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Enlightenment in the Name of Rejection? Chinese Straussians' self-image within the intellectual debate in post-1989 China

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ENLIGHTENMENT IN THE NAME OF REJECTION?
CHINESE STRAUSSIANS' SELF-IMAGE WITHIN THE INTELLECTUAL
DEBATE IN POST-1989 CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

Chinese intellectuals as a distinctive character in modern and contemporary Chinese history have attracted extensive research interest. Scholars have devoted attention to various aspects, including the Chinese intellectuals' diverse propositions for social change and the distinctive self-image of Chinese intellectuals, who have tirelessly prescribed themselves with particular roles in relation with China's society. The Tiananmen Square protest and subsequent suppression in 1989 brought about a profound and traumatic impact on Chinese intellectuals, resulting in repercussions within the intellectual field. These changes encompassed shifts in their propositions for social change and alterations in their self-images.

The existing academic literature on intellectual field in post-1989 China has focused predominantly on intellectuals representing mainstream schools of thought, including, most notably, liberalism and neo-conservatism. This scholarship has analyzed these mainstream schools from a variety of perspectives, with one important genre focusing on the divergent self-images of the mainstream intellectuals in the post-1989 era. However, aside from these mainstream schools of thought, the intellectual field of the post-1989 China also comprised several non-mainstream schools of thoughts and less well-known groups of Chinese intellectuals such as the Straussians, which remain overlooked in these debates. The few available studies on Chinese Straussians have concentrated mainly on their critiques on mainstream intellectual thought but has so far not touched on what the self-image of Chinese Straussians is, and whether, and if so how, the self-image of Chinese Straussians differs from that of the mainstream.

To fill up the gap, this thesis will attempt to answer the research question: what is the self-image of Chinese Straussians? After figuring out the self-image of Chinese Straussians, I will compare it with the self-images of the Liberals and neo-conservatives to examine if there is any similarity or difference between them. My research findings will therefore contribute to the existing academic discussion by providing a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of Chinese Straussians, one of the marginal threads of the post-1989 intellectual field, and their relationship to mainstream thought. My findings will also help us to have a more comprehensive understanding of the intellectual field as well as Chinese intellectuals' relationship to China's society and the state at large in the post-1989 era.

I will review the existing literature in the next section, which will end up with a summary and critique of the current academic discussion. In the section "Project Design", I will explain my choice of research scope, source, data, and analytic framework. In the section "Case study: Self-Image of Liu Xiaofeng", I will code what I call "noticeable remarks" in three selected writings of Liu Xiaofeng and then analyze two themes concerning Liu's self-image embedded within these remarks. Finally, I will conclude my thesis by evaluating my research findings and contributions to the academic discussion.

REVIEWING THE FIELD: WHERE ARE THE CHINESE STRAUSSIANS

The existing literature on Chinese intellectuals and intellectual debates in post-1989 China comprises two threads of discussion that merit attention. One major thread of discussion revolves around the role Chinese intellectuals prescribed for themselves in relation to Chinese society at large. Existing research within this category focuses predominantly on two opposing mainstream intellectual camps, the Liberals (自由派) and the Neo-conservatives (新保守主义者). The other, much smaller thread of discussion comprises only a small number of studies that focus on one non-mainstream intellectual camp, namely Chinese Straussians (中国施特劳斯学派), and their contestations with the mainstream intellectuals. This scholarship serves as a reminder that Chinese Straussians were also significant participants of the intellectual debate in post-1989 China. At the same time, this suggests that the first thread of scholarship is incomplete, because it neglects the role in relation with Chinese society that Chinese Straussians prescribed for themselves in the post-1989 era. In this section, I will review the field in more detail and further develop this critique.

Self-images of Mainstream Intellectuals

Definition of Self-image

The first genre of literature discusses what this thesis will refer to as the “self-images” of mainstream Chinese intellectuals in post-1989 China, notably the Liberals and neo-conservatives.

