

From Heretic to Hedonist: Kang Youwei's Transformation of Yang Zhu

WANG (*Abigail*) Xiaowei*

Abstract

At the end of the nineteenth century, Chinese intellectuals had to respond to the dire situation of their country. Against this background, the leading intellectual Kang Youwei aimed to re-establish some traditional values. Although Yang Zhu had long been employed rhetorically in pre-modern China, Kang reconstructed Yang Zhu as an ancient master who had a coherent theory centered around two expressions: *wei wo* (serving one's own interest) and *zong yu* (indulging in desires). However, there is a tension in Kang's attitudes towards Yang Zhu: on the one hand, he criticizes Yang Zhu for when he reflects upon the despotic nature of Chinese governance; on the other hand, Kang sees the positive sides of *wei wo* and *zong yu* in the achievement of the Great Unity. Despite the ambiguity, Kang's choice of vocabulary still made an impact to the portrayals of Yang Zhu after his: his portrayal turned this master into someone highly relevant to modern China; he also showed the possibility of reading Yang Zhu in a positive light.

Keywords: Kang Youwei, Yang Zhu, modernity, *wei wo*, *zong yu*

Od heretika do hedonista: Kang Youweijevo preoblikovanje Yang Zhuja

Izvilleček

Ob koncu devetnajstega stoletja so se morali kitajski intelektualci odzvati na grozljivi položaj svoje države. Na tej osnovi si je vodilni intelektualec Kang Youwei prizadeval ponovno vzpostaviti nekatere tradicionalne vrednote. Čeprav se je ime Yang Zhu v pred-moderni Kitajski dolgo uporabljalo v retoričnem pomenu, je Kang Youwei rekonstruiral Yang Zhuja kot starodavnega mojstra, ki je imel koherentno teorijo, osredotočeno na dva izraza: *wei wo* (služiti lastnemu interesu) in *zong yu* (prepuščanje željam). V Kangovem odnosu do Yang Zhuja pa vseeno obstaja napetost: po eni strani kritizira Yang Zhuja glede razmišljanja o despotski naravi kitajskega vladanja. Po drugi strani pa Kang vidi pozitivne vidike konceptov *wei wo* in *zong yu* v doseganju Velike enotnosti. Kljub tej dvoumnosti je Kangova izbira besedišča v opisovanju Yang Zhuja vplivala na kasnejše, ker je tega mojstra spremenila v nekoga, ki je zelo pomemben za sodobno Kitajsko. Poleg tega pa je pokazal tudi možnost branja in razumevanja Yang Zhuja v pozitivni luči.

Ključne besede: Kang Youwei, Yang Zhu, modernost, *wei wo*, *zong yu*

* WANG (Abigail) Xiaowei, KU Leuven, Belgium.
Email address: abigail_wang(at)hotmail.com



Introduction

By the mid-19th century, the traditional Sinocentric worldview was no longer suitable for China in a world of nations. In what Chang Hao calls the “transitional period”, China was undergoing a national crisis both politically and existentially¹ (Chang 1999, 29). Toward the last quarter of the 19th century, Chinese intellectuals had to respond to the dire “historical situation” and “existential situation” the nation faced (Chang 1987, 4). They not only were forced to re-examine the inherited political order, but also had to find ways to negotiate the legitimacy of traditional Chinese concepts. At the end of the 19th century, scepticism of the functional effectiveness of the institutional order as well as its moral legitimacy was widely prevalent (ibid., 5). It was against this background that Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858–1927), a leading intellectual and political activist in the late Qing dynasty, aimed to “reveal” the truth of traditional Chinese thought by reconstructing Chinese intellectual history and re-establishing traditional values. In this process, the pre-Qin master Yang Zhu 楊朱 (who allegedly lived around 400 BC) was given an important role. In contemporary academic discourse, Yang Zhu is discussed as the founder of the Yangism, whose theory is characterized by its emphasis on maintaining physical integrity. He is also labelled a Daoist, hedonist, individualist, and egoist on the basis of the fragmented information preserved in early sources. Perhaps the most influential portrayal of Yang Zhu comes from the *Mencius*, which associates Yang Zhu with the expression *wei wo* 為我 (“serving one’s own interest”), and depicts Yang Zhu as someone who is unwilling to sacrifice one hair for the benefit of the world. A similar description of Yang Zhu can also be found in the *Liezi*,² of which the seventh chapter is titled “Yang Zhu”. Modern reconstructions of Yang Zhu’s hedonistic ideas usually take this chapter as their main reference (Brindley 2022).³ This paper aims to show that these modern constructions of Yang Zhu were only possible because of Kang’s unprecedented transformation of Yang Zhu. Before Kang, the Yang Zhu figure—who had no full book recorded to his name—had barely received any detailed scholarly attention (Defoort 2020a, 235–56). It was Kang who pulled Yang Zhu into discussions of the relationship between individuals and the nation, which continued reappearing for half a century. It is thus worthwhile to consider what Kang did with Yang Zhu, and how the latter fitted into his project. This investigation not only shows Kang Youwei from a novel perspective, but also unravels some major constituents of Yang Zhu’s modern portrayal.

1 Chang Hao defines the “transitional period” as the 25 years between 1895 and 1920 when Chinese intellectual thought transformed from traditional to modern.

2 Many scholars have questioned the date, the author, and the content of the text of the *Liezi*.

3 Whether the “Yang Zhu” chapter in the *Liezi* represents Yang Zhu’s ideas is beyond the scope of my current discussion. Discussion of this matter can be found in Brindley (2022).

Regarding Kang Youwei, extant scholarship tends to focus on either his role in political history or his adoption and transformation of Confucianism (Bell 2010; Gan 2003; Jiang 2003). The few studies of Kang's views on non-Confucian thought include Wei Yixia's research on Kang's views on the pre-Qin masters⁴ (Wei 2014, 14–17; 2017, 40–45), Lee Ting-mien's paper on the role of Mohism in Kang's arguments for his New Text Theory of Confucianism (Lee 2020, 461–77), and Carine Defoort's examination of Yang Zhu in Kang's *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (*Confucius as a Reformer*) (Defoort 2020a, 250–53). Still, how Kang discusses the masters in light of his own political imagination and how he transforms the masters' theories remain rather overlooked in the field.

Regarding Yang Zhu, contemporary scholarship tends to ruminate on whether the accepted portrayals offer accurate accounts of his philosophy without acknowledging when and how these portrayals came to be (Shi 2015, 11–18; Huang 2008, 13–15). Some also study the modern portrayals of Yang Zhu, but these discussions appear to be built upon the assumption that these portrayals are modern expressions of the authentic philosophy of Yang Zhu (He 2015). An exception might be Li Yucheng's study of the historical constructions of Yang Zhu's image as a “heretic”, in which he traces the representative texts that present portrayals of Yang Zhu from different periods in Chinese history and argues that Yang Zhu's image as a heretic was amplified after the Tang-Song dynasty to serve the needs of the time (Li 2017, 51–61). Nonetheless, a detailed study of the novel and various portrayals of Yang Zhu in modern China is still lacking.

