

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

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[More information](#)

Introduction

Modernity, ‘an unfinished project’, as Jürgen Habermas terms it,¹ has been a subject of considerable interest to intellectuals in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) since the late 1980s, with some scholars questioning the postmodernist claim that modernity is dead. In 1997, for example, the intellectual historian Xu Jilin asked rhetorically whether modernity had really come to an end. Certainly not, he said, as far as Chinese modernity is concerned.² More importantly, in the same year, a lively debate took place between the liberals (or neoliberals) and the so-called New Left following the publication of the literary scholar and intellectual historian Wang Hui’s provocative article ‘Contemporary Chinese thought and the question of modernity’. The article has since attracted a great deal of scholarly attention at home and abroad and has been translated into Korean, Japanese and English.³ In many respects, the debate was between liberal thought, especially classical liberalism, and socialist thought in the contexts of China’s transition to a global market economy and of the social and economic inequalities spawned by the economic reforms.⁴ The debate is ongoing, which reminds us of the cultural

¹ Maurizio Passerin D’Entrèves and Seyla Benhabib (eds.), *Habermas and the Unfinished Project of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996).

² Xu Jilin 许纪霖, *Xunqiu yiyi: xiandaihua bianqian yu wenhua pipan* 寻求意义: 现代化变迁与文化批判 (Shanghai: Shanghai sanlian shudian, 1997), 258–64.

³ Wang Hui, ‘Contemporary Chinese thought and the question of modernity’. This article, known in Chinese as ‘Dangdai Zhongguo de sixiang zhuangkuang yu xiandaixing wenti’ 当代中国的思想状况与现代性问题, was originally published in the journal *Tianya* 天涯 (Frontiers) and has been reprinted in *Zhishi fenzi lichang: ziyou zhuyi zhi zheng yu Zhongguo sixiangjie de fenhua* 知识分子立场: 自由主义之争与中国思想界的分化, ed. Li Shitao 李世涛 (Changchun: Shidai wenyi chubanshe, 2002), 83–123.

⁴ See Li Shitao (ed.), *Zhishi fenzi lichang: ziyou zhuyi*; Gao Like 高力克, ‘Zhuaxingzhong de xiandaixing zhi zheng’ 转型中的现代性之争, in *Qiusuo xiandaixing* 寻求现代性 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 1999), 26–32; and more recently, various chapters in

Cambridge University Press

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Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

and intellectual controversies of the precommunist period. There are similarities. Intellectuals of the Republican era wrestled with questions of modernization, wealth and power, liberty, democracy, equality and social justice and contemplated China's place in the world. Contemporary intellectuals, finding themselves in an era of reform and globalization, continue the search for Chinese modernity that had begun three quarters of a century earlier. They, too, grapple with the question of 'whither China', using a similar language of critical inquiry to explore issues some of which stretch back many decades. The similarities are instructive – the intellectual foundations of Chinese modernity date back to the Republican era.

This historical study is concerned with the cultural and political dimensions of Chinese modernity that are underpinned by a triad of liberal, conservative and socialist thought during the period under review. Previous scholarship has tended to treat each component of this triad in isolation, as though the three are separate, distinct and mutually opposed. Consequently, it has overlooked their interrelatedness and interactions, leaving many assumptions, some old and some more recent, about modern Chinese thought open to challenge. Chinese conservatism is often seen as essentially a cultural conservatism and not a political one⁵ or as part of a post-World War I antimodernization phenomenon in the non-West.⁶ Liberalism, imported into China first through Japan and then directly from the West, often is said to have been misunderstood, and even distorted, by Chinese intellectuals, who are blamed for the damage done to the liberal cause in the Republican era.⁷ And socialism is all too often studied in the context of the communist movement as revolutionary socialism. PRC scholars have long maintained that liberalism (which subsumes cultural radicalism), cultural conservatism and Marxism were the three competing currents of thought during the Republican period.

Qimeng de ziwo wanjie: 1990 niandai yilai Zhongguo sixiang wenhua jie zhongda lunzheng yanjiu 启蒙的自我瓦解：1990 年以来中国思想文化界重大论争研究, eds. Xu Jilin 许纪霖 and Luo Gang 罗岗 et al. (Changchun: Jilin chubanshijuan, 2007).

⁵ Benjamin I. Schwartz, 'Notes on conservatism in general and in China in particular', in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, ed. Charlotte Furth (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3–14.

⁶ Ai Kai 艾恺 [Guy S. Alitto], *Wenhua shoucheng zhuyi lun: fanxiandaihua sichao de pouxu* 文化守成主义论：反现代化思潮的剖析 (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1986); republished unchanged in a PRC edition under a new title, *Shijie fanweinei de fanxiandaihua sichao: lun wenhua shoucheng zhuyi* 世界范围内的反现代化思潮：论文化守成主义 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1991).

