Article

Reinterpreting and Remapping Philosophy, Evolutionism and Religion in Late Qing Missionary’s Translation of The Making of a Man

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Abstract: Between the Boxer Movement and the 1911 Revolution, missionaries in China confronted distinct social challenges compared to their counterparts in home countries. In response, American missionary Young John Allen and his Chinese assistant, Van Yi, co-translated James Wideman Lee’s The Making of a Man into Chinese as Ren Xue. This translation aimed to counter Spencer’s social evolutionism, introduced by native intellectuals like Yan Fu, offering a reinterpretation of the relationships among individuals, nations, and God. Additionally, it sought to remap philosophy, evolutionism, ethics, and religion tailored for late Qing China. In contrast to clergymen in America and China, Chinese native intellectuals developed their unique reinterpretations and reshaping of philosophy, science, evolutionism, ethics, and religion for China. Through a cross-comparison of works by Yan Fu, Huxley, Spencer, Lee and Allen, this study explored the diverse responses to Spencer’s evolutionary theory and related issues among the advocates of evolutionism, Chinese intellectuals, and clergies in America and China.

Keywords: social evolutionism; Christianity; The Making of a Man; Ren Xue; late Qing Missionary; Young John Allen

1. Introduction

1.1. Literature Review


Previous studies on Allen’s translation can be categorized into research on his translation activities as a whole and research on specific translation works. Liang (1978) conducted a case study on Allen in Young J. Allen in China: His Careers and the Wan-kuo Kung-pao, exploring his multifaceted roles as a missionary, educator, and journalist. Zha (1977) gave a description of Allen’s life and activities in China. L. Wang (1997) regarded Allen as a representative of American missionaries, exploring his newspaper ventures in various chapters of American Missionaries and Modernization of China in the Late Qing Dynasty. Xiong (1994), in The Dissemination of Western Learning and the Late Qing Society, dedicated a separate chapter that delved into Allen’s contributions towards enlightening people through his writings and ideas.

Studies on Allen, from the translation perspective, primarily focused on the motives, strategies, and impacts of his translation activities, on the relations between the original
and the translated versions, as well as on his efforts to disseminate western knowledge. Lu’s (2010) work, Translation and Difference: Young J. Allen: His Translation and the Spread of Western Learning, analyzed Allen’s translated works and contributions to the spread of western learning by combining historical and translational methods. Gao’s (2006) American Missionaries and Translations of the Late Qing Dynasty discussed the interaction between missionary translation activities and the late Qing’s socio-cultural context.

However, except for The Church News and The Review of the Times, in-depth investigations into Allen’s specific works, such as Record of Sino-Japanese War, On the Relations between China and the West, Women of All Lands, Education in Japan, and a translation of The Statesman’s Yearbook (Allen and Zheng 1875), were published predominantly in the form of articles, book chapters, or master’s theses. Comprehensive and systematic monographs or doctoral dissertations on these works remained scarce.

1.2. Introduction to the Translation of The Making of a Man

The Making of a Man was written to “pass from the mechanical world into the organic” and “enter the intellectual world which corresponds to the world which the saints in all ages have grasped by faith.” Its seven chapters elaborated on provision for the physical, social, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, spiritual nature of man and the permanence of the completed life of man (Lee 1899, pp. viii, ix, xvii). Its title was first referenced in the book as “Human relations create language, values, art, morality, and religion, that they may be used to advance and perfect the main work they were ordained to perform, ‘the making of a man’” (Lee 1899, p. 62). James Wideman Lee published The Making of a Man in New York and London in 1892, which was translated into Japanese in 1893 and into Korean in 1908. After its publication, the book soon gained popularity in Europe and America. Before it was first translated into Chinese, it already had scores of English editions and seven Japanese translations.

In 1903–1904, Young John Allen and Van Yi completed the translator’s preface and translated the introduction and the first three chapters, which were published in issues 178-186 of The Review of the Times. To promote the book, Young John Allen and Van Yi’s preface was included in New Book Recommendation of The Review of the Times’ issue 186 (Allen and Van 1904a, p. 15). Young John Allen and James Weideman Lee were contemporaries; both were from Georgia, and both were important clergymen in the Methodist Episcopal Church, which explains Allen’s reference to Lee as “my old friend” and “I fetched one book from him to translate”.

Young John Allen’s translated works Record of Sino-Japanese War, Education in Japan and Women of All Lands as well as his newspapers The Church News and The Review of the Times, have been extensively studied (Bennett 1983; Barnett and Fairbank 1985). However, his translation of The Making of a Man, Ren Xue has not been noted and explored yet. The reasons are twofold: first, the original and the translation were scattered and lost, and it is difficult to gather both; second, the source and target texts have strong religious connotation, indicating obvious evangelistic intention.

Nevertheless, The Making of a Man and Ren Xue deserve further study for the following reasons: first, they involve debates and critiques against Spencer’s social evolutionism, which represent western and eastern clerical responses and challenges to evolutionism and other religions and ideologies. Second, as Lee mentions in the revised preface, The Making of a Man addressed the shift of western philosophy from mechanism to organism, and by comparative study of the original and the translated versions, one can further examine the different attitudes and responses of clergies to the philosophies of mechanism and organism in Chinese and western contexts. Third, although national salvation was not the concern of the author, Allen’s translation was influenced by the self-strengthening request and anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiments prevalent among the Chinese between the Boxer Movement and the Revolution of 1911 (Forsythe 1971). Thus, the translation was not only reoriented toward the national salvation appeal, the translation strategies and methods were also oriented toward it. Fourth, in the specific social and historical context of late
Qing, the translation of *The Making of a Man* involved shaping national character, reconstructing ethics and morals, designing social and political systems, remapping philosophy, science, evolutionism and religion, and reevaluating the relations among individuals, nations and God. The original and the translated works represent the responses of Christian clergies to their respective societal issues in both America and China.

1.3. Influence of Ren Xue

As far as is known, no first-hand historical literature is available regarding the direct impact of *Ren Xue* on Chinese society and its native intellectuals at the time. This lack of evidence may be attributed to the strong religious connotations of the source and target texts, coupled with the prevailing anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiments that persisted in China between the Boxer Movement and the 1911 Revolution. Consequently, the translated work, *Ren Xue*, did not gain widespread popularity among Chinese intellectuals. There is no record of commentary or feedback on *Ren Xue* in contemporary newspapers and books, leaving us with no direct link to the New Culture Movement.