Different studies of this genre have utilized different concepts for discussion, including for example, self-awareness (Lin 1996), self-position (Xu 1999) and Chinese intellectuals’ consciousness (Xu 2001). However, most literature of this genre does not give clear definitions for these concepts. Nevertheless, these studies contribute to the debate by highlighting the role in relation with Chinese society that Chinese intellectuals prescribed for themselves in the post-1989 era, such as the role of criticizing the reality of China’s society, the role of liberating the people, and the role of constructing an ideal society pursuant to utopian modes. For example, Thomas A. Metzger has probed into the premises within the self-awareness of mainstream Chinese intellectuals in the 20th century. According to Metzger, mainstream Chinese intellectuals, throughout the that century, have identified themselves to have the mission of *reforming the reality* and *leading the social transformation and modernization of China* through social engineering (Metzger 1993). Some studies, on the other hand, reveal that the traditional role Chinese intellectuals prescribed for themselves had been transformed by social changes like commercialization. These studies point out that a group of intellectuals in post-1989 China embraced their new role as expert and professionals within a modern labor-division system (Goldman 1999 Lin 1996; Xiao 2003). In summary, this array of conceptualizations deployed in the first genre preponderantly refer to the role that Chinese intellectuals had prescribed for themselves in relation to Chinese society. This thesis will use self-images of Chinese intellectuals in the same sense for further discussion.

The Liberals

Most literature defines the Liberals as anti-authoritarian intellectuals descending from the New Enlightenment movement in 1980s China, which invoked and sought inspiration from the May Fourth

tradition of enlightening Chinese people and Chinese nation to legitimize itself. For example, Junpeng Li's study reveals that the Liberals separated themselves from other groups of intellectuals with their anti-authoritarian stance (Li 2017); Timothy Cheek, David Ownby and Joshua Fogel's research (2018, 111) treats the Liberals as dissidents who struggled for democracy and human rights in China by confronting authority of the party-state. There are also few studies that put emphasis on the Liberals' critique on the loss of humanistic spirit in the post-1989 era (Zhang 1998).

The existing literature has analyzed the self-image of the Liberals from two angles.

On the one hand, some studies highlight that marketization of China's economy and the rise of mass culture in the post-1989 era had undermined the Liberals' role as "moral authority" in the 1980s. For example, Xudong Zhang's research illustrates that the rise of commercialization and mass culture in the post-1989 era had eclipsed the Liberals' previous *role of enlightening Chinese nation* by promoting Enlightenment values and modernization projects for Chinese nation in the 1980s (Zhang 1998); Junpeng Li's research underlines similarly that the intellectual debates had no longer occupied a central position in China's cultural life in the post-1989 era (Li 2017). Consequently, this sort of literature claims that the Liberals "painfully" recognized themselves as losers to a vulgarized and apolitical society (Zhang 2008). In contrast, a few studies shed a light on the self-conscious effort of some Liberals, for example, novelist Wang Shuo (王朔), to embrace vulgarization and to seek commercial success (Fewsmith 2008, 113-39; Li 2017). Although these studies can indicate that there were divergences among the Liberals' attitudes towards social changes in the post-1989 era, these studies reach a consensus that the Liberals had recognized their previous *role of enlightening Chinese nation* eclipsed in a vulgarized society.

On the other hand, other studies engaged in this genre have argued that the Liberals had not changed their propositions for political liberation and their self-image with the *role of enlightening Chinese nation* in the post-1989 era. Instead, this strand suggests, the Liberals had reinforced their self-image as *heirs of the May Fourth enlightenment tradition*, who were responsible to promote Enlightenment values and modernization projects for Chinese nation (Zhang 2001; Fewsmith 2008, 113-39). For example, Fewsmith's study on Chinese Liberals like Li Shenzhi (李慎之) indicates that the Liberals in the post-1989 era continued to propose consciously for deploying science, democracy and Western philosophy to regulate the state-society relation (Fewsmith 2008, 113-39).