⁷ See, for example, Liu Junning 刘军宁, *Gonghe, minzhu, xianzheng: ziyou zhuyi sixiang yanjiu* 共和、民主、宪政：自由主义思想研究 (Shanghai: Sanlian shudian, 1998), 292–301, 340–1.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

3

In their scholarship, socialism since 1921 is equated with Marxism along with the thought of Mao Zedong, producing a communist-dominated historiography that obscures the reformist alternative put forward by non-Marxist, noncommunist intellectuals who had a socialistic impulse.⁸ This disregards the fact that socialist thought of a reformist kind was an important feature of modern Chinese political thought.

This study seeks to offer a new frame of reference for thinking about this triad. It takes a fresh, integrated approach, treating the three entities simultaneously in an intricate relationship. Little, however, will be written about democratic thought, which I have treated elsewhere.⁹ It should also be stated at the outset that socialist thought here refers not to Marxism, even though Marxism was itself an ideology of modernization, but to reformist socialism of a kind akin to the revisionist socialism of Western Europe. Marxism is left out not only because it is well covered elsewhere,¹⁰ but also because the key figures studied here were not Marxists. It was not that Marxist thought was marginalized; in fact, there was great interest in it (or in dialectical materialism) between 1928 and 1935 as ‘the defining feature of Chinese thought’,¹¹ not to say by the 1940s. But the intellectuals in this study were not that leftist; although they accepted Marxism’s critique of capitalism, they repudiated the notion of class struggle and social revolution.

This book proceeds from the premise that liberal, conservative and socialist thought was all a response to the ‘crisis of modernization’ and that modern Chinese thought is marked by a plurality of competing ideas. Unravelling their complexity, interrelatedness, interactions and dialectical relationship is the key to understanding Chinese modernity in its intellectual, cultural and political configurations. This book seeks to illuminate the processes and pathos of Chinese intellectual history in the interweaving of a variety of ideas – Chinese and Western, old and new, modern and traditional, liberal and conservative, radical and

⁸ See, for example, the review article by Fu Qingmin 付庆敏 and Yu Zuohua 于作敏, ‘Shehui zhuyi sichao ji Makesi zhuyi Zhongguohua’ 社会主义思潮及马克思主义中国化, in *Zhongguo jindai shehui wenhua sichao yanjiu tonglan* 中国近代社会文化思想研究通览, eds. Yu Zuhua 俞祖华 and Zhao Huifeng 赵慧峰 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 2005), 302–419.

⁹ Edmund S. K. Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China, 1929–1949* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ See, for example, Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and History: The Origins of Marxist Historiography in China, 1919–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); also Dirlik, *Marxism in the Chinese Revolution* (Lanham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005); Nick Knight, *Marxist Philosophy in China: From Qu Qiubai to Mao Zedong, 1923–1945* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005).

¹¹ Dirlik, *Revolution and History*, 43.

Cambridge University Press

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Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

reformist – addressing broader questions and the underlying issues that cannot be analysed by using binary explanatory categories.

China has a long history of responding to the Western intrusion dating back to the latter half of the nineteenth century, following the Opium War and other armed conflicts with foreign powers. Underscoring the response was reformist thought that evolved through several phases. The first phase was the Self-Strengthening Movement (dating approximately from 1860 to 1894), which was characterized by a strategy and a mind-set of ‘learning from the barbarians to deal with the barbarians’ (*yiyi zhiyi*), with its focus on the acquisition of Western arms and technologies. The second phase, from the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) through the ‘New Administration’ of the post-Boxer decade to the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), was marked by a new emphasis on institutional change. The third phase, from the founding of the Republic to the New Culture Movement (1915–21), saw a shift in intellectual thinking to the role of culture in China’s modern transformation.¹² Other phases that followed featured culture, politics and economics as intimately intertwined in the quest for modernity.

