Confucius and the Modern World is a valuable resource for anyone interested in Confucian thought and the revival of Confucianism in modern times. This wide-ranging volume consists of a collection of essays previously published in Chinese between 1994 and 2010 by Chen Lai, a leading scholar of Confucian thought and the history of Chinese philosophy. In this book, Chen introduces the challenges and opportunities facing Confucianism, bringing Confucian thought into conversation with global ethics, human rights, political philosophy, education, and other related topics that demonstrate the complexity of the future possibilities of Confucianism.

A common thread that runs through all the essays is whether and how Confucian thought can continue to be relevant in the modern world. In the opening chapter, the author introduces three interpretative frames that have been applied to this issue: Joseph R. Levenson's "museum" metaphor, Li Zehou's "structure of culture mentality" (a mistranslation of Li Zehou's *wenhua xinli jiegou*, cultural-psychological formation), and Benjamin Schwartz's "library" metaphor. Chen Lai endorses Schwartz's metaphor and also Leo Strauss' view that "[Confucian] thinking on morals, politics and human nature still plays a role and has its significance in modern thinking" (5). Chen himself maintains that "various thoughts concerning modern culture have stimulated and challenged Confucian philosophy, ideology and culture," prompting Confucianism to "respond to and reflect on these challenges" (187) in an era that highlights "cultural self-consciousness" (1).

One of Chen's main theses is that Confucian values and priorities differ from Western ones in many ways, and that the former can be a supplement to the limitations and inadequacies of the latter. For example, Chen claims that although there is no concept of human rights in Confucian culture, similar concerns have been expressed—with the emphasis on responsibility rather than rights—making it possible to "guide and enrich the Western concept of human rights with ancient Confucianism" (18). Chen even suggests that Confucian rites can become "a constraint condition for and an active supplement to democratic society" (64) and that the importance of "political moral conduct to political process" in ancient Confucianism is still of "great significance" (155-156).

Of particular philosophical interest are Chen Lai's reflections on ontology in Confucian philosophy in chapter 7, despite the misleading title "The Confucian views on the dialogue between Confucius and Jesus—noumenon and origin." (In fact, there is no discussion about Jesus and Christianity at all). By ontology, Chen Lai here means the study dealing with the ultimate entity (unseparated from phenomena) and the origin of the universe. According to Chen, Confucian thought about ontology has evolved in the course of the development of Confucianism. Chen ranges with ease through a wide array of ancient Confucian texts relevant to this subject, arguing that in neo-Confucian Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) writings the concept of *li* (typically translated as "principle" or "pattern," but which in this chapter is translated idiosyncratically as "reason") came to assume "the greatest significance and meaning as the ultimate source in Confucian philosophy" (80). Chen's emphasis on Confucian ontology is part

of his broader agenda to have Chinese philosophy placed on a par with western philosophy so as to promote "cross-cultural philosophical dialogues" (179). It should be noted that Chen's views in this chapter were further developed in his book *Humaneness-based Ontology* (2014), in which he argues that Confucian ontology is humaneness-based, rather than reason-based.

Perhaps Chen's most intriguing conceptual creation in this volume is the idea of "multiple universality" that he proposes in the last chapter. This idea, according to Chen, is inspired by American sociologist Roland Robertson's work, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. Chen refers to Robertson's statement about "global localization" and "local globalization" as a stepping-stone and, in shades of first generation "new Confucian" Liang Shuming (1893-1988), further argues that both Eastern and Western civilizations have their own universality and universalism, the only difference is a matter of time and degree of realization – the West realized it earlier whereas the East is "still at the initial stage of having its locality [*sic*] realized as universality" (182). This constitutes what Chen Lai means by "multiple universality" (although his descriptions suggest "universalities" rather than a monolithic universalism).

As such, he argues, Western values such as justice and freedom are universal values, but so are Confucian notions of benevolence/humaneness, equality, and responsibility (183). Chen harnesses the idea of "multiple universality," to argue the case that different civilizations and cultures should have equal status: "Today, only by establishing the concept of multi-element universality in globalization can all cultural types of the world be relativized and equalized" (183). Chen Lai's concern has lost none of its urgency as it becomes increasing important to balance relations between different cultures and civilizations in a rapidly globalizing world. Whether Chen's particular prescription is viable is another matter.

This is the first book in the Routledge Studies in Contemporary Chinese Philosophy. As the series editors state in the blurb at the front of the book, the series "seeks to fill the large gap that currently exists in the study of Chinese philosophy by providing high-quality translations to English-language scholars." This is a laudable goal. The book, however, is not without some translation problems. For example, the concept *li* is inconsistently translated as "principle" and "reason" throughout the book. (And, as noted above, there seems to be no good reason to translate Zhu Xi's concept of *li* as "reason." The mistranslation of Li Zehou's key concept of *wenhua xinli jiegou* has also been noted.) Also, the key concept *duoyuan pubianxing* is variously translated either as "multi-element universalism" (172), "multiple universality" (180), or "multi-universality" (183). Despite these minor issues, *Confucius and the Modern World* provides important insights into how a leading voice in the contemporary Confucian revival movement views the current status and future prospects of Confucianism and reflects, I believe, the attitudes of Chinese mainstream academia on the future of Confucianism.