However, indirect evidence of its influence can be found in the serial publication and advertisements in various newspapers over a ten-year span. The first three chapters of *Ren Xue* were serially published between 1903 and 1904 in *The Review of the Times*. Notably, this periodical, established by foreign missionaries, boasted extensive readership, even reaching villagers in remote areas. In its issue 192 in 1905, an advertisement for *Ren Xue* stated, "*Ren Xue*, translated by our publishing house, elaborates on the relations between the making of a man and human nature, supported by philosophical reasoning. Its value and merits surpass those of Spencer and Darwin. Well-written and fluently translated. Available for purchase at Guang Xue Hui".

A year later, another advertisement in issue 214 of *The Review of the Times* titled "*Ren Xue*, The Latest Philosophy" occupied a full page with bold, large characters. As with the previous advertisement, *Ren Xue* was recommended in comparison with Darwin’s and Spencer’s works, emphasizing its superiority: “Recently, people, whenever discussing philosophy, favor books by Darwin and Spencer. However, *The Making of a Man*, written by American scholar James Wideman Lee, surpasses both in its findings. Its language is expressive, superior to Japanese translations. Price: Three Jiao per volume". These recommendations indicated that *Ren Xue*, in the eyes of Allen and other journalists at the Publishing House, was translated to challenge or replace the popular works of Darwin and Spencer, aiming to compete with their evolutionary ideas. Thus, in addition to *Ren Xue*’s textual content, the extra-textual recommendation in the advertisement revealed its aim to challenge the works of Darwin and Spencer.

Between 1911 and 1912, *Zuo Hai Gong Dao Bao*, by the North Fuhkien Religious Tract Society, serially published the introduction and the first two chapters of *Ren Xue*. This demonstrated that nearly ten years after its serial publication in *The Review of the Times*, another newspaper reserialized it to advocate its ideas. This suggested that its influence persisted from 1903 to 1912. *Zuo Hai Gong Dao Bao* began publication in 1911, the same year as the 1911 Revolution, which became its primary concern and reporting focus. The newspaper sought to elevate the moral, intellectual, and living standards of ordinary people, covering topics such as education, economy, religion, and society, making it a valuable resource for the research of society at the time of the 1911 Revolution.

One year after the serial publication of *Ren Xue* in *The Review of the Times*, *Wu Jun Bai Hua Bao*, starting with its first issue in 1904, published an article entitled "*Ren Xue*" in its academic column. This version of "*Ren Xue*", bearing the same title, was not a translation of *The Making of a Man* but an essay in vernacular Chinese written and signed by Bo Chou. By comparing its content with that of the translated *Ren Xue*, it can be inferred that its author Bo Chou must have read Allen’s *Ren Xue*, as he had borrowed and repeated some of Allen’s ideas. Though Bo Chou, as a Chinese intellectual, argued from a Chinese perspective and focused on China’s impoverished and colonized state, he aimed to inspire people to take action. He initially argued that what distinguishes humans from other living be-
ings is the spirit within human brains. *Wu Jun Bai Hua Bao* was founded by the Chinese intellectuals Wang Weibo, Bao Tianxiao, and others. The newspaper aimed to analyze current affairs and disseminate truth in vernacular Chinese, thus aligning itself with the New Culture Movement. In this way, “Ren Xue” in this newspaper also connected itself with the New Culture Movement.

1.4. Research Significance

This research has collected first-hand source materials, including *The Making of a Man* and its Chinese translation *Ren Xue*.

Previous research overlooked the attitudes and responses of western missionaries to Spencer’s social evolutionism, especially to the sensational *Tian Yan Lun* translated by Yan Fu. *The Making of a Man* and *Ren Xue*, written and translated by western missionaries, either in or outside of China, were a reflection of such responses. Through them, we can observe western missionaries’ criticism of social evolutionism in China and the West, and their different views on related issues: mechanic philosophy vs. organic philosophy, science, and the reconstruction of ethics and religion.

This research made comparative studies of works by Yan Fu, Huxley, Spencer, Lee and Allen, and revealed different reinterpretations, remappings, and responses among evolutionism initiators, Chinese intellectuals and clergies in America and in China. The cross-comparison of the original works of Huxley and Lee, and the translations of Yan Fu and Allen, provides nuanced insights into the reception and adaptation of Spencer’s evolutionary theory in late Qing China. Through a cross-comparison of the five works and five figures, the article manifests the cross-reinterpretations and reshapings of philosophy, science, evolutionism, ethics and religion; and reveals the relations of individuals, nations and religions from the five perspectives.

These works underscore the complexities and diverse responses that emerged within the Chinese context. The western missionaries’ responses to Spencer’s theory and their translations reflected their philosophical critique, cultural engagement, and missionary efforts to harmonize the theory with their religious beliefs. These translations and responses are indicative of the dynamic interplay between western and Chinese thoughts, religious convictions, and cultural contexts in this transformative period of Chinese history.

2. Reinterpreting Philosophy and Religion

Both the author and the translator emphasized the philosophical focus of the book, downplaying or denying its religious purposes. However, as clergymen, theological viewpoints were naturally or indirectly revealed.

Lee expressed his purpose in writing as not to preach, but rather to “tackle ‘humanity’ as philosophers”. However, Christian content increased from Chapter three to the end of the book, with the conclusion stressing that only Christianity can fulfill the making of man. Lee resorted to organic philosophy to challenge mechanic philosophy, addressing “spiritual existence” within a theological framework. That he asks readers to approach the book with a religious mindset is ample proof. Although the book claims to be based on philosophy, it actually criticizes any philosophy sharing its origins or thoughts with Spencer’s theory and affirms Christianity as the only right one. For example, the last section omitted in the translated version read: “From the domain of philosophy the conflict has passed up to the plane of religion, and we now have the attack made upon the self-determining spirit” (Lee 1899, p. 370). It can be inferred that the non-religious declaration actually ends up as a disclosure of the writer’s true intentions.