Driven by the need to survive as a nation, China’s new intellectuals sought a new level of integration into the modern world. They attempted to achieve this in three sometimes overlapping modes. The first mode was represented by cultural radicalism, which found expression in the thought of the Westernizers who took an iconoclastic attitude towards the Chinese heritage. This radical antitraditionalism, asserts Lin Yü-sheng, began in the May Fourth period,¹³ although the birth of modern Chinese radicalism really started in the late Qing. It culminated in the 1930s in the call by the political scientist and sociologist Chen Xujing (1903–67) for ‘total Westernization’. The most extreme statement of this position was made by those who idealized Western culture, society and institutions. This first mode represents a strand of liberal thought that I call ‘Westernized radicalism’ in Chapter 1. The second mode, represented by cultural conservatism and linked to modern conservative thought, defended the national heritage while emphasizing cultural synthesis through a confluence of Chinese and Western ideas. The third mode, represented by the New Confucians, was a variant of the second mode, emphasizing either

¹² Yü Ying-shi 余英时, ‘Zhongguo wenhua weiji ji qi sixiangshi de beijing’ 中国文化危机及其思想史的背景, in Yü Ying-shi, *Lishi renwu yu wenhua weiji* 历史人物与文化危机 (Taipei: Dongda tushu, 1995), 187–8.

¹³ Lin Yü-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness: Radical Antitraditionalism in the May Fourth Era* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

5

‘returning to the roots in order to be creative and new’ (*fanben kaixin*) or ‘creating something new in order to strengthen the core’ (*chuangxin guben*). There was a fourth mode, represented by radical Marxism, which is outside the scope of this study.

The non-Marxist, noncommunist elite studied here constituted a group of mainstream intellectuals who were basically social and political reformers, even though some were cultural radicals. They appropriated Western ideas, adapted them to local conditions and used them to rethink, reevaluate and reformulate the Chinese past and articulate visions of Chinese modernity. They lived in an age when traditional authority had been eroded, first, by the abolition of the civil service examinations in 1905, and then by the demise of the monarchical system. The literati of yesteryear were reeducating themselves in order to seek a leadership role in the post-imperial order. Those of a younger generation, the new intellectuals, were exposed to a range of ideologies, from liberalism to democracy to capitalism to socialism to anarchism to Marxism, about which they were keen to learn within so short a time – what Brantly Womack has called ‘compressed intellectual modernization’.¹⁴ Politically, they favoured a strong state marked by national cohesion, constitutionalism, powerful government, administrative efficiency and the rule of law. They, too, had a socialistic impulse.

How different schools of thought contended, interacted and influenced one another as they developed is the main concern of this study. A number of themes will be developed, namely, cultural radicalism, cultural conservatism, reformism, nationalism, statism, state building, capitalist development, social justice, liberty and equality. These themes are linked to the three currents of thought and to the three modes of integrating China into the modern world. In this way, this book seeks to promote a better understanding of the intellectual foundations of Chinese modernity from the perspective of non-Marxist intellectuals.

Towards an Understanding of Chinese Modernity

Anyone who writes about Chinese modernity confronts an interpretive problem at the outset: What does the term mean? It has been defined in a variety of ways, even by the same writer at different times. For example, in 1990, the literary scholar Leo Ou-fan Lee wrote that, since the turn of

¹⁴ Brantly Womack, ‘The phases of Chinese modernization’, in *Modernization in China*, ed. Steve S. K. Chin (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong Centre of Asian Studies, 1979), 1–16.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

the twentieth century, Chinese modernity was ‘a mode of consciousness of time and history as unilinear [sic] progress, moving in a continuous “stream” or “tide” from the past to the present... [leading] prophetically to a purposeful future’.¹⁵ To be modern was to be new as in ‘new thought’, ‘New Literature’, in the journals *New Youth* and *New Tide* and so forth. The emphasis on newness was intended to contrast the old with the new and the past with the present, suggesting either a succession of time or a break with the past. Before the decade was over, however, Lee took a new, postmodernist approach to studying modern Shanghai during the 1930s and 1940s. Interested in a new urban consumerism and in a new genealogy of knowledge and focusing on styles and images rather than on ideas and ideologies, Lee views Shanghai as ‘the very embodiment of modernity’, with its material culture, cinemas, bookshops, advertising, popular entertainments and commercialization. He links the elitist project of enlightenment with a populist commodity culture and images of a Western-style urban life.¹⁶ In the changing urban culture, music and films reflected many of the new ideas of the age.¹⁷ Remaking the Chinese city is hailed as a means of passage to modernity and beyond.¹⁸ There also has been much scholarly interest in urban ideas.¹⁹

Clearly, there has been a shift of interest from new thought to something more concrete and material. More recently, Peter Zarrow and colleagues speak of ‘creating Chinese modernity’ in terms of knowledge and everyday life in the first four decades of the twentieth century.²⁰ In a similar vein, Madeleine Yue Dong and associates deploy the notion of ‘everydayness’, the idea that many of the most mundane everyday life experiences, such as people’s search for food, water and lighting and their contradictory attitudes towards women, provide excellent material from which to investigate the processes of modernity in twentieth-century

¹⁵ Leo Ou-fan Lee, ‘In search of modernity: some reflections on a new mode of consciousness in twentieth-century Chinese history and literature’, in *Ideas Across Cultures: Essays on Chinese Thought in Honor of Benjamin I. Schwartz*, ed. Paul A. Cohen and Merle Goldman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), 122.

