.

OSTERHAMMEL, J.: *Unfabling the East: the enlightenment's encounter with Asia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

YU, K. P., TAO, J. & IVANHOE, P. J. (eds.): *Taking Confucian Ethics Seriously*. Albany: State University of New York Press 2010.

### ***Critical Theory and Chinese Philosophy in Conversation***

Globalization poses a challenge to social and political philosophy because it seems to require a reassessment of the frameworks and rules that govern global exchange processes. However, if these rules and regulations are to be both legitimate and effective, they cannot simply reflect the interests and values of Western powers but should be the result of an intercultural dialogue. In such a dialogue, China's position is particularly important given its emerging status as a major global player. Therefore, an adequate understanding of the political, historical, cultural, but primarily philosophical background of contemporary Chinese thought is essential. In this context, critical theory is characterized above all by its critical-hermeneutic or pragmatic approach to questions of globalization: Historical experience, for example, shows that solutions to social problems are rarely solved by prescriptions that result from reflection on ideal circumstances. Such solutions are rather the result of complex learning processes from previous problems, crises, and the like. The aim of this seminar is to compare selected conceptions of Chinese philosophy with current Western debates (i.e., especially within critical theory). First, the relevance of Chinese philosophy for contemporary philosophical debates will be explored. Second, considerations of critical social theory will be brought in to critically analyze concrete forms of suffering and injustice in an increasingly globalized world. Third, the potential and limitations of the works of Heiner Roetz and Fabian Heubel for critical theory will be examined in order to stimulate inter- and transcultural dialogical competences.

### **Reading list**

BILLETTER, J. F.: *Contre François Jullien*. Paris: Allia 2013.

BROWN, N. – FRANKE, W. (eds.): *Transcendence, Immanence, and Intercultural Philosophy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.

HABERMAS, J.: *Auch eine Geschichte der Philosophie: Band 1: Die okzidentale Konstellation von Glauben und Wissen*. Berlin: Suhrkamp 2019.

HEUBEL, F.: *Was ist chinesische Philosophie? Kritische Perspektiven*. Hamburg: Meiner 2021.

JULLIEN, F.: *The Silent Transformations*. NYC: Seagull Books 2011.

ROETZ, H.: *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age: A Reconstruction Under the Aspect of the Breakthrough Toward Postconventional Thinking*. Albany: SUNY Press 1993.

UNSCHULD P.: *Chinas Trauma – Chinas Stärke. Niedergang und Wiederaufstieg des Reichs der Mitte*. Berlin: Springer 2016.

ZHANG, D.: *Key Concepts in Chinese Philosophy*. Beijing, New Haven & London: Foreign Languages Press and Yale University Press 2005.

### ***Contemporary Chinese Political Philosophy***

An interest of a Western philosopher in Chinese philosophy who attempts to understand the role and place of China in an increasingly globalized world, can easily come across to a significant problem. There is a historical paradox, viz. that even after the great interest in Chinese philosophy from some modern European philosophers, today most of our knowledge about Chinese philosophy comes from sinologists, economists, or experts in cultural studies, rather than from (political) philosophers, who are capable of providing a more comprehensive view on such topics as politics, justice, legitimacy, authority, etc. This, in turn, sometimes leads to simplistic and misrepresenting interpretations, which undermine an adequate representation of Chinese philosophy in the history of World philosophy, as well as its role in contemporary philosophical debates. The lecture focuses mostly on the Chinese authors who have already got certain reception in the West and who challenge Western liberal-democratic thought, and plea for an alternative model, as for instance Bai Tongdong, Jiang Qing, Wang Hui, Zhao Tingyang, accompanied with the analyses and commentaries of for instance Daniel A. Bell, Thomas Metzger, Stephen Angle, Joseph Chan among others.

#### **Reading list**

ANGLE, S. C.: *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*. Cambridge - Malden: Polity, 2012.  
BAI, T.: *China. The Political Philosophy of the Middle Kingdom*. London & New York: Zed Books 2012.  
BAI, T.: *Against Political Equality. The Confucian Case*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.  
HEUBEL, F.: *Was ist chinesische Philosophie?: Kritische Perspektiven*. Hamburg: Meiner, 2021.  
METZGER, T. A.: *A Cloud Across the Pacific. Essays on the Clash between Chinese and Western Political Theories Today*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2005.  
QING, J.: *Confucian Constitutional Order: How China's Ancient Past Can Shape Its Political Future*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 2012.  
WANG, H.: *The Politics of Imagining Asia*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press 2011.  
ZHAO T.: *All under Heaven: The Tianxia System for a Possible World Order*. Oakland: University of California Press: 2021.

### ***Introduction to Confucianism***

Confucian or Ruist philosophy is one of the oldest philosophical traditions in the world and has been a fundamental philosophical, ideological, and religious pillar throughout much of China's (and other Asian societies') history. The seminar will introduce the three most important periods: First, the origins of the tradition associated with the figures of Confucius (Kongzi/ Kong Fuzi), Mencius (Mengzi) and Sun Tzu (Sunzi). Secondly, the Neo-Confucian period, which focuses mainly on Zhou Dunyi, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming. The last third section of the semester will then focus on the so-called "New Confucianism" of the 20th century.

#### **Reading list**

ANGLE, S. C.: *Sagehood. The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.  
ANGLE, S. C.: *Contemporary Confucian Political Philosophy*. Cambridge - Malden: Polity, 2012.  
CHAN, W.: *A Source Book in Chinese philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1969.

LAU, D. C. (tr.) *Confucius: The Analects* (paperback bilingual edition). Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2002.

LAU, D. C. (tr.), *Mencius* (revised and bilingual edition). Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003.

ROETZ, H.: *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age: A Reconstruction Under the Aspect of the Breakthrough Toward Postconventional Thinking*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.

SIGURÐSSON: *Confucian Propriety and Ritual Learning: A Philosophical Interpretation*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2015.