In the preface of *Ren Xue*, Allen reiterates Lee’s purpose of restoring humanity, and indicates his own objective of rectifying its philosophical origin. His introduction to *Ren Xue* was published in the 178th issue of *The Review of the Times*, where Allen appraised *Ren Xue* as “the epitome of modern philosophers”, stressing its philosophical nature instead of its religious implications.
The choice of organism by clergies was primarily for the sake of missionary work, as it allowed for a deduction of spirituality. Philosophical deduction was not the ultimate goal, but it was a means to convince and convert. Lee’s “Preface to the Revised Version” focused on the transition of philosophy from mechanism to organism. As it is not Allen’s main concern, it is omitted in the translated version. In the preface, Allen describes the book as food for spirit, key to the Bible and mirror of Christianity. While Lee focused on organic philosophy, elaborating in the preface that organism replacing mechanism was a development in philosophy, Allen makes no mention of mechanism or organism in his preface. Omitted too was the book’s last section of refutation against opposition from the philosophical circle. Philosophy was not Allen’s concern and he had equated Christianity with organism in his translation. Instead, Confucius was honored by the Chinese and evolutionism, frenziedly adopted by intellectuals, was seen as the target in the eyes of missionaries in China. In the preface, Allen dismissed Confucius as ages-long superstition, and refuted evolutionism as blinded wrong.

Why is evolutionism, not organism appealing to the Chinese? First, organism was not new to the Chinese, for Laozi’s “unity of heaven and men” was similar but already recognized as obsolete and dismissed by intellectuals as of little use for the national revival. Second, the Chinese believed that mechanism, which was the modern thought introduced by the West, could advance science and technology and directly actuate national strengthening. Third, anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiments did not significantly decrease after the Boxer movement, so although disguised under the philosophy of organism, its missionary implications could still be felt and might arouse negative reactions.

Religious information was also selectively translated. The explanation of foundational theological notions or hymns or notorious events was often brief, or omitted in translated versions, e.g., the definitions of religion by great philosophers; the emotional praise “Paul, leading him to plant churches in Asia Minor, which became the seeds of modern civilization, were as natural as the rising of the waters of a mountain spring”; the berating accusation of “the insane act of Nero, swathing Christians in tar to light his feast” (Lee 1899, pp. 7–8). Ren Xue selectively translated core Christian concepts such as “Ten Commandments” and “love your neighbor as yourself”, while omitting specific secular activities and missionary transformation such as church construction. That is because teachings of universal value were less likely to create negative sentiments in the Chinese, and, after the Boxer Rebellion, negative sentiment towards Christianity was still lingering; minimizing missionary messages at the beginning of a book could help to avoid readers’ initial rejection and make them read on.

The two works inevitably contained negative comments on other religions. For example, in Allen’s preface, he commented Confucius which had been followed by Chinese for thousands of years, was a great fallacy. As for Islam, Lee stated in the original text, “Mohammed established his religion mainly on secular and corporal basis” while Allen added in the translated version “Mohammed established Islam to manipulate. Islam was based on corporal desire and personal gains. Its teaching cannot be explained in terms of science or God” where Islam is downgraded in comparison with Christianity. Regarding agnosticism and materialism which was influential in China and contradictory with Christianity, they were viewed as “passing away with a correct theory of knowing”, and “being in line with ignorance and indolence” (Lee 1899, pp. 15–51).

Both the author and the translator linked Christian messages to philosophical reasoning. In this way, religious teachings came naturally through philosophical expounding, and religious teaching did not directly target social evolutionism but did so rather by means of philosophy.

3. Remapping of Science and Christianity

The original and translated works addressed various academic disciplines, including anthropology and biology when discussing evolution; physics when introducing conservation of energy; economics when mentioning trade, as well as modern emerging disci-
plines like sociology and political science. While the interpretations of modern disciplines may differ from Christian messages and sometimes even contradict them, the two works employed various methods to demonstrate Christianity’s compatibility with science, philosophy, ethnics, and the making of men. This reflected Christian responses to science. One way was to emphasize the reciprocity of Christianity with discipline, knowledge, or principles, such as by noting the similar meaning of “exchange” in both commercial and Christian contexts. Another way was to emphasize that Christianity offers fresh insights and novel contributions to disciplines. For instance, the pursuit of beauty in art was seen, in *The Making of a Man*, to stem from a divine origin. The third way was to underscore that Christianity was omnipotent, but that disciplines had limitations, e.g., “Christ’s work and influence in the world not only forms an exception to the principle of the correlation of forces, but here we have an unparalleled amount of force rising up when, to all human appearances, none subsided at all”. (*Lee* 1899, p. 327).

Both the original and the translation acknowledged modern science and used it to explain natural laws at lower levels (i.e., the plant and animal realms), and proposed that the higher level where humans exist can only be explained through the divine perspective (*Allen* 1882, p. 13). Alternatively, they applied the logical deductions of modern science to disclose its inherent contradictions, then resolved these contradictions through divine interpretation.

Completed at the time when science and Christianity preliminarily encountered each other, both the original and the translated work did not seek to integrate science and Christianity or prove their mutual confirmation. They neither aimed to apply science to prove Christianity (no evidence of scientific interpretation of Biblical texts were found in the original or translated works), nor to prove Christianity’s role in guiding science. Not until many years later did the view of the compatibility between science and religion gradually replace the separated view in *The Making of a Man* or in *Ren Xue*, which became a reference for future clergies. As indicated in Streeter’s case, Christianity can be compatible with science, and it was not necessary for the Chinese to accept western science on the one hand and reject Christianity on the other (*Lai* 2009, pp. 41–73).

*The Making of a Man* combined science and theology with organic philosophy. *Lee* held that the philosophy of organism replaced that of mechanism to act on science, and viewed theology as embodied in organic philosophy and philosophy as an unveiling of science, all governed by Christian theology. This hierarchy can be simplified as: theology—organic philosophy—science. Employing organic philosophy to prove the power of God not only conformed to God’s omnipotence and abstract nature, but also explained it without contradiction.

Amid the nationwide embrace of science, *Allen* resorted to philosophy to position science within a theological framework. He advocated that theology and science constituted the essence of western learning, thus elevating science to cater to Chinese belief while avoiding any confusion of it with superstition (*Allen and Ren* 1896, p. 63). In a word, the division of western learning by Christian missionaries in America or in China does not equate “religion”, “philosophy”, or “science” as independent and separate, but as interconnected and hierarchical reflections of each other.

As the intermediary connecting Christianity and science, organic philosophy in both works served as the means to argue against Spencer’s theories and for Christianity. Both works do not place science within the domain of theology, nor do they place theology within science. Rather, they emphasize separate but complementary realms for each, thereby not opposing science but demarcating its boundaries from religion (*Allen and Ren* 1896, p. 41). Contrary to the previous research’s conclusion that missionaries opposed evolutionism and thus opposed science as a whole, they combined science and theology to criticize social evolutionism, which is incompatible with Christianity.