Combining Kang and Yang, this paper aims to offer a case study of Kang's transformation of the heretic Yang Zhu. I demonstrate how for the first time in Chinese intellectual history Yang Zhu was attributed an elaborate, coherent theory instead of being taken as a mere rhetorical tool, as well as how Kang turned this traditional underdog into someone relevant to modern China. By taking a closer look at the lecture notes transcribed by Kang's students in 1896⁵ and his writings before 1904,⁶ this paper examines Kang's portrayal of Yang Zhu in a way that departs

4 Wei has done a series of studies on Kang's views on the pre-Qin masters.

5 There are four transcribed notes of Kang's speeches during the time he taught at Wanmu Caotang (Myriad Trees Academy), in which Kang discussed Yang Zhu. Among these four, “*Nanhai shicheng ji* 南海師承記 (*The Records Made when I Studied under my Teacher Nanhai*)” was transcribed by Kang's student Zhang Bozhen 張伯楨 (1877–1949). The transcript of “*Kang Nanhai xiansheng jiangxue ji* 康南海先生講學記 (*The Notes of the Lectures of Mr. Kang Nanhai*)” is provided by Zhang's son Zhang Cixi 張次溪 (1909–1968). The transcribers of the “*Wanmu Caotang koushuo* 萬木草堂口說 (*The Speeches Recorded in the Myriad Trees Academy*)” and “*Wanmu Caotang jiangyi* 萬木草堂講義 (*The Lecture Notes at the Myriad Trees Academy*)” are unknown.

6 See Kang, *Kangzi nei wai pian* 康子內外篇 (*Esoteric and Exoteric Essays of Master Kang*) (2007b). See also, Kang, *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (*Kongzi as a Reformist*) (2007h). See also, Kang, *Deguo youji* 德國游記 (*Travels in Germany*) (2007j).

from the longstanding Yang-Mo trope, as an independent early master whose lineage is associated with Laozi. For Kang, Yang Zhu's theory is mainly characterized by two interrelated expressions: *wei wo*, attributed to him by Mencius, and *zong yu* 縱慾 ("indulging in desires"), attributed to him by Kang.⁷ These two expressions made Yang Zhu indispensable in Kang's discussion of the fate of modern China: on the one hand, he criticizes Yang Zhu for promoting *wei wo* and *zong yu* when he reflects upon the despotic nature of Chinese governance; on the other hand, Kang sees the positive sides of *wei wo* and *zong yu* in the achievement of *Datong* 大同 (Great Unity). Even though he does not explicitly refer to Yang Zhu in his positive evaluation, the connection seems to be implicitly present in the combined use of these two expressions. In this paper, I first outline Kang's general portrayal of Yang Zhu. Then I introduce Kang's negative and positive readings of Yang Zhu's doctrines of *wei wo* and *zong yu*. The order of my discussion of the related sources is thematic rather than chronological, which hopefully better presents Kang's implicit transformation of the image of Yang Zhu.

Kang's Portrayal of Yang Zhu

As Yang Zhu is supposedly a pre-Qin figure to whom short comments and anecdotes in some early texts refer,⁸ Kang's attempt to portray this figure becomes a selective highlighting and interpretation of certain traits that are presented or suggested in these references. Three key points in Kang's portrayal of Yang Zhu are his doctrine of *wei wo*, his doctrine of *zong yu*, and his association with Laozi.

The first well-known notion associated with Yang Zhu and picked up by Kang, namely *wei wo*, can be traced to the *Mencius*. According to the *Mencius*, Yang Zhu and Mozi are the masters whose teachings flow throughout the world (Bloom 2011, 70). Mencius's statement about Yang Zhu and Mozi "totally blocking humaneness and righteousness 充塞仁義" also set the tone for a negative image of Yang Zhu in later generations (Defoort 2020a, 242). Another statement Mencius attributes to Yang Zhu portrays him as someone who maintains the idea of *wei*

7 Although there were portrayals of Yang Zhu's hedonism made by Japanese scholars before Kang, they did not use the term *zong yu*.

8 The earliest appearances of Yang Zhu can be found in the sources drafted from the pre-Qin era to the Han dynasty, such as the *Mencius*, *Xunzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Han Feizi*, *Huainanzi*, *Liezi*, *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Garden of Stories*), *Hanshu* 漢書 (*Book of Han*), and *Zhonglun* 中論 (*Discussions on the Mean Way*). In the *Lü Shi Chun Qiu* 呂氏春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lü*), there also seems to be a Yang Sheng 陽生 who promotes ideas on valuing the self, which is also considered to be the textual evidence of Yang Zhu.

wo and would not even pull out a single hair for the benefit of the world⁹ (Bloom 2011, 150). Although this portrayal may have been an invention of Mencius's and did not receive much attention from his contemporaries or other pre-Han generations (Defoort 2018, 165–84), the concise expression *wei wo* was so powerful that it became the dominant characteristic identified with Yang Zhu from at least the Song dynasty onward (Defoort 2020a, 247–50). In line with this tradition, Kang also describes Yang Zhu with the expression *wei wo*. However, there are two twists to Kang's reading of Yang Zhu's *wei wo*, which also lead to the other two key points of Kang's portrayal, namely, Yang Zhu's doctrine of *zong yu* and his association with Laozi.

The second notion that Kang comes up with, *zong yu*, has a totally different origin and history. An examination of the *Diaolong* Database of the Full Chinese and Japanese Classical Texts shows that before the Qing dynasty, the term *zong yu* was not mentioned in relation to Yang Zhu, and when Yang Zhu was discussed in terms of his attitude towards *yu* 欲 (“human desires”), he was associated with Laozi and was characterized as someone *wu yu* 無欲 (“without desires”). The earliest use of the term *zong yu* can be found in the “*Wanmu Caotang koushuo* 萬木草堂口說 (The Speeches Recorded in the Myriad Trees Academy)” (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 132), a collection of Kang's lecture notes recorded by one of his students in 1896. Here Kang states that “Yang Zhu places emphasis on *zong yu* 楊朱講求縱慾”¹⁰ (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 177). For Kang, the relation between *wei wo* and *zong yu* is a relation between ideology and practice: “Yang Zhu holds ‘*wei wo*’ as his core idea; what he says follows the practice of *zong yu* 楊朱以為我為宗旨，所言以縱慾為事”¹¹ (Kang 2007h, vol. 3, 41). Kang also believes that “Yang's teaching promotes indulging in desires, and thus it flourished 楊氏之學縱慾，故盛行” (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 179). One year later, this conclusion of Yang Zhu's ideology of *wei wo* and his practice of *zong yu* is drawn in the *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (*Confucius as a Reformer*) based on passages Kang quotes from the “Yang Zhu” chapter. These quotes depict Yang Zhu as someone who maintains