¹⁶ Leo Ou-fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China 1930–1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ Yingjin Zhang (ed.), *Cinema and Urban Culture in Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Joseph W. Esherick (ed.), *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity & National Identity, 1900–1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002).

¹⁹ See, for example, Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution: China’s Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁰ Peter Zarrow (ed.), *Creating Chinese Modernity: Knowledge and Everyday Life, 1900–1940* (New York: Peter Lang, 2006).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

7

China.²¹ Frank Dikötter looks at the culture of material objects in late imperial and early modern China, ranging widely from transport to modern urban architecture to modern utilities to private houses to clothing to food to sights and sounds.²² Also, Ruth Rogaski, focusing on the treaty-port city of Tianjin, speaks of ‘hygienic modernity’ (*weisheng*), which not only concerned the cleanliness of bodies and a variety of regimens of diet, meditation and self-medication intended for internal vitalities, but also served as a vehicle through which the treaty-port elite sought to transform the state, society and individual.²³

These are important works. However, it is premature to write off the nation as a site from which to study Chinese modernity. The historian Margherita Zanasi draws attention back to the nation by exploring economic modernity in the Nanjing Decade (1928–37) as a way of saving the nation,²⁴ supplementing William Kirby’s work on industrial modernity at the birth of the Nationalist developmental state.²⁵ Ideas are central to the discourse of modernity. Most recently, Weipin Tsai illuminates three dimensions of Chinese modernity as reflected through the images of Shanghai urbanites in the readership of *Shenbao* (*Eastern Times*). One of these is a new concept of citizenship in which the individual is treated as the basic unit composing the nation.²⁶ In some ways, the equation of cultural and national identity with modernity remains an important framework for studies of modernity in the Republican era.²⁷

Philosophically, modernity is not so much a concept as ‘a conceptual cluster of overlapping and sometimes contradictory elements’, write David Hall and Roger Ames. As a state or condition, modernity is ‘a multivalent and richly vague complex that cannot be too sharply defined’ or understood in a coherent manner. Yet philosophical interpretations of modernity are grounded in conceptions of self and society. According to

²¹ Madeleine Yue Dong and Joshua Goldstein (eds.), *Everyday Modernity in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

²² Frank Dikötter, *Things Modern: Material Culture and Everyday Life in China* (London: Hurst & Co., 2007).

²³ Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meaning of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

²⁴ Margherita Zanasi, *Saving the Nation: Economic Modernity in Republican China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

²⁵ William C. Kirby, ‘Engineering China: birth of the developmental state, 1928–1937’, in *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond*, ed. Wen-hsin Yeh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 137–60.

²⁶ Weipin Tsai, *Reading Shenbao: Nationalism, Consumerism and Individuality in China 1919–37* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²⁷ See, for example, Yeh (ed.), *Becoming Chinese*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Hall and Ames, four principal strands are associated with these interpretations: self-consciousness, self-assertion, self-gratification and aesthetic self-expression, which run afoul of China's communitarian traditions. The challenge for twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals was to accommodate liberalism (or rights-based democracy), free enterprise capitalism and rational technologies.²⁸

Historically, modernity meant, first, a society that was industrialized, capitalistic in its mode of production and driven by a constantly growing economy; and second, the formation of the nation-state, which offered its members a cultural and political identity, a single economic unit (the national market) and political sovereignty exercised by the state. Further, modernity involved increasingly well-organized social classes that engaged each other, sometimes in violent conflict.²⁹ To all of this must be added secularization, functional differentiation, increasing levels of popular participation in politics and a valorization of the state as an appropriate agency for achieving desirable political, economic and social change.³⁰

As a broad philosophy, modernity has been identified with the Enlightenment, with its faith in reason, in progress and in unbounded human capacity for pursuing happiness in this world rather than in the afterlife. Core beliefs of the Enlightenment include perfectibility; the application of science and technology to solve the problems not only of the natural world but also of humanity; principles governing nature, people and society; and secularism. And it spoke of 'the good life', promising a bright future for all humanity. These characteristics of modernity are Eurocentric. It is precisely for this reason that they often appear to be arbitrary, especially in terms of the often rigid distinction drawn between East and West, tradition and modernity. The non-West had a late start in modernization, which raises the question: Did the non-Western historical experience define modernity as well? S. N. Eisenstadt thinks so, for he has long spoken of each non-Western society that engaged in modernization having its own internal dynamics. What struck him was modernity as 'a new civilization and the differential patterns of its expansion'.³¹

²⁸ David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *The Democracy of the Dead: Dewey, Confucius, and the Hope for Democracy in China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 66.