The considerations for the combination were threefold. One was to establish a causal connection between science and Christianity to replace the cause-and-effect relation between science and social evolutionism which was incompatible to Christianity. Second, the
popularity of evolutionism as a driving force for science brought evolutionism and science closer together, thus challenging Christianity’s interpretation of science. This prompted objections from both the Chinese and western religious communities against evolutionism, particularly social evolutionism, as they sought to establish connections between theology and science. This also explains the religious opposition to evolutionism, which, although primarily originating from evolutionism’s denial of divine creation and the transcendent, is also related to the shift from the connection between theology and science to that between evolutionism and science. Third, the convergence of evolutionism and science appeared more reasonable and realistic from Chinese perspectives in late Qing than the combination of Christianity and science or the union of Christianity, organic philosophy, and science. This convergence was deemed beneficial for national rejuvenation, and thus led to the failure of western missionaries’ efforts to establish the Christianity–science relation through works like Ren Xue, which were not accepted by the Chinese and not as comparable, in terms of influence, as Yan Fu’s Tian Yan Lun (Han 1906, p. 2).

4. Reinterpreting Evolutionism and Social Evolutionism

4.1. Reinterpreting Evolutionism

4.1.1. Yan Fu’s Reinterpretation

Evolution and Ethics, written by Huxley, was published in 1894 and translated by Yan Fu into Chinese as Tian Yan Lun. Although it was a translation of Huxley’s work and “it was aimed to rectify the disorder caused by Spencer’s concept of ‘survival of the fittest’”, Yan Fu’s standpoint was the opposite. Adding notes spanning approximately 1800 words, he uttered his belief in Spencer’s theory and argued against Huxley’s. Yan Fu objected to Huxley’s criticism that Spencer’s concept of “survival of the fittest” was “the source of chaos” and dismissed it as “narrow-viewed” and “not as meticulous as Spencer’s” (K. Wang 1997).

He clearly expressed his agreement with Spencer’s social evolutionism and concluded that the law of evolution “survival of the fittest” was beneficial for human progress, which was also applicable to countries, including China. From Tian Yan Lun’s preference of Spencer’s theory, it can be inferred that the evolutionism that had a significant impact on modern China was specifically Spencer’s social evolutionism (Schwartz 1964).

4.1.2. Lee’s Interpretation

In the original and translated work, Spencer, instead, became the target. Although Allen, in the preface, put Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer on a par, attributing the “survival of the fittest” concept to the three, the entire book primarily targeted Spencer, with Darwin barely touched and Huxley mutely criticized. This could be attributed to the fact that Spencer’s social evolutionism had a greater impact on China at the time and was more challenging to Christianity. Another possible reason was that, besides social evolutionism, Spencer also advocated “the unknowable”, which negated the existence and role of a Christian God. Thus, the third chapter of the original and the translated work, “Truth”, mainly aimed to refute Spencer’s “unknowable”. This chapter was primarily a philosophical critique of Spencer, extensively addressing the philosophical origins that influenced his thought, tracing back to John Locke’s speculative essay, which, in Lee’s opinion, triggered the French Revolution, and, later, George Berkeley’s idealism. It further criticized the philosophical sources that Spencer and his followers drew upon, including Mill and Hume. The chapter also stated, “Mr. Spencer’s vivid and faint manifestations of the unknown are old acquaintances with new names” (Lee 1899, pp. 155, 175).

The original text criticized Spencer’s theory and its philosophical sources by pointing out Spencer’s internal contradictions and its coincidence with the concept of “God”. For example, it derived from Spencer’s theory the contradiction between the theory of knowing and that of being, which were irreconcilable, unless the concept of God in Christianity was resorted to. Another approach was to point out that Spencer’s concept of the “unknowable” was actually a reference to God, as what it described was the nature of God.
4.1.3. Comparison between Lee’s and Allen’s Responses

A comparison between Lee’s writing and Allen’s translation reveals divergent responses and nuances in their commentaries on Spencer. For example, the translation omitted the sentence “Spencer’s theory of knowing is destructive, while his theory of being is constructive and transcendental” (Lee 1899, p. 183). Despite their differing standpoints, Lee affirmed the constructive elements of Spencer’s theory, maintaining an objective and unbiased tone, Allen, by omitting these acknowledgements, intensified the critique. The deletion in the translation enhanced the critical force and, meanwhile, made it less noticeable to Chinese readers, as retaining it could easily elicit Chinese readers’ identification with Spencer. Consequently, it was evident that the western missionaries in China were more resolute in rejecting Spencer’s theory than their western counterparts. The former’s stronger reaction was primarily due to the great influence of Spencer’s theory in China and its deep-rooted challenge to missionary efforts.

In addition to the impact of western evolutionary thought on Christianity, missionaries in China faced obstacles from traditional superstitions and polytheistic worship in their missions. Although mechanic philosophy was associated with evolutionism and atheism, it was useful in countering superstition. Therefore, Allen and other western missionaries in China recognized the validity of evolutionary explanations to nature in opposing idolatry and superstition. This nuanced stance for missionaries in China was absent for their counterparts in the West due to the non-existence of these dual tasks in western missions.

4.2. Reinterpreting Social Evolutionism

4.2.1. Yan Fu’s Reinterpretation

The analysis of Tian Yan Lun revealed that Yan Fu understood that Spencer’s theory was of pure natural selection, which, when applied to humans and society, might be construed as rationalizing imperialist colonization and aggression (Shen 1998). The Chinese did not readily accept the social law of “survival of the fittest” dominating societal relations, particularly international relations, and did not view it as an ideal rule that should prevail; instead, they regarded the peaceful coexistence between China and foreign nations, from ancient times, as the preferred rule. Nevertheless, the Chinese were aware of their position as a backward and weak semi-colony, and that the law between nations was already controlled by stronger powers.

However, passive acceptance did not represent acknowledging the rationality of social evolutionism and did not mean passively submitting to imperialism and domination. Chinese intellectuals, represented by Yan Fu, derived hope and motivation out of social evolutionism: the hope of transforming weakness into strength, and the motivation in reversing and overtaking, rather than being beaten down by backwardness. Previous studies focused on the passiveness of the Chinese response, on the alarming effect of Tian Yan Lun, and on the warning intended by Yan Fu, but overlooked the active effect it aimed at achieving, and the uplifting reaction it elicited. The reason why Tian Yan Lun deeply resonated with Chinese people was that the social evolutionism reinterpreted by Yan Fu offered hope and inspiration, provided a way for the perplexed Chinese to self-rescue and self-strengthen rather than being only alarmed by threat and danger.