9 “Yangzi chooses ‘serving one's own interest.’ If by pulling out a single hair from his own body he could have benefited the entire world, he would not have done it. 楊子取為我，拔一毛而利天下，不為也。”

10 Around the same period, Zhang Zhidong 張之洞 (1837–1909) (2019) also describes the main idea of the “Yang Zhu” chapter as “only indulging in the satisfaction of desires 唯縱嗜慾”. Masayuki Sato (2022) argues that the Meiji Japanese scholars who included Yang Zhu in their composition of the history of Chinese philosophy also started to compare Yang Zhu with Epicurus and depicted him as a philosopher who advocated *kairaku shugi* 快樂主義 (“hedonism”).

11 In the edition in *Kang Youwei quanji*, this statement is 楊朱以為愛為宗旨. However, the editors of the Chinese Text Project seem to believe that this statement should be 楊朱以為我為宗旨. Here I follow the editors of the Chinese Text Project and stick with the term 為我.

that “in life, people care for each other; after death, people abandon each other 生相憐，死相捐”，we ought to “act by following one’s heart and not disobey the inclinations of nature 從心而動，不違自然所好”，that “if no one sacrificed a single hair and no one benefited the world, the world would be well governed 人人不損一毫，人人不利天下，天下治也”，and that as for “big houses, pretty clothes, rich flavour, and beauty, if one possessed all four of them, what more would one demand from the external world 丰屋，美服，厚味，姣色，有此四者，何求於外” (Kang 2007h, vol. 3, 40; Yang 1985, 238).¹² The overall image in these statements is of someone who follows his natural disposition, namely by valuing this-worldly carnal enjoyments, and who has little concern about others and the after-life. Despite the fact that Kang does not elaborate on these quotes, this image seems to be what he relies on to present the idea that Yang Zhu’s theory is really about *wei wo* and *zong yu*.

The third key point of Kang’s portrayal is Yang Zhu’s connection with Laozi. The earliest association between Yang Zhu and Laozi can be found in the “Yu Yan” chapter of the *Zhuangzi* and the “Huang Di” chapter of the *Liezi*.¹³ Both these texts record Yang Zhu’s journey to the South and his conversation with his teacher Laozi¹⁴ (Watson 2013, 237; Graham 1990, 51). These two texts also be-

-
- 12 Most translations in this paper are my own. Even when references to existing translations are given, I do not always follow them.
- 13 While in the “Yu Yan” chapter the protagonist of the anecdote is named 陽子居 and in the “Huang Di” chapter he is named Yang Zhu, scholars usually take these two as the same person. Despite the controversy concerning the author and the date of the outer chapters of the *Zhuangzi* and the *Liezi*, and that there is a slight difference between what is written in these two texts, they might still be the earliest texts that mention Yang Zhu and Laozi’s meeting.
- 14 The anecdotes recorded in the *Zhuangzi* and the *Liezi* are highly similar. Here I quote from the *Zhuangzi*. 陽子居南之沛，老聃西遊於秦，邀於郊，至於梁而遇老子。老子中道仰天而歎曰：“始以汝為可教，今不可也。”陽子居不答。至舍，進盥漱巾櫛，脫履戶外，膝行而前曰：“向者弟子欲請夫子，夫子行不聞，是以不敢。今聞矣，請問其過。”老子曰：“而睢睢盱盱，而誰與居？大白若辱，盛德若不足。”陽子居蹶然變容曰：“敬聞命矣。”其往也，舍者迎將其家，公執席，妻執巾櫛，舍者避席，煬者避灶。其反也，舍者與之爭席矣。Yang Ziju went south to Pei, and when he got to Liang, he went out to the edge of the city to greet Lao Dan, who had been traveling west to Qin, and escort him in. Laozi stood in the middle of the road, looked up to heaven, and sighed, saying, “At first I thought that you could be taught, but now I see it’s hopeless!” Yang Ziju made no reply, but when they reached the inn, he fetched a basin of water, a towel, and a comb and, taking off his shoes outside the door of the room, came crawling forward on his knees and said, “Earlier I had hoped to ask you, sir, what you meant by your remark, but I saw that you were occupied and didn’t dare. Now that you have a free moment, may I ask where my fault lies?” Laozi said, “High and mighty, proud and haughty—who could stand no live with you! The greatest purity looks like shame; abundant virtue seems to be insufficient.” When Yang Ziju first arrived at the inn, the people in the inn came out to greet him. The innkeeper stood ready with a mat, his wife with towel and comb, while the other guests moved politely off their mats, and those who had been warming themselves at the stove stepped aside. But when Yang returned from his interview with Laozi, the people at the inn tried to push him right off his own mat. (Watson 2013, 237–38)

came evidence for later scholars to associate Yang Zhu with Laozi. One such person was the Song scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200). In response to the question why Mencius did not attack Laozi, he answered that Mencius attacked Yang Zhu because Yang Zhu's learning came from Laozi.¹⁵ In line with these precedents, Kang also saw Yang Zhu as a disciple of Laozi. But no previous scholar had enhanced this lineage connection as much as Kang did. For Kang, the teachings of Laozi and Yang Zhu were essentially one. This is seen in several aspects of Kang's portrayal. First of all, unlike his predecessors, Kang did not merely make a vague claim about the resemblance between Laozi and Yang Zhu's teaching, but rather directly attributed *wei wo* to Laozi. He illustrated Laozi's idea of *wei wo* with the *Book of Changes*: "Laozi's idea of 'wei wo' grasps the gist of four words from the *Book of Changes*: humbleness, receding, modesty, ensnaring 老子'為我者', 得《易經》'卑,退,謙,陷'四字" (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 176). Secondly, Kang contended that Laozi's theory inevitably led to an idea of *zong yu*:

Laozi said: heaven and earth are inhumane. They take everything as straw dogs. Sages are inhumane, they take common people as straw dogs. A lack of humaneness to others leads to *wei wo* and *zong yu*. If one can be *wei wo* and *zong yu*, then he does not take into consideration anyone or anything. He denies both the people and the state. Thus, Mencius considered that a denial of one's ruler.