Neo-conservatives

Most literature defines neo-conservatives in the post-1989 era as an intellectual group that succeeded the 1980s' neo-authoritarianism and proposed to find a middle path between radical reformers and orthodox Marxist-Leninists. Current research shows that neo-conservatives objected to propositions for radical democratization or complete marketization, contending for strengthening the state capacity (Misra 2003, Wang 2006, Fewsmith 2008, 83-112; Freeman and Wen 2012; van Dongen 2019; Veg 2019). For example, Junpeng Li's study defines "(neo-) conservatism" as a "reactive movement" within the liberal camp, which repudiated the radical Liberals' proposal for a quick regime change (Li 2017). Some studies also indicate that neo-conservatism cannot be defined explicitly because it was an intellectual response to changing socio-economic-political problems (Fewsmith 1995), and thus it had comprised an array of intellectual trends, including neo-authoritarianism, statism, post-modernism and the New-Left (Wang 2006).

The existing literature on the self-image of neo-conservatives revolves around two major themes: anti-radicalism and self-righteous Sinicized enlightenment.

On the one hand, some studies underline the anti-radicalism stance of neo-conservatives in post-1989 China. Most studies deploy the term “anti-radicalism” to classify one intellectual trend in post-1989 China, which had abandoned the 1980s project of seeking final and overall solutions to China’s political and economic problems (Xu 1999; van Dongen 2019). By adopting the anti-radicalism stance, neo-conservatives had rejected any proposition to change the *status quo* pursuant to universal principles and Enlightenment values (Xu 1999; van Dongen 2019). Most literature considers this anti-radicalism stance an embodiment of neo-conservatives’ state of mind within a repressive context that was derived from their traumatic experience in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest and suppression (Xu 1999; Xu 2001; Fewsmith 2008, 83-112; Zhang 2008). For example, Xu’s study reveals, Chinese neo-conservatives had forsaken their traditional *role of enlightening Chinese nation* and thus reoriented themselves as *prudent defenders for Chinese reality* by turning to anti-radicalism (Xu 1999; Xu 2001).

On the other hand, some studies find, although neo-conservatives claimed to reject Enlightenment values and the role of enlightening Chinese nation, they were actually obsessed with their own form of Enlightenment. Existing literature reveals that a group of Chinese neo-conservatives turned to Western postmodern-postcolonial theories in the 1990s and deployed these to challenge the legitimacy of Western pro-democracy Enlightenment. Unlike Western postmodernist theories’ critiques on the interrelationships between Enlightenment concepts and imperialism, the Sinicized postmodernism rejected any criticism on the *status quo* in China (Xu 2001; Zhang 2008). Xu’s study contends that neo-conservatives’ accusation against the fallacious form of enlightenment as a disguised discourse of Western hegemony had reflected their wish to engage in the righteous form of sociocultural engineering. Thus, neo-conservatives utilized Sinicized post-ism to *enlighten Chinese nation* about their real interest (Xu 2001). In this regard, Chinese neo-conservatives had still recognized themselves to have the intellectual *role of enlightening Chinese nation*.

Contestations from Chinese Straussians

A second genre of literature, comprising only a limited number of studies, is concerned with the rise of Chinese Straussians and their propositions in the post-1989 era. While these studies have failed to provide a specific definition for Chinese Straussians, existing literature deploys this term to nominate an approximately fixed group of Chinese intellectuals in the post-1989 era. According to current research, Chinese Straussians is a group of intellectuals who not only consciously identify themselves as Straussians but also promote classical political philosophy and criticize the *ideal* of liberal democracy with the theories and concepts formulated by Leo Strauss (Marchal and Shaw 2017; Kwak and Park 2021). In particular, most literature in this genre has recognized Chinese Straussians as opponents against mainstream intellectual thought (Zhou 2012; Jiang 2014; Marchal and Shaw 2017; Kwak and Park 2021). Existing research has mainly highlighted three respects of the opposition between Chinese Straussians and mainstream intellectuals.