4.2.2. Lee’s Reinterpretation

As a clergyman in America, Lee opposed Spencer’s theory primarily from the Christian perspective, engaging in philosophical critique of Spencer’s views by resorting to Christian doctrines like spirituality, God, love, and cooperation. The original work denounced the French Revolution and aimed to counter the prevailing trend of imperialism. It targeted Spencer philosophically, critiquing authoritarianism and stated, “Philosophy itself, originally emerged on the turning from barbarism to civilization, is now reversing from civilization to barbarism, the same as ‘the struggle for survival’ or ‘the exercise of authority’, what difference is there from barbarism?” Here, Lee not only equated “the struggle for survival” with authority, but also criticized both as causes of barbarism. Fur-
other arguments included, “But to regard the operations of this law as beneficent upon the plane of human life, as does Mr. Spencer, is altogether to overlook the obligations men are under to one another, because of their mutual relations” (Lee 1899, pp. 56–57). “The attempt to regulate forms of value in accordance with the law of ‘the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence’ does not have sufficient regard for the contribution each individual has made.—The leading political economists of the times have come to see that the law of extreme individualism, of ‘every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost,’ must be substituted by some more beneficent principle” (Lee 1899, p. 58). Here, individualism was also the target of Lee’s argument, as Allen indicated in the preface that Lee’s purpose in writing was to restore the declining humanity in America.

4.2.3. Comparison between Lee and Allen’s Reinterpretation

Unlike Lee, Allen’s translation did not aim to rectify the decline of humanism in society due to the fact that the individualism in China at that time was not pronounced. Nor did he oppose imperialism. He intended to respond to the challenge that “survival of the fittest” posed to missionary work, as evidenced by his preface “I see that in recent years, philosophical ideals have gradually infiltrated into the minds of China’s upper class, who were ignorant of the origin of western philosophies. So, I acquired one book to translate and expound” (Allen and Van 1910, p. 79). Unlike Lee, Allen focused less on theoretical discussions, but more on contemporary issues and hidden obstacles of missionary work. Unlike The Making of a Man, which centered on philosophical argument, Ren Xue’s main concern was a self-strengthening solution for China.

It became apparent that the responses of the religious communities in China and the West differed, as was reflected in their interpretations of imperialism and dominance. Western missionaries in China like Allen, positioned within the opposition between China and the West, maintained a stance supportive of imperialism, rather than challenge the West’s invasion of China. On the contrary, they defended and justified it by resorting to social evolutionism. Thus, the translator’s attitude and position were inherently contradictory to that of the author. The source work aimed to arouse readers against imperialism, individualism, and the law of the jungle, to force imperialists to discard social evolutionism, while the translated work urged the Chinese to abandon isolationism, to actively accept western influence and team with western powers. Therefore, Allen’s view in Ren Xue, of abandoning narrow-mindedness, embracing western influence, and integrating with the West, was dismissed by the Chinese as a proposal equal to accepting semi-colonial status and imperialistic dominion by western powers. This also explained why, before the Revolution of 1911, western missionaries in China saw a decline in influence and withdrew from the limelight on China’s historical stage.

4.2.4. Allen’s Reinterpretation

Allen included Chinese examples in the translation to stress the negative effects of late Qing’s closed-door policy and hostility towards outsiders. “Any people not known were considered barbarian. For instance, the Greeks called the non-Greeks ‘barbarians’, and the Chinese called foreigners ‘savages’. These judgments were based solely on differences in languages and customs, which eventually lead to envy and hostility” (Allen and Van 1910, p. 52). He also inserted his viewpoints in the translation, “Despite China’s vast territory, large population and early development, its subsequent decline is inevitable, which is due to isolationism. Individuals and nations thrive when united and decline when isolated. This is the natural law. In China’s case, xenophobia has been an ingrained trait for three thousand years, and the current state of internal strife exacerbates the situation, making it even more lamentable” (Allen and Van 1910, p. 48). Drawing upon the theme of “individual” and “collective” in The Making of a Man, Allen delved into the reasons behind a nation’s rise and fall, imputing China’s perceived decline to xenophobia, as indicated in The Review of the Times, and that China’s decline and impending demise should not be attributed to other countries but to its own stagnation.
When arguing that nations rose to power through unity and declined due to isolation, both the original and the translation refrained from citing western examples. Instead, they listed ancient civilizations such as Greece, Rome, Babylon, Persia, and India as negative examples and made analogies to give historical lessons. The translation went further by inserting China as an additional example and adding Allen’s caution to China. But for the West, in countries such as England and America, Allen showed no restraint in putting his appraisal into the target text, e.g., “Western countries have achieved civilization by acknowledging past mistakes, not defending past errors but eliminating them.—The recent progress of western countries lies in this” (Allen and Van 1910, pp. 48, 100). As is shown, the advance and progress of the West is assumed as a premise, which underlined western superiority and the disparity between China and the West.

The original text advocated that social evolution should not be based on the survival of the fittest but rather on the integration of humanity with Christianity, while the translation highlighted that society evolves according to the law of natural selection, and there existed hierarchical levels of civilization among nations. It argued that integration with Christianity is the path leading from the low level to the high. Thus, the translation inserted levels of civilization that were absent in the original text. As an example of the different depictions of a utopian world, the original text described a true utopia where “From the beginning, nature and human effort have wrought together for universal good will and social organization” (Lee 1899, p. 120). In contrast, the translation depicted a “utopia of layers” where hierarchy still existed, as it was translated as, “People all over the world agree to unite as one big family, although there may be conflicts, Truce Union is there to settle them, and judgments will be made by Great Parliament. Isn’t it laying the foundation, layer by layer, up for a utopia?” (Allen and Van 1910, p. 52). In addition, the translation incorporated one passage of Allen’s own envisioning of utopia through the mouth of “a British poet” “who envisioned the complete elimination of competition and sorrow worldwide, with nations on Earth form a ‘Great Union’, with representatives from all continents gathered in a central parliament. Divisions among races, families, and nations were all contrary to the Providence and should be dismantled, allowing human beings to foster unity and friendship. This is the utopia to be longed for.” From Allen’s above depiction, it can be inferred that the longed for utopia was, in essence, the one copied from the west, having a western political administration system of “parliament” and “delegates”, the only difference being that it had expanded from one nation to five continents (Allen and Van 1910, p. 50).