老子謂：天地不仁，以萬物為芻狗。聖人不仁，以百姓為芻狗。於人不仁，故只為我而已，縱慾而已。苟可以為我縱慾，則一切不顧，無人亦無國，故孟子以為無君。(Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 492–93)

That is also why even though Laozi had many followers, it was Yang Zhu who represented Laozi's teachings the best: "Laozi's followers were divided into so many schools: Zhuang and Lie maintain promoting purity and tenuousness; Yang Zhu puts emphasis on indulging in desires 老子後學，流派甚繁：莊、列主上清虛。楊朱講求縱慾" (ibid., 177). "Yangzi represents Lao's teaching 楊子即老學" (ibid., 144).

Relying on the portrayal of Yang Zhu in the *Mencius*, the overall image suggested in the "Yang Zhu" chapter, and the association between Laozi and Yang Zhu, Kang manages to rescue Yang Zhu from being part of a rhetorical trope and solidifies him as an ancient master with a theory. Having attributed an elaborate theory to Yang Zhu, Kang gives him greater relevance in a modern context.

15 Zhu Xi (s.d.) states that "Yang Zhu's learning came from Laozi 楊朱之學出於老子" and that "in refuting Yang Zhu, Mencius actually refuted Zhuangzi and Laozi 孟子闢楊朱，便是闢莊老了."

A Negative Reading of *wei wo* and *zong yu*.

Traditionally, the heretical Yang Zhu has long been the target of criticism. In line with this tradition, Kang also takes Yang Zhu as someone to blame. However, as the traditional criticism tended to take Yang-Mo as a rhetorical trope due to his threat to the Confucian Way, Kang's reproof towards Yang Zhu leaves out Mozi and pays more attention to Yang Zhu. From Kang's perspective, Yang Zhu's theory characterized by *wei wo* and *zong yu* has debilitated China with its influence on China's governance and the Chinese mentality. This portrayal also relies on Kang's unprecedented emphasis on Yang Zhu's association with Laozi. By firmly merging Laozi and Yang Zhu into one lineage, Kang attributes not only Yang Zhu's doctrine of *wei wo* to Laozi, but also Laozi's *buren* ("inhumaneness") to Yang Zhu. For Kang, the idea of inhumaneness accounts for a political system and mentality founded upon the idea of *ren* 忍 ("indifference"), which is the exact opposite of the idea of *buren* 不忍 ("compassion") that he believes to be ideal for the Great Unity.¹⁶

In his eyes, the problem with the adoption of *wei wo* and *zong yu* in China is that it has the powerful effect of bringing a dynasty to its end. When *wei wo* and *zong yu* are applied, not only are the rulers' actions affected, but the officials are as well. Kang believes that the rulers of China follow Laozi and Yang Zhu's doctrine of *wei wo* so that they "restrain their subjects and take the world as their private possession 鉗製臣民，自私其天下" (Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 493). The officials in government also follow the doctrine of *wei wo*, and "in the worst case, they seek private gain 下者營私" while "in the better cases, they cultivate personal integrity 上者獨善" (Kang 2007c, vol. 1, 345). This then leads to the severe situation that a dynasty is brought to its end, which can be shown in two examples Kang offers: "Li Si brought an end to [the Qin dynasty] under the rule of the second emperor and Yang Guang brought an end to the Sui dynasty. [These instances only occurred] because Yang Zhu's theory of indulging in desires set a precedent 李斯之亡二世，楊廣之亡隋，皆楊朱縱欲之說開之也" (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 207).

However, what concerns Kang more is that following Yang Zhu's doctrine is not a problem of the past but an on-going one. It was because Yang Zhu's ideas had already been deeply rooted in the Chinese mind that China was in its weak state.

16 A direct translation of the character *ren* 忍 is "withstanding," "enduring" or "restraining" oneself from. However, in the context of Kang's discussion, this idea should be understood as an opposite of *buren* 不忍 that positively refers to one's inability to endure the suffering of others. *Ren* would then refer to the ability to endure the suffering of others. Here, I follow the translation of Kung-chuan Hsiao (1975) and translate *buren* as compassion. The translation of *ren* as "indifference" is meant to be the opposite of compassion.

For Kang, the “evil of *wei wo* secretly prevailed in the Han dynasty and has not been disposed of to this day 為我之私陰行漢世，至今不廢” (Kang 2007h, vol. 3, 216). It “is the great poison of China 為中國大毒” (Kang 2007, vol. 5i, 493). Because Laozi and Yang Zhu’s theories are popular among the people:

The sages are inhumane; they see the people as the dogs of straw. Therefore, they reduce and exterminate the heart of compassion, becoming more and more indifferent until there is nothing left. Then they act from nothing but the wish to indulge in desires. This is also what ordinary folks enjoy in common, which is why their way still prevails until today. That is poisonous for the Great Way. As I have said, the learning of Lao and Yang brought great calamity to China.

聖人不仁，以萬民為芻狗。故削絕其不忍之心，忍之又忍，以至於無，而惟以縱欲為事。此亦俗人所共樂，故其道至今猶大行，此真大道之蝨賊也。吾嘗謂，老、楊之學為中國之大禍。 (Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 497)

Because the spirit of indifference is so prevalent in China,

even the people with great knowledge and noble conduct cannot behave other than prudently and silently and consider nothing but the preservation of their bodies. They sit by negligent of the predicament experienced by their ruler and fathers; they sit by without sympathy for the predicament experienced by their family, teachers and friends; they sit by unconcerned about the subjugation of their nation and the genocide of their people.

雖有碩學高行之人，但為謹默之行，保身之謀。坐視君父之難而不顧，坐視宗親師友之難而不恤，坐視國亡種滅而從容。 (ibid., 497–98)

The prevalence of Yang Zhu’s doctrine was not only affecting China’s present state, but also impacting its future. That is, it was preventing China from achieving the Great Unity. Kang’s vision of the Great Unity is founded upon the Confucian concept of *ren* 仁 (“humaneness”). Humaneness is not only “the universal virtue for all beings” (Chang 1987, 29), but also a worldview that signifies what the world essentially is or should be (ibid., 37). The idea of humaneness then naturally leads to the idea of compassion and sympathy for other people. As Kang states, “the Confucian Way is founded on humaneness; compassion is its theme; sympathizing with the suffering of the people is its mission 孔子之道本仁，以不忍為宗，以同民患為義” (Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 498). The heart of

compassion (*buren* 不忍) is also why the Great Unity is attainable¹⁷ (*ibid.*, 414). Kang describes human history “as proceeding from the chaos generated by selfish instincts to the joyful experience of global peace and commonality” (Brusadelli 2017, 105). In this blueprint, the Great Unity will be realized in the process of humanity overcoming people’s instincts to prioritize their individual selves and finally reaching moral perfection of humaneness. However, “the governance of the world has been dominated by Laozi’s learning for thousands of years 數千年治天下，皆老學” (Kang 2007f, vol. 2, 176). The fundamental difference between Laozi and Confucius is that Laozi’s theory is defined by its inhumaneness and indifference, whereas Confucianism is defined by humaneness and compassion. This means a polity built upon Laozi’s theory would be the exact opposite of the Great Unity. Since Yang Zhu’s notions of *wei wo* and *zong yu* generated from Laozi’s theory of inhumaneness and resulted in a reduction of compassion, to build a polity on Yang Zhu’s theory is to enact the spirit of indifference:

(Laozi) treats others with inhumaneness. Thus, he only acts out of self-interest and that is it; he indulges in desires and that is it. Supposing he can act out of self-interest and indulge in desires, he would not care about anything else, which amounts to a denial of other people and the state. That is why Mencius thinks he dismisses his ruler. 於人不仁，故只為我而已，縱欲而已。苟可以為我縱欲，則一切不顧，無人亦無國，故孟子以為無君。 (Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 492–93)

That is to say, because of the enactment of Laozi and Yang Zhu’s theory, China stood far away from the end goal of human history, which is the Great Unity. While still referring to the traditional Mencian comments on *wei wo*, Kang’s interpretation of it in relation to Yang Zhu is nothing short of innovative.

Although Kang’s portrayal of Yang Zhu still echoes the traditional portrayal, it is in fact far from conventional. Kang preserves the negative image traditionally associated with Yang Zhu. But in Kang’s discourse, Yang Zhu was a master identified with specific doctrines. Yang Zhu’s doctrines of *wei wo* and *zong yu*, he believes, were not only adopted by Chinese rulers, but also practiced by Chinese people. They were also problematic, and this dominance of Yang Zhu’s theory explains the weakness of China and why the Great Unity had not been achieved. That being said, Kang’s perception of Yang Zhu is much more complex, and not outrightly negative. In Kang’s earlier writings, his discussion of *wei wo* and *zong yu* shows the possibility of a positive reading of Yang Zhu, even though he is never mentioned there.

17 According to Yang Zhende 楊貞德 (2018, 153–96), the heart of “compassion” (*buren zhi xin* 不忍之心) is the source of the Great Unity.

A Positive Reading of *wei wo* and *zong yu*

The *Datong shu*, which Kang claimed to have begun drafting as early as 1884, probably contains Kang's most advanced ideas regarding an ideal future. Except for the first two chapters, which appeared in Kang's journal *Bu Ren* 不忍, Kang voluntarily kept the *Datong shu* unpublished because he believed the book was too advanced for that time (Brusadelli 2020, 7). Although the question of when the *Datong shu* was composed remains contested,¹⁸ Kang's *datong* ideas were already present before 1884. Another unpublished manuscript bearing the title *Kangzi nei wai pian* 康子内外篇 (*Esoteric and Exoteric Essays of Master Kang*) was written around the same time, namely 1886¹⁹ (Hsiao 1975, 419). While some scholars believe that Kang's "attitude toward the characteristic Confucian values is perceptibly less radical" in the *Nei wai pian*, this manuscript still gives the impression that its general intellectual outlook is identical with the *Datong shu* (ibid., 51). Despite the early date of composition, the ideas in these works were meant for a distant future that China would eventually arrive at. It is also in this manuscript that Kang offers an unconventionally positive reading of the supposedly heretical concepts of *wei wo* and *zong yu*. Although he does not explicitly refer to Yang Zhu, he still discusses the notion of *wei wo* in opposition to the notion of *jian ai* 兼愛 ("undifferentiated love"),²⁰ two expressions consistently associated with Yang Zhu and Mozi, respectively, in Chinese intellectual history. Despite the negative implications that are traditionally attached to these two concepts, Kang manages to offer a naturalistic reading: *wei wo* is transformed from selfish intentions to self-development, and *zong yu* from a negative sense of indulging in desires to a positive sense of giving free rein to one's desires. With

18 Hsiao (1975, 50–55) has presented a debate on dating the composition of *Datong shu*.

19 James Z. Gao (2009, 298) states that the *Kangzi nei wai pian* is a collection of fifteen essays written around 1886, of which nine were published in *The China Discussion* (*Qingyibao* 清議報) in 1899, and the remaining six remained unpublished. Kang explains that the "esoteric essays deal with the principles governing Heaven, earth, man, and things", while the "exoteric essays cover matters relative to government, education, arts, and music". Although this explanation can be found in Kang's self-edited chronological biography, it is impossible for us to tell which essays belong to the esoteric or to the exoteric. Although these essays do not present a systematic philosophy, according to Hsiao Kung-chuan (1975, 419), they still indicate the general tenor of Kang's thinking at this stage. The ideas expressed in these essays can even be read as the precursors of what will later be developed in the *Book of Great Unity*. *Qingyibao* was a newspaper founded on December 23, 1898, by Liang Qichao after he was exiled to Japan; its purpose was to introduce Western political theories and democratic ideas to China. *Qingyibao* was published every 10 days. Each issue included political editorials, news, translations, and book reviews. *Qingyibao* criticized the Qing conservatives headed by Dowager Empress Cixi and praised the Guangxu emperor, who supported radical reform. The mission of the newspaper was to advocate Liang's ideal of constitutional reform. On December 21, 1901, a fire destroyed the paper's offices and its publication ceased.

20 For current views on the translation of the term *jian ai*, see Defoort (2020b, 708–09).

this reading, the concepts of *wei wo* and *zong yu* are incorporated in Kang's vision of the Great Unity and transformed into ideas that are crucial in the achievement of the Great Unity.

An indication of Yang Zhu's presence in this chapter might be Kang's discussion of *wei wo* as an opposite to *jian ai*: the concepts of *wei wo* and *jian ai* are both mentioned in the first paragraph and explained as the two extreme sides that mark the periphery of *xue* 學 ("learning")²¹ (Kang 2007b, vol. 1, 107). Although some Neo-Confucians warned against the danger of Mozi's *jian ai* for its resemblance with the Confucian concept of *ren* 仁 (Cheng and Cheng 1981, 231–32), Kang asserts that "there is no fault with inclusive care 兼愛無弊" (Kang 2007b, vol. 1, 107). However, the situation concerning the concept of *wei wo* seems to be more complicated. Kang explains that:

There are four types of *wei wo*: those who (live) for their dispositions are common people; those who (live) for their reputations are virtuous people; those who (live) for their bodies are Daoists; those who (live) for their souls are Buddhists....

為我有四：一為我之質，眾人是也；一為我之名，賢人是也；一為我之體，道人是也；一為我之魂，佛學是也。²² (ibid.)

As we saw earlier, in the discussions where Kang explicitly associates the notion of *wei wo* with Yang Zhu, it seems to refer to selfishness. However, when Kang discusses the notion of *wei wo* without explicit reference to Yang Zhu, it becomes a concept that resembles self-development towards a designated destination. Being *wei wo* is a neutral concept of choosing to pursue something one cares about.