First, some studies illustrate that Chinese Straussians learned from Leo Strauss that classical political philosophy is the only solution to modern problems, like nihilism, which requires people to value the tradition and to study classical works of each nation. Therefore, Chinese Straussians repudiate all modern Western doctrines, including liberalism and conservatism, and advocate for revival of Chinese traditions (Zhou 2009; Zhou 2012; Zheng 2013, Jiang 2014). For example, Qi

Zheng's study illustrates that Chinese Straussians criticize mainstream intellectuals' intention of finding direct solutions for China's problems through studying modern Western doctrines. Zheng's research shows that Chinese Straussian Gan Yang proposed for utilizing Confucian tradition to reconstruct legitimacy for China's regime (Zheng 2013); Dongxian Jiang's research stresses Chinese Straussians' endeavor to search for autonomy of Chinese civilization by rejecting the dominance of modern Western thoughts and reemphasizing the value of traditional Chinese thoughts (Jiang 2014).

Second, some studies focus on Chinese Straussians' rejection of liberal democracy and their endorsement for a new gentry class to direct China's state affairs (Lila 2010, Jiang 2014). For example, Mark Lila's work demonstrates that Chinese Straussians had recognized the need to have a new gentry class to direct the state to be wiser and more just (Lila 2010); Jiang has similarly contended that Chinese Straussians are "wholehearted supporters of elitism" (Jiang 2014, 67). Mingkun Li and Lian Zhou have both highlighted Chinese Straussians critiques on liberal democracy and liberal ideas for being the origin of nihilism and decline of social mores, because liberal pluralism has set aside value judgment concerning good and bad (Zhou 2009; Zhou 2012; Li 2021). According to Li's study, these Straussian propositions have encountered fight-back from the Liberals, who warn that the anti-modern stance of Chinese Straussians would encourage the anti-liberal and anti-democratic ruling regime and result in stagnation or even regression of China's existing political democratization (Li 2021).

Third, some studies demonstrate that Chinese Straussians criticize mainstream intellectuals for violating the classical principle of moderation and prudence when dealing with political issues, which is named as "the corruption of intellectuals" by some Straussians (Zheng 2013; Shaw 2017; Li 2021). For example, Zheng's study notes that Chinese Straussians' proposal for classical liberal education encompassed their critique on mainstream intellectuals as a whole, who were considered to have been blindly following modern Western doctrines, including liberalism and conservatism (Zheng 2013). Mingkun Li's research shows that Liu Xiaofeng attributed the moral depravity to the corruption of modern intellectuals, who have degenerated into "representatives of the modern ideology" and "standard-bearers" of the society (2021, 85). Li's study further illustrates that Chinese Straussians rejected the role that mainstream intellectuals had prescribed for themselves as representative on behalf of the people and critics against China's state (Li 2021).

Among the discussion of the second genre, some studies note that the first and second respects above show that Chinese Straussians are similar to (neo-)conservatives, especially in terms that both have endorsed the revival of Chinese traditions and the necessity to resist liberal democracy and liberal ideas (Zhou 2009; Zhou 2012; Dallmayr 2012; Shaw 2017). For example, Dallmayr's work regards Gan Yang's Straussian proposition for integrating Confucianism, liberal socialism, and communism the embodiment of a "a strange version of conservatism" (Dallmayr 2012, 4). However, other studies of this genre point out that Chinese Straussians' critique on the corruption of intellectuals distinguish them from mainstream intellectuals, as Chinese Straussians recognize the latter has been corrupted by modern Western doctrines and has been excessively absorbed in politics (Zheng 2013; Jiang 2014; Li 2021). For example, Jiang's research reveals that Chinese Straussians put emphasis on the relationship between intellectuals and the political society and therefore assert that intellectuals should retreat from politics to protect both intellectuals themselves and the stable life of the multitude (Jiang 2014). By the same token, Li's work contends that the intention of Chinese Straussians has transcended the

opposition between the left and the right, because Chinese Straussians propose to disengage intellectuals from obsession of diverse “-isms” (Li 2021).