4.2.5. More Narratives

Previous research on how Chinese intellectuals interpreted and embraced evolution theory often emphasized the goal of nation strengthening. However, it overlooked the attitudes and responses of westerners in China, particularly missionaries who had played a pioneering role in disseminating western knowledge. While intellectuals like Yan Fu translated Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics and introduced evolutionism to China to strengthen the nation and enlighten the people, they did not blindly adopt Spencer’s social evolutionism, which advocated individualism and imperialism. Instead, the impact of evolutionary theory on the society of late Qing was not a monotonous call for national strengthening but involved mixed voices, including criticism of social evolutionism, often targeting Spencer’s individualism and imperialism. By translating books such as The Making of a Man, western missionaries like Allen attempted to replace social evolutionism with Christianity as the dominant ideology, opposing the prevailing notion of “survival of the fittest”. The resistance of western missionaries to social evolutionism, their complex and changing attitudes toward evolution, and the influence of their anti-Spencer translations on China can provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the introduction, dissemination, and reception of evolutionary ideas in late Qing. It is also conceivable that some Chinese individuals, including conservatives or Chinese Christians, may not have shared the same attitudes toward evolutionism and social evolutionism as reformists and revolutionaries.
Among them, there may have been hesitators, wanderers, and opponents, and a study of these may disclose a variety of responses beyond the prevailing single narrative.

5. Remapping of Ethics and Religion

The translated work Ren Xue reflected the moral crisis and ethics reconstruction that China faced at that time, in which missionaries participated, promoted, and constructed, thereby playing a historical role. Yet their impact was limited.

Previous research has not touched upon or explored thoroughly the following points: before the Revolution of 1911, the introduction of evolutionary thought into China was accompanied by assessments of evolutionary thought, its negative consequences, the crisis of a moral and ethical void, the arguments and attempts by the Chinese and westerners to construct ethical and moral systems, and the complex reactions it elicited. The introduction of evolutionary thought was accompanied by challenges to traditional feudal ethics, especially to Confucianism, and was accompanied by the introduction of modern thoughts such as freedom, equality, democracy, and science. Thus, the crisis of an ethical void emerged in an ethical and moral system and has left a lasting imprint on contemporary society to this day.

5.1. Ethics or Evolution

The title of Huxley’s work, Evolution and Ethics includes the word “ethics,” whereas the title of Yan Fu’s translation Tian Yan Lun, only preserves “evolution” while downplaying and omitting “ethics”. This indicated that Yan Fu’s translation was selective and his focus was different than Huxley’s. Although The Making of a Man and Ren Xue incorporated both themes of challenging Spencer and establishing Christianity, the titles of the two works revealed that their primary focus was on ethics rather than on social evolutionism. Despite their emphasis on Christianity, neither title carried a religious connotation; instead, both chose to be academic and neutral. Therefore, each title of the two works conformed, respectively, to the writing purpose and main concerns of their authors.

Regarding the relation between evolutionary theory and ethics, Huxley and Spencer held opposing views. Huxley maintained that the processes of human social evolution and natural evolution were distinct from one another (Huxley 1894). In contrast, Spencer contended that the two were interconnected, that competition was the driving force of social evolution, and that ethics itself was subject to evolution (Spencer 1982). Spencer’s assertion that free competition respecting individual rights would progressively improve society was not introduced and advocated by intellectual reformists like Yan Fu.

In late Qing, Chinese intellectuals like Liang Qichao and Yan Fu used evolutionary theory to critique traditional Confucianism, China’s backwardness, and its failure in international competition. Missionaries, on the other hand, took the opportunity to advocate Christianity as a replacement for China’s ancient patrimonial system and Confucianism. They opposed international rivalry and advocated global harmony, condemned individualism, and upheld collectivism. Western missionaries in China aimed to replace the Confucianism and traditional collectivism with Christian teaching and western values.

5.2. Social Evolutionism or Individualism

While missionaries in the West targeted Spencer’s individualism, missionaries in China did not oppose it. For example, Ren Xue aimed to challenge Spencer’s evolutionism as introduced by Yan Fu, but not Spencer’s individualism, because individualism was not advocated in Tian Yan Lun and Yan Fu had opted to advocate for Spencer’s social evolutionism over his individualism. As the challenge to Spencer’s social evolutionism as well as the response to Yan Fu’s evolutionism, Ren Xue downplayed competition and conflicts among nations, proposed a unified world, elaborated on the social nature of ethics, and criticized the amoral nature of social evolutionism.

Both the original and the translation advocated for reshaping national ethics and elevating individuals through Christianity, but they differed in that the original work mainly
criticized western individualism while the translation primarily critiqued Confucianism. As it was held that the negative impact of Spencer’s theories was the amoral nature of social evolutionism, both the original and the translation aimed to fill the moral void left by Spencer’s social evolutionism with Christian morality.

5.3. “Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself” or “Survival of the Fittest”

Western missionaries held the Christian ethic of “love thy neighbor as thyself” against individualism and social evolutionism. Although they agreed that ethics was part of evolution, they disagreed with the notion that evolution was based on individual rights and free competition. They advocated loving others, upheld harmony over discord, and collectivism over individualism.

However, their perspective differed from that of Yan Fu, whose main concern was saving the nation and the race, not the whole of humanity. Therefore, the mores that Yan Fu proposed were to be followed within the nation, not out of the nation. Concerning China and other countries, the ethics to be abided by, in his opinion, should be the law of the jungle, not the mores.

Spencer’s evolutionary thought was the basis of Chinese racist nationalism of the early 20th century. Chinese intellectuals interpreted the theory of evolution in a socio-political context very different to that of the West. The predominant interpretation of natural selection was one of racial competition (zhongzu jingzheng) and racial survival (baozhong). Yan Fu focused exclusively on the theory of the struggle for survival and pictured evolution as a constant struggle between groups defined as “races”. Spencer’s idea of inter-group competition was combined with Huxley’s concept of intra-group cooperation to form Chinese racist nationalism, where group cohesion and racial strength were principles with respect to racial struggle. Within an evolutionary view of struggle for survival between different “races”, nationalism was seen to be the key for national revival by Chinese intellectuals (Dikotter 2015, pp. 82–88).