The discussion on *wei wo* is almost immediately associated with a discussion on *yu* 欲 ("desires"). For Kang, desires are natural endowments of Heaven that should be perceived neutrally. Following the quote above, Kang states that:

Each of these four types is following what their nature is close to, only that common people take interest in shape and bodies, thus, they have

21 "Learning cannot exceed its two extreme sides, serving one's own interest and inclusive caring, that is all. 學不外二端，為我，兼愛而已。"

22 This statement also resembles the four things "Yang Zhu" believed that the living is occupied with: "The things that prevent the living from resting are four: the first is longevity, the second is reputation, the third is social status, and the fourth is possession. 生民之不得休息，為四事故：一為壽，二為名，三為位，四為貨。" See Yang (1985, 235). In Kang's discussion of the theories of the different masters, schools, religions, terms such as *shen* 身 ("body"), *ti* 體 ("disposition"), *hun* 魂 ("soul"), and the *po* 魄 ("animal spirit") are almost always present and function as the standards that classify the different theories. However, Kang is not always consistent with his use of the terms, and he never elaborates on these concepts.

desires. Since these are also endowed by Heaven, they cannot be forbidden. Thus, even sages cannot do without music and sex...

四者各隨其性之所近，惟眾人為形質則有欲，斯亦天之所予，無可禁也。故雖聖人不能無聲色之奉... (ibid.)

That is to say, desires are nothing but one's liking. The reason people have desires is due to the physicality of being human and there is no point in prohibiting desires. However, that does not mean there is no limit for desires. While Kang believes that desires are inherent, he explains that they "cannot be unrestrained 不得肆者" because "Heaven imposes limitations 天有限焉" (such as one's lifespan) and "humans have regulations 人有制焉". "The sages know that desires are rooted in Heaven 聖人知欲之本於天也" so they "serve them 事之", but they also worry that people might indulge in desires, so they make rules to "restrain them" 束之". With this, Kang concludes that "those people who live for themselves, do what they do, and do not do what they should not do; that is all 夫人也，為我之質者，為其所以為，無為其所不為，斯已矣" (ibid.). In other words, being *wei wo* is essentially satisfying the desires given by one's disposition and restraining other desires as necessary.

The close connection between *wei wo* and desires also sheds new light on the concept of *zong yu*, which also implicitly relates to Yang Zhu. In this context, *zong yu* no longer connotes a negative sense of indulging in desires as when it is explicitly associated with Yang Zhu, but rather a positive sense of giving free rein to one's desires:

All creatures that have blood and breath necessarily have desires; having desires, they invariably give them free play.²³ To be without desires is simply to be dead. The most desireless are the Buddhists; but they give free rein to the desire to preserve the soul. The most desireless are the sages; but they give free rein to the desire for humanness and righteousness ...²⁴ Thus, what reins them in is due to having blood and breath, and what gives them free rein is due to having blood and breath.

凡為血氣之倫必有欲，有欲則莫不縱之，若無欲則惟死耳。最無欲者佛，縱其保守靈魂之欲；最無欲者聖人，縱其仁義之欲... 故夫制之者血氣也，縱之者血氣也。(Kang 2007b, vol. 1, 103–04)

23 The verb Kang uses in this passage to collocate with *yu* 欲 ("desires") is *zong* 縱, which is the same verb in the compound *zong yu* 縱欲 that is attributed to Yang Zhu. I choose to translate the word *zong* as "giving free play" or "giving free rein to" in this passage instead of "indulging in" in previous translations of *zong yu* to highlight the difference of the term when used in different contexts.

24 The translation is based on Hsiao (1975, 157–58).

In this reading, certain desires are repressed so that one can give more important desires free play. But to give free rein to the more important desires and to rein in the less important ones are choices made by humans. In other words, the reason people can restrain or not restrain desires is because we are human.

The concept of *zong yu* is thence incorporated in Kang's narrative of a utopian ideal. Kang believes that compassion (*buren* 不忍) is the foundation for establishing a good polity. According to him, "To take the heart of compassion (as the foundation) and to implement a polity of compassion—even the heart-mind of Yao and Yu was not more than that 以不忍人之心，行不忍人之政，雖堯、禹之心，不過是也" (Kang 2007b, vol. 1, 97). More importantly, compassion is also a type of *yu* that can be given free rein to. From Kang's perspective, although the "heart of compassion" 不忍之心 is restrained by one's power and longevity, the "desire of compassion" 不忍人之欲 has the potential of being freed from restraints (*ibid.*, 104). Not only does Kang believe that the "desire of compassion" can be given free rein, but he also counts on it. It is exactly because of the restraints put on compassion by people's lifespan and the limited population that only by giving free rein to an individual's desire of compassion that the effect of compassion can be strengthened. This idea of "compassion" is so crucial that later it is developed into the core of the attainment of the Great Unity in Kang's *Eso-teric Meanings of the Mencius*, drafted around 1902 (Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 498).²⁵

The heart of compassion ... Everyone has it. That is why Mencius says that humans by nature are all good. Since there is already the heart of compassion, it spreads outward and thus forms the polity of compassion. If humans did not have the heart of compassion, even the sages would not have had this seed, and then all the humane polity would have nothing to grow from. Thus, we know that all humane polities grow from the heart of compassion. It is the sea of myriad transformations, the root of everything, the origin of everything. This one kernel can grow into a tree that reaches into the sky; this one drop can multiply into a sea. The humane caring of humanity, the civilization of humanity, the evolution of humanity, even universal peace and great unity all come out of it.

不忍人之心.....人人皆有之，故謂人性皆善。既有此不忍人之心，發之於外，即為不忍人之政。若使人無此不忍人之心，聖人亦無此種，即無從生一切仁政。故知切仁政皆從不忍之心生，為萬化之海，為一切根，為一切源。一核而成參天之樹，一滴而成大海之水。人道之仁愛，人道之文明，人道之進化，至於太平大同，皆從此出。(Kang 2007i, vol. 5, 414)

25 Some chapters of this book were published in *Xinmin congbao* 新民叢報 (*New People's Journal*) and *Buren* 不忍 separately in 1902 and 1913. The whole book was not published until 1916.

Thus, what makes the Great Unity achievable is the inherent compassion in all humans. It is also due to humans' ability to choose which desires are to be given free rein, implicit in the natural tendency to be *wei wo* and to *zong yu*, that they can enlarge and spread their inherent compassion and therefore that a humane polity can be established. Even though Kang does not explicitly refer to Yang Zhu, Yang Zhu is undeniably present through his choice of vocabulary. Kang not only establishes a strong connection between *wei wo* and *zong yu*, but also perceives them as key elements of the attainment of the Great Unity.