Summary and Critique

In the first section I have reviewed the literature concerning the self-images of mainstream intellectuals in post-1989 China. On the one hand, current research reveals that the changing socio-economic-political condition in post-1989 China had imposed influences on the self-images of both the Liberals and neo-conservatives. Some studies have discussed how the process of vulgarization had undermined the Liberals’ traditional *role of enlightening Chinese nation*. Other studies revolve how neo-conservatives had abandoned their traditional *role of enlightening Chinese nation* and thus reoriented themselves as *prudent defenders for Chinese reality* from an anti-radicalism stance. At the same time, existing literature also highlights that mainstream intellectuals, either the Liberals or neo-conservatives, in the post-1989 era still consider themselves to have the *role of enlightening Chinese nation*. Therefore, the central issue of the first genre of literature is whether Chinese intellectuals had transformed their self-image as the *role of enlightening Chinese nation* in the post-1989 era.

The second section focuses on the literature concerning the contentions between mainstream intellectuals and Chinese Straussians. On the one hand, existing research demonstrates that Chinese Straussians are divergent from the Liberals but similar to neo-conservatives in terms of Chinese Straussians’ proposition for revival of Chinese tradition and their rejection of liberal democracy and liberal ideas. On the other hand, some studies distinguish Chinese Straussians from mainstream intellectuals as a whole, as Chinese Straussians propose to retreat from politics, while mainstream intellectuals are excessively absorbed in politics adhering to modern “-isms”. This thread of scholarship thus supplements to the current understanding of the intellectual debate in post-1989 China by engaging Chinese Straussians into the contestations and relations with both the Liberals and neo-conservatives.

However, current understandings of Chinese intellectuals’ self-images in the post-1989 era remain incomplete. What is missing in these scholarly debates is a more thorough understanding of the self-image of Chinese Straussians in the post-1989 era. Since we have imperfect knowledge about Chinese Straussians, which have been a significant participant in the intellectual debate, our understanding of the intellectual debate in post-1989 China is also insufficient. As a result, we cannot thoroughly specify whether and to what extent the Liberals, neo-conservatives, and Chinese Straussians, who have all participated in the intellectual debate in post-1989 China, are inherently different from each other. Specifically, we cannot tell yet if and in what respect the self-image of Chinese Straussians are different from that of the liberals and neo-conservatives. To assess and better understand the position of the Chinese Straussians in the post-1989 intellectual debate and therefore the post-1989 intellectual debate itself, there is a need to study the role in relation with China’s society that Chinese Straussians prescribed for themselves. The research question of this thesis is thus: what was the self-image of Chinese Straussians? Or what was the role in relation with China’s society that Chinese Straussians had prescribed for themselves?

PROJECT DESIGN

The research question of this thesis is: what was the self-image of Chinese Straussians? Namely, what was the role in relation with China's society that Chinese Straussians prescribe for themselves? To approach this research question, I will analyze the self-image of one representative figure of Chinese Straussians, Liu Xiaofeng, by studying his writings that I find relevant to his self-image as a Chinese Straussian. In this project design section, I will explain (1) the reason I choose Liu Xiaofeng and hence analyze his self-image to answer the research question; (2) the theoretical assumption that underpins my approach to reveal Liu Xiaofeng's self-image by studying his writings; (3) the sources (specific writings of Liu Xiaofeng) from which I will collect data for analysis; and (4) the analytic framework I will deploy in the case study section.

Why Liu Xiaofeng?

There are a substantial number of figures labeled as Chinese Straussians. Due to limitation on capacity, I am unable to study the self-images of all Chinese Straussians but the self-image of one representative figure, Liu Xiaofeng, in this thesis.