In contrast, missionaries like Allen attempted to dispel nationalism and racism, envisioning a world of great unity. They tried to persuade readers to turn to a global moral perspective and accept Christian morality. As it was stated in The Making of a Man, “The ultimate reasons, then, for the existence of social relations—is the making of men.—It must not be a law leaning to extreme individualism on the one side, or to extreme socialism on the other.—That law has already been formulated for us. It is this: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself’” (Lee 1899, pp. 68–69). Allen inserted his comment in the ending of Chapter one, “Thus, the idea of ‘survival of the fittest’ is not the foundation of social evolution, but rather, it lies in the principle of ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’.” “Therefore, those who run the society, should adhere to the principle of ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’, rather than the principle of survival of the fittest.” (Allen and Van 1910, pp. 32, 37).

Thus, amid the Chinese racist nationalism of the early 20th century, western missionaries sought to disintegrate the basis of Spencer’s concept of “survival of the fittest” with the Christian concept of “love thy neighbor as thyself”. “Love thy neighbor as thyself” was advocated as the core concept of Christianity to counter Chinese racist nationalism and replace it as the predominant ethics for China.

However, the appeal of the “love thy neighbor as thyself” to the Chinese was less compelling than Spencer’s “survival of the fittest”, which resonated more powerfully with the imperative of national salvation and strengthening. First, notions similar to “love thy neighbor as thyself” had existed for centuries in Chinese classics and traditional teachings such as Confucianism, but they were not as impactful as the notion of “survival of the fittest” and evolutionary theory. Second, after the Boxer Rebellion, anti-Christian sentiment persisted for various complex reasons.

5.4. Christianity or National Strengthening

From a Chinese perspective, even if social evolutionism did not apply to individuals, it could be applied to nature and potentially to nations or ethnic groups, as nations and ethnic
groups were not individuals but non-living entities or collectives. Therefore, the natural laws of evolution could be applicable. Before the Revolution of 1911, Chinese attention was focused on saving the nation and competing with other nations, not on individual-to-individual or overall human evolution. Christianity could not address the urgent national crisis. Consequently, the religious and moral system proposed by missionaries was not accepted by the Chinese and was viewed as cultural and intellectual aggression in disguise, to be resisted along with military aggression. For instance, in order to counter Christian influence, Kang Youwei reinterpreted and reshaped Confucianism (Kang 1988)13.

Although Lee in America and Allen in China were both Methodist missionaries with similar backgrounds and educational experiences, their work reflected the distinct environment they were in, and how their roles differed. Allen recognized the needs of the Chinese people and attempted to align his translations with the national salvation agenda. In his translations, he introduced many suggestions for national reform, downplayed the Sino-Western divide, and indicated that China’s decline was due to its own decline and its isolationism and exclusionary policies, and should not be blamed solely on foreign aggression (Allen and Van 1904b, pp. 18–24).

Lee and Allen promoted a global worldview where differences between China and the West would be erased, and unity would prevail worldwide. But this vision did not suit China’s dire circumstances at the time, and it could not address the urgent issues China faced. The Chinese were aware that opening doors to foreigners, as Christianity advocated, would jeopardize China’s security. Therefore, even as traditional thoughts came under criticism, and the old Confucian ethics gradually crumbled in the minds of the Chinese, Christianity still could not fill the void and attain the same prominence as it did in western countries and in Japan. In the context of a nation striving for its survival, reform proposals that favored national competition were welcomed and listened to by reformists and progressive intellectuals. Proposals that did not favor national competition were largely ignored and failed to generate responses.

Consequently, Ren Xue, an influential work in the West and Japan, received little attention in China, as circumstances in the West and Japan did not involve a national crisis and struggle for survival. From the westerners’ perspective, Spencer’s social evolution theory revealed flaws in guiding human interactions and the operation of the social family. However, the core Christian notion of “love thy neighbor as thyself” was more suitable for guiding human interactions and regulating the overall operation of society. This resulted in different receptions and impacts of the same work, The Making of a Man, in China, and in the West and Japan. Ren Xue promoted a concept of God that was seen as too distant and abstract by the Chinese, not suitable for China’s urgent need for self-rescue.

6. Conclusions

Spencer’s theory of evolution has generated significant responses in both China and the West. Philosophers, theologians, churchmen, and Chinese intellectuals had varying opinions about Spencer’s theory of evolution. Previous research overlooked the attitudes and responses of western missionaries to Spencer’s social evolutionism, especially to the sensational Tian Yan Lun translated by Yan Fu. The Making of a Man and Ren Xue, both written and translated by western missionaries, either in or out of China, were a reflection of such responses. Through them, we can observe western missionaries’ criticism of social evolutionism in China and the West, and their different views on various related issues.

This research has collected first-hand source materials, including The Making of a Man and its Chinese translation, Ren Xue. Ren Xue chose a different focus from the original work, highlighting different interpretations of the same social issues. These differences are evident in four key themes: mechanic philosophy vs. organic philosophy; science; Spencer’s social evolutionism; and the reconstruction of ethics and religion.

Both the original work and its translation primarily targeted Spencer’s social evolutionism. Although Yan Fu’s Tian Yan Lun, as the translation of Huxley’s Evolution and Ethics, was supposed to take Huxley’s standpoint against applying natural evolution theory to so-
cial sphere, in essence it was supportive of Spencer’s social evolutionism. Therefore, Ren Xue served as a response to western evolutionism, especially to Tian Yan Lun, and aimed to be a rectification and revision of Spencer’s social evolutionism by missionaries in China.

While preaching Christianity and critiquing social evolutionism was the aim of the original and translated works, philosophy was consistently employed as the means. Often, philosophy, and even science, was paired with Christianity in arguments against social evolutionism, but not against natural evolutionism. In western religious circles, organic philosophy was used to oppose individualism, liberalism, and anarchism, advocating for the collective over individualism, which conformed to western circumstances. However, the primary concern of Chinese missionaries was not to oppose individualism, liberalism, or anarchism, but to challenge narrow nationalism. They advocated for integration and harmony with other nations over seclusion and anti-foreignism. Under China’s political situation, Chinese missionaries equated Christianity with western, advanced nations, with the West and with the human civilization, placing them under a unified framework in contrast to Confucianism, to the East and to China. This distinction set Chinese missionaries apart from their western counterparts.

The intertwined relationship between Chinese missionaries and colonial powers resulted in an accommodating and supportive attitude towards imperialism and colonialism in missionaries’ translations. Ren Xue highlighted the complexity and contradictory responses of missionaries in China to Spencer’s social evolutionism. The translator emphasized that China, as the passive party, should not seek survival through isolationism, whereas the original text stressed that the governing party should not pursue progress through individualism. This shift in focus between the original and translated works reflected different interpretations and responses to Spencer’s social evolutionism between missionaries in China and in the West, which also differed from those of Chinese intellectuals like Yan Fu.