Conclusion

Yang Zhu had long been employed rhetorically instead of being studied seriously as a pre-Qin master with his own teachings in pre-modern China. The short expression *wei wo* that Mencius attributed to Yang Zhu had a great effect on how scholars of later generations perceived Yang Zhu. However, a reconstruction of Yang Zhu's theory only seems to have begun with the late Qing intellectual Kang Youwei. Kang relied on the *Liezi* to solidify Yang Zhu as an ancient master who had a coherent theory. In this process, Kang shifted the focus away from the age-old Yang-Mo trope and to a Lao-Yang lineage; the expressions *wei wo* and *zong yu* were attributed to Yang Zhu as his core ideas. Whether or not explicitly related to Yang Zhu, they were seen by Kang as deeply intertwined. However, Kang remained ambiguous in his views of these two notions: when they were explicitly associated with Yang Zhu, they were the doctrines that weakened China; when they were not explicitly associated with Yang Zhu, they were the key elements to achieve the Great Unity. So far, this ambiguity seems unresolvable. Possible explanations for it might be that Kang was not aware of the ambiguity himself; or that he was aware of it, but decided not to acknowledge it and so left Yang Zhu out of the positive vision. Despite the ambiguity, Kang's choice of words still had an impact on the portrayals of Yang Zhu that followed his. Kang's depiction of Yang Zhu turned this master into someone highly relevant to modern China. It also showed the possibility of reading the notions of *wei wo* and *zong yu* in a positive light, and this had implications for new, positive interpretations of Yang Zhu. Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), for instance, subsequently contended that Yang Zhu was an early Chinese philosopher of rights whose theory was beneficial to strengthening China.²⁶

26 More about Liang's portrayal of Yang Zhu can be seen in Wang Xiaowei (2022).

Despite this ambiguity, Kang's reconstruction of Yang Zhu undeniably made Yang Zhu more relevant to modern Chinese discourse. With Kang's emphasis on the *Liezi*, later intellectuals and scholars also started to pay attention to the *Liezi* and debated the authenticity of the text as well as the possibility of finding Yang Zhu's ideas in this text. Despite Kang's reading of Yang Zhu's *zong yu* not having been followed by many, the trend of associating Yang Zhu with a general sense of hedonism can be seen in the writings of later Chinese intellectuals. For instance, although Liang was able to offer a positive reading of Yang Zhu, he still claimed that Yang Zhu's theory was "nothing more than ego-centrism and hedonism 除為我主義，縱樂主義，更無所可事" (Liang 1999, 573). Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895–1990) also considers the "Yang Zhu" chapter in the *Liezi* to be a text that exhibits hedonistic ideas.²⁷ However, the May Fourth intellectual Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962) defends a reading of Yang Zhu's theory as characterized by pessimism.²⁸ The leader of the Doubting Antiquity School Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (1893–1980) emphasizes instead a very positive reading of Yang Zhu's idea of keeping human nature intact rather than satisfying bodily desires. Even in contemporary scholarship, whether Yang Zhu held a theory of hedonism is still in debate (Brindley 2022). Thus, these debates over how to interpret Yang Zhu's teachings, both what they were and what they mean for us, are all children of Kang Youwei's original move to read and evaluate Yang Zhu as a master in his own right.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the FWO project G060817N: "Mozi and Yang Zhu from Heretics to Philosophers: Caught in Another Web? The Genealogy of 'Chinese Philosophy' in Three Major Steps." Many thanks to Professor Carine Defoort, Robert. A. Carleo, Lee Ting-mien, Chang Yao-cheng, Liu Haicheng and Wang Xin for the valuable comments on the earlier versions of this paper.

27 When Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao discuss Yang Zhu, they base their reading of Yang Zhu on the "Yang Zhu" chapter. See Kang (2007h, vol. 3, 40–41); see also Liang (1999, 573–74) Although Feng Youlan does not believe that the "Yang Zhu" chapter represents Yang Zhu's philosophy, he still reads the "Yang Zhu" chapter in terms of its hedonistic ideas. See Feng Youlan (2001, vol. 2, 109–117).

28 For those who defended Yang Zhu, see Hu Shi (2003, vol. 5, 349–50). See also Feng (2001, vol. 2, 373–76.)

References

- Bell, Daniel. 2010. *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bloom, Irene. 2011. *Mencius*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brindley, Erica. 2022. "Deconstructing 'Hedonism': Understanding Yang Zhu in the *Liezi*." In *The Many Lives of Yang Zhu: An Historical Overview*, edited by Carine Defoort, and Ting-mien Lee, 105–31. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Brusadelli, Federico. 2017. "Transforming Benevolence: Classicism, Buddhism and Politics in Kang Youwei's Lecture on 'Ren' 講仁字." *Archiv Orientalní* 85: 99–117.
- . 2020. *Confucian Concord*. Leiden: The Netherlands: Brill.
- Chang, Hao. 1987. *Chinese Intellectual in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning (1890–1911)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chang, Hao 張灝. 1999. "Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi de zhuanxingshidai 中國近代思想史的轉型時代 (The Transitional Period in the Modern Chinese Intellectual History)." *Ershiyi shiji shuangyuekan* 二十一世紀雙月刊 52: 29–39.
- Cheng, Hao 程顥, and Cheng Yi 程頤. 1981. *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (*The Collected Writings of Two Cheng*). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Defoort, Carine. 2018. "Unfounded and Unfollowed: Mencius's Portrayal of Yang Zhu and Mo Di." In *Having a Word with Angus Graham: At Twenty-Five Years into His Immortality*, edited by Carine Defoort, and Roger Ames, 165–84. Albany: SUNY.
- . 2020a. "Five Visions of Yang Zhu Before he Became a Philosopher." *Asian Studies* 8 (2): 235–56.
- . 2020b. "Mohism and the Evolving Notion of *Jian Ai*." In *Oxford Handbook on Early China*, 698–710. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Defoort, Carine, and Lee, Ting-mien, eds. 2022. *The Many Lives of Yang Zhu: An Historical Overview*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Feng, Youlan 馮友蘭. 2001. *Sansongtang quanji* 三鬆堂全集 (*The Hall of Three Pines*). Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe.
- Gan, Chunsong 幹春松. 2003. *Zhidu hua rujia ji qi jieti* 制度化儒家及其解體 (*Institutionalized Confucianism and Its Dissolution*). Beijing: Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe.
- Gao, James Z. 2009. *Historical Dictionary of Modern China (1800–1949)*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.
- Graham, A. C. 1990. *The Book of Lieh-tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- He, Aiguo 何愛國. 2015. *Xiandaixing de bentu huixiang: jindai yangmo sichao yanjiu* 現代性的本土迴響：近代楊墨思潮研究 (*Local Response of Modernity: A Study of Yang Zhu and Mo-tse Thought in Modern China*). Guangzhou: Shijie tushu chubanshe Guangdong youxian gongsi.
- Hsiao, Kung-chuan. 1975. *A Modern China and a New World: K'ang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927*. Seattle, London: University of Washington Press.
- Hu, Shi 胡適. 2003. *Hu Shi quanji* 胡適全集 (*The Collected Works of Hu Shi*). Edited by Ji Xianlin 季羨林. Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe.
- Huang, Zhongjing 黃忠晶. 2008. “‘Zong yu’ ‘xiang le’ keneng shi Yang Zhu de sixiang ma? “縱慾”“享樂”可能是楊朱的思想嗎? (Can ‘Indulging in Desires’ and ‘Hedonism’ Possibly be Yang Zhu’s Philosophy?).” *Liaodong xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 遼東學院學報(社會科學版) 10 (6): 13–15.
- Jiang, Qing 蔣慶. 2003. *Zhengzhi ruxue—dangdai ruxue de zhuanxiang, tezhi yu fazhan* 政治儒學——當代儒學的轉向、特質與發展 (*Political Confucianism—The Transformation, Characteristics and Evolvement of Contemporary Confucianism*). Beijing: Sanlian shudian.
- Kang, Youwei 康有為. 2007a. *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*). Edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 12 vols. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007b. *Kangzi nei wai pian* 康子內外篇 (*Esoteric and Exoteric Essays of Master Kang*). Vol. 3 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 95–112. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007c. *Changxing xueji* 長興學記 (*A Record for the Studies at Changxing*). Vol. 1 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 339–53. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007d. *Nanghai shicheng ji* 南海師承記 (*The Records Made When I Studied Under my Teacher Nanghai*). Vol. 2 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 209–63. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007e. *Kang Nanghai xiansheng jiangxue ji* 康南海先生講學記 (*The Notes of the Lectures of Mr. Kang Nanghai*). Vol. 2 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 103–24. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.