²⁹ John Schwarzmantel, *The Age of Ideology: Political Ideologies from the American Revolution to Postmodern Times* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 4–6.

³⁰ David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

³¹ S. N. Eisenstadt, 'Introduction', in *Patterns of Modernity, Vol. II: Beyond the West*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt (London: Frances Pinter, 1987), 5–9.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)*Introduction*

9

Some scholars maintain that modernity has a dual character: cultural and societal. The term ‘cultural modernity’ is often used to emphasize what the nineteenth-century French poet and artist Charles-Pierre Baudelaire called ‘aesthetics of the self’. Central to the concept of cultural modernity are such issues as mass media and mass culture, entertainment, commercial arts and advertising, rapid social change, utopian or dystopian visions, cultural clashes and encounters with the alien ‘Other’. On the other hand, ‘societal modernity’ involves a set of cognitive and social transformations and often refers to the process of change that stresses the overall rationalization of social life that has led to what Max Weber called the ‘iron cage’ of economic compulsion and bureaucratic domination.³² For the contemporary social thinker Anthony Giddens, modernity refers to ‘modes of social life or organization which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence’.³³ Modernity, Giddens adds, is ‘multidimensional on the level of institutions’.³⁴

This dualism has evoked different responses from contemporary social thinkers. The postmodernist Jean-François Lyotard has challenged the underlying legitimization of the ‘grand narratives’ of modernity and has pronounced modernity’s end in a narrow and special sense.³⁵ Jürgen Habermas, however, comes to its defence as an ‘unfinished’, redeemable project. And Giddens has argued that rather than entering a period of postmodernity, contemporary societies ‘are moving into one in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalised and universalised than before’.³⁶

Modernity, then, is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is both an epochal concept, the ‘new age’, as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel conceptualized,³⁷ and an attitude, as Michel Foucault maintains. By

³² Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, ‘On alternative modernities’, in *Alternative Modernities*, ed. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 1–5. See also Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 3rd edn., trans. Stephen Kalberg (Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing, 2002).

³³ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984).

³⁶ Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 3.

³⁷ For Hegel, modernity is not simply the present, but a unique period in history, distinct in its nature and orientation from antiquity and the Middle Ages. See Jürgen Habermas’s critique of Hegel in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell, 1987), 51–69.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-19511-9 - The Intellectual Foundations of Chinese Modernity: Cultural and Political Thought in the Republican Era

Edmund S. K. Fung

Excerpt

[More information](#)

‘attitude’, Foucault, echoing Immanuel Kant, means ‘a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task’.³⁸ What is important to Foucault is ‘a type of philosophical interrogation’, one that ‘simultaneously problematizes man’s relation to the present, man’s historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject’, coupled with ‘a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era’.³⁹ In other words, modernity, intellectually, is an attitude of questioning the past and the present and linking them with the future. It questions everything and, Weber would say, measures everything against a unitary principle of rationality. (Weber, however, recognized that this questioning of reality by reason was ultimately self-defeating and self-destructive.) It is this spirit of critique that is the most valued legacy of the Enlightenment, even though today, the Enlightenment is viewed by postmodernist, postcolonial and poststructural theorists as an historical anomaly.

As an attitude of questioning the past and the present, modernity entails a criticism of modernity itself. Habermas has contended that the assumptions of progress and of the superiority of the ‘new age’ to the past need to be justified and that self-reflection is inherent to the very nature of modernist culture.⁴⁰ What Habermas tells us is that modernity is internally complex and contains many paradoxes, tensions and contradictions – the ‘pathologies of modernity’.

Understanding modernity as both an epoch and an attitude of questioning the past and the present is important to this study. The concept of the age underscores the relationships among Chinese liberal, conservative and socialist thought. It relates to the responses to the ‘crisis of modernization’ and is linked to the different modes of integrating China into the modern world. In terms of attitude, a spirit of *fansi* (reflection), *pipan* (critique) and (*zijue*) self-consciousness pervaded the intellectual discourse of the Republican era. Wang Hui puts it in an historical perspective: ‘[T]he basic characteristics of Chinese thought on modernity are doubt and critique. As a result, at the heart of the search for Chinese modernity in Chinese thinking and in some of China’s most important

³⁸ Michel Foucault, ‘What is Enlightenment?’, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (London: Penguin Books, 1991), 39.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴⁰ Andrew Edgar, *The Philosophy of Habermas* (Chesham: Acumen Publishing, 2005), 191–2.