However, before the Revolution of 1911, China underwent a transition from the organic philosophy symbolized by traditional “unity of heaven and man” to the mechanic philosophy represented by evolutionism, with the influence of the latter holding a dominant position. “Evolutionism today has the power to influence every philosophical, ethical, educational, organizational, spiritual, and political facet, leaving no aspect untouched” (Chen 1920, pp. 83–128). Despite that missionaries translated works promoting organic philosophy to challenge mechanism theories, their impact remained limited in China. The prevailing appeal of national salvation favored the popularity of mechanism theories represented by evolutionism, while later critiques, challenging mechanism theories and evolutionism with organic philosophies, received little attention in China.

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Notes

1. Young John Allen (1836–1907), an American Methodist missionary with the Chinese name Lin Lezhi (林乐知). Since 1860 to his last day, he had served as a missionary in China. Besides being a publisher and educator, he translated many works of Chinese into English, as well as English religious tracts into Chinese. His list of publications exceeds 250 books.

2. In 1868 Allen founded The Church News (《教会新报》), later renamed as the Global Magazine and The Review of the Times (《万国公报》) which was the most widely circulated and enduring Chinese periodical established by foreign missionaries. With broad readership, it actively disseminated Western knowledge in geography, history, civilization, and many other fields.

3. There exist two versions of The Making of a Man. The first edition was published in 1892 by the Cassell Publishing Company in London, while the second, a revised edition, was published in 1899 by the St. Louis Christian Advocate Company in the United States and is currently housed in Harvard University Library. The primary distinction between these two versions lies in the inclusion of a “preface to the new and revised edition” by Lee, completed on 5 December 1893, in St. Louis. Lee noted that the book had been thoroughly revised, and some of it rewritten and an index had also been prepared by Professor James M. Dixon.

4. James Wideman Lee (1849–1919) was born at Rockbridge, Georgia, 1849. He wrote nine books and edited six. He published The Earthly Footsteps of the Man of Galilee in 1895, and Henry W. Grady: The Editor, the Orator, the Man in 1897. It was during the last year of his pastorate at Park Street Church that Dr. Lee delivered the address “Christ the Reason of the Universe” before the World’s Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago 1893. While a pastor of Park Street Church, Atlanta, he wrote The Making of a Man. It was estimated that its Chinese version had been presented to about 2000 Chinese officials and leading mandarins by Rev. Dr. Young J. Allen.

5. From the contrastive analysis of the two editions, it can be deduced that the source text Allen had chosen to translate from was the second, the revised edition. The evidence was that compared with the first version, the latter added names to some quotations, and Allen’s translation also had these added names for consistency.

6. Yan Fu (范祎), Chinese co-translator and assistant of Allen, transformed from a traditional scholar to an intellectual reformist who shifted his engagement from studying Confucian classics to spreading western knowledge, and became the main contributor and translator of The Review of the Times.

7. Allen’s preface was written on 12 May 1904 whereas the translated work was published in 1910, a lapse of six years in between. Additionally, Allen passed away in 1907. From this, it can be deduced that Ren Xue was published three years after Allen’s demise. Between 1903 and 1904, Allen and Van Yi had already published the translated introduction, the first three chapters, and the preface in issues 178–186 of The Review of the Times. Therefore, one may speculate as to whether the subsequent four chapters were more time-consuming, taking a longer period to complete, or whether there was a prolonged interruption or cessation in translating between 1904 and 1907. Similarly puzzling was the question of why, despite having completed the translation before 1907, it was not promptly sent for publication, but rather was postponed till three years later. The underlying cause of these puzzles remains to be ascertained.

8. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). English sociologist and philosopher, an early advocate of the theory of evolution, who stood for the preeminence of the individual over society and of science over religion. He is best remembered for his doctrine of social Darwinism, according to which the principles of evolution, including natural selection, apply to human societies, social classes, and individuals as well as to biological species developing over geologic time. The term “survival of the fittest” was coined by Spencer. He held that science and philosophy gave support to and enhanced individualism and progress.

9. Social Darwinism and social evolutionism are two related but distinct concepts that emerged in the 19th century. Social Darwinism applies Darwinian principles to human societies, emphasizing competition and natural selection as driving forces. Social evolutionism, on the other hand, offers a broader perspective on how societies change and develop over time, considering various factors, including cultural and technological advancements, in addition to competition. Social evolutionism is a broader concept that encompasses various theories and ideas developed by scholars in the 19th century, while Social Darwinism, strictly speaking, should be defined as the application of Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection to the evolution of human society. As stated in Discourse of Race in Modern China, the evolutionary theories that appeared during the last decades of the Qing were essentially non-Darwinian in that the individual basis of evolution was replaced with the concept of qun and Darwin’s emphasis on the branching process of evolution was also discarded.

10. Yan Fu (1854–1921), Chinese scholar who translated works by T.H. Huxley, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Adam Smith, and others in an attempt to advocate that the secret to western wealth and power did not lie in western technological advances, but in the ideas and institutions that lay behind these techniques. His translations and introductions of these works had great influence on Chinese intellectuals then and after.

11. Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895), a British biologist actively advocated Darwin’s theory of evolution. In 1893, Huxley was invited to deliver a famous lecture at Oxford University entitled “Evolution and Ethics”, which focused on the interdependence between the natural forces and ethical processes. This lecture further interpreted and developed Darwin’s theory of evolution. Then in 1894, Huxley published the book Evolution and Ethics (Huxley 1894), which can be divided in half, corresponding to the two themes of evolution and ethics. However, Yan Fu only selected and translated the “evolution” part of the original text.

12. Lee indicated in the preface that the old and the new world in theology was represented, respectively, by mechanic philosophy and organic philosophy, “The difference between the old and the new is the difference between mechanism and organism, chaos...
and order, matter and mind, death and life. In the theology of the old world, God was above and outside of things, and related to them as the mechanic is related to the machine he has built. In the theology of the new world, God is immanent as well as transcendent, and rules all things from within.”

Kongzi Gaizhi Kao (Confucius as a Reformer) (Kang 1988), which expounded Kang Youwei’s belief that Confucius was concerned with contemporary problems and stood for change and that the progress of mankind was inevitable. His interpretation of Confucian teachings and research on ancient texts subsequently inspired modern scholarship to reevaluate China’s past. However, criticism arose regarding his use of Confucius to advance his own objectives and his attempts to undermine the established way of life.

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