- . 2007f. *Wanmu Caotang koushuo* 萬木草堂口說 (*The Speeches Recorded in the Myriad Trees Academy*). Vol. 2 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 131–208. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007g. *Wanmucaotang jiangyi* 萬木草堂講義 (*The Lecture Notes at the Myriad Trees Academy*). Vol. 2 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 277–304. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007h. *Kongzi gaizhi kao* 孔子改制考 (*Kongzi as a Reformist*). Vol. 3 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 1–260. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007i. *Mengzi wei* 孟子微 (*The Esoteric Meanings of the Mencius*). Vol. 5 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 409–505. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . 2007j. *Deguo youji* 德國游記 (*Travels in Germany*). Vol. 7 of *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有為全集 (*The Collected Works of Kang Youwei*), edited by Jiang Yihua 姜義華, and Zhang Ronghua 張榮華, 407–60. Beijing: Zhongguo renmindaxue chubanshe.
- . s.d. “Kongzi gaizhi kao 孔子改制考 (Confucius as A Reformer).” *Chinese Text Project*. Accessed November 9, 2021. <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=467809#p126>.
- Lee Ting-mien. 2020. “The Role of Mohism in Kang Youwei’s Arguments for His New-Text Theory of Confucianism.” *Dao* 19: 461–77.
- Li, Yucheng 李玉誠. 2017. “Yang Zhu ‘yiduan’ xingxiang de lishi shengcheng 楊朱‘異端’形象的歷史生成 (The Historical Construction of Yang Zhu as a ‘Heretic’).” *Social Science Forum* 3: 51–61.
- Liang, Qichao 梁啟超. 1999. “Lun Zhongguo xueshu sixiang bianqian zhi dashi 論中國學術思想變遷之大勢 (On Changing Trends in Chinese Scholarship and Thought).” In *Liang Qichao quanji* 梁啟超全集 (*The Collected Works of Liang Qichao*), edited by Zhang Pinxing 張品興. Beijing: Beijing Publishing House.
- Sato, Masayuki. 2022. “The Birth of the Image of the ‘Egoist-Epicurian Philosopher’ Yang Zhu During the Meiji Period.” In *The Many Lives of Yang Zhu: An Historical Overview*, edited by Carine Defoort, and Lee Ting-mien, 227–27. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Shi, Chao 石超. 2015. “Cong ‘zhong sheng’ dao ‘wei wo’—Yang Zhu xueshuo de yihua lichen 從‘重生’到‘為我’——楊朱學說的異化歷程 (From ‘Valuing Life’ to ‘Serving One’s Own Interest’—The Estrangement of Yang Zhu’s Theory).” *Journal of Anhui University (Social Science Edition)* 2: 11–8.

- Wang, Xiaowei 王曉薇. 2022. "Struggling between Tradition and Modernity: Liang Qichao's Portrayal of Yang Zhu in the Early Twentieth Century." In *The Many Lives of Yang Zhu: An Historical Overview*, edited by Carine Defoort, and Ting-mien Lee, 259–87. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Watson, Burton. 2013. *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wei, Yixia 魏義霞. 2014. "Kang Youwei dui Laozi de zongti pingjia he taidu 康有為對老子的總體評價和態度 (Kang Youwei's General Views and Attitude towards Laozi)." *Lilun tansuo* 理論探索 207: 14–17.
- . 2017. "Kang Youwei shijie zhong de Yang Zhu" 康有為視界中的楊朱 (Yang Zhu in the Eyes of Kang Youwei)." *Jianghuai luntan* 江淮論壇 284 (4): 40–45.
- Yang, Bojun 楊伯峻. 1985. *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (*Liezi* with a Collected Annotations). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju.
- Yang, Zhende 楊貞德. 2018. "Buren zhengzhi sanquan—Kang Youwei cong chuantong dao jindai de sisuo 不忍政治三詮——康有為從傳統到近代的思索 (Interpreting the Political Discourse Centered Around "Compassion" Based on Three Works—Kang Youwei's Contemplation on Transforming Tradition to Modernity)." *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu tongxun* 中國文哲研究通訊 28 (1): 153–96.
- Zhang, Zhidong 張之洞. 2019. "Quan xue pian 勸學篇 (On Encouraging Learning)." *Wikisource*. Last modified in 2019. [https://zh.m.wikisource.org/zh/%E5%8B%B8%E5%AD%B8%E7%AF%87_\(%E5%BCE4%B9%8B%E6%B4%9E\)](https://zh.m.wikisource.org/zh/%E5%8B%B8%E5%AD%B8%E7%AF%87_(%E5%BCE4%B9%8B%E6%B4%9E)).
- Zhu, Xi 朱熹. s.d. "Zhuzi yulei 朱子語類 (Thematic Discourses of Master Zhu)." *Chinese Text Project*. Accessed October 30, 2021. <https://ctext.org/text.pl?node=600173&if=en>.