Liu Xiaofeng was born in Chongqing, China in 1956. He is now a well-known Chinese scholar and professor in Renmin University of China, one of the most prestigious universities in China in the field of social sciences and humanities. Liu received his master's degree in philosophy in Peking University in 1985 and Ph.D. degree in theology in University of Basel in 1993. From 1993 to 2002, Liu worked as a researcher in the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. From 2002 to 2003, he worked at the University of Bonn as a visiting professor. From 2003 to 2009, Liu worked as professor and doctoral supervisor in the Department of Philosophy of Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangdong, China. Since 2009, Liu has been working in Renmin University of China as professor and doctoral supervisor in the School of Liberal Arts and chief of the Center for Classical Civilization. Liu's official profile in Renmin University of China indicates that his research field comprises "classical poetics, classical political philosophy and comparative classics."¹

There are two reasons for which I decide to analyze Liu Xiaofeng's self-image. First, Liu Xiaofeng is the main introducer of Leo Strauss' works into mainland China. Consequently, most studies of the "Contestations from Chinese Straussians" genre specified in the previous section consider Liu Xiaofeng the founding and most authoritative member of Chinese Straussians. Since 1999, Liu has published an array of essays concerning Leo Strauss and relevant issues. Existing scholarship focusing on Chinese Straussians' propositions and claims regards Liu Xiaofeng's writings during this period typical texts of Chinese Straussians (Zheng 2013; Marchal and Shaw 2017; Kwak and Park 2021). Second, Liu Xiaofeng has been consistently and expressly positioning himself as a Chinese Straussian. For example, Liu manifests explicitly in the preface of his self-edited essay collection *The Road Sign of Leo Strauss* (施特劳斯的标路 in Chinese) that essays in this collection are reflection of what he has learn from Leo Strauss (研读施特劳斯的的心得 in Chinese) (Liu 2011). In "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition (施特劳斯余中国——古典心性的相逢 in

¹ The information can be found at the official website of Renmin University of China: http://wenxueyuan.ruc.edu.cn/sztd/zjs/azcpl/zjs_js/5b317ef32bf849f98d1d0ade9473e2a8.htm

Chinese)", Liu Xiaofeng responds to the query from what he named as "the Western scholars", about the reason Chinese scholars, typically like Liu himself, introduce works of Leo Strauss into mainland China (Liu 2009).

Why Liu Xiaofeng's writings?

To demonstrate the self-image of Liu Xiaofeng, I will analyze selected writings of Liu Xiaofeng based on the premise that a careful reader can disclose the author's subjectivity from his/her text. This presumption is derived from Wayne Booth's theory of authorship that to produce a text is a conscious activity of the author, even if the author's consciousness is constrained by culture and language system itself to some extent (Booth 1961). Text is intentional product of author because an author has to deploy writing strategies and to make an array of choices when producing a text. Therefore, careful readers and critics can not only reconstruct the author's writing strategy but also discover the author's intention from words and sentences within the text. There are three reasons for which I agree with Booth's theory and applies it to the study of the writings and self-image of Liu Xiaofeng.

Firstly, previous studies on Chinese intellectuals' self-images have all deployed unspecified textual analysis methods to reveal the self-image of the author, even though these studies have barely developed a formal section to explain their methodology choice. For example, Joseph Fewsmith's research on the Liberals has analyzed writings of Li Shenzhi to reveal his Enlightenment stance (Fewsmith 2008, 113-39). Ben Xu's research on neo-conservatives has likewise analyzed writings of Zhang Yiwu and Wang Desheng to illustrate their anti-radical stance (Xu 1999). Like Booth's authorship theory, these studies actually presume that subjectivity of the author, including his/her self-image, can be discovered through close reading and critics through interpreting words and sentences in the text.

Secondly, preliminary research on selected Liu Xiaofeng's Straussian writings indicates that Booth's authorship theory applies well to the case of Liu Xiaofeng and his writings, as Liu has indeed set up conspicuous signs to remind his readers that the author has intentionally concealed some implicit content. For example, in "The Docility of the Hedgehog (刺猬的温顺 in Chinese)", Liu equates China and Athens by using rhetorical expressions and distinctive font (Liu 2001), which, on the one hand, indicates that Liu has an explicit intention to remind his readers to notice the anomaly. On the other hand, this also suggests that Liu has concealed a portion of his intention, which I propose myself to disclose with attentiveness on the words and sentences in Liu's text.

Thirdly, the potential difference in theory between Liu Xiaofeng's intention as the author of his Straussian writings and his self-image as a Chinese Straussian is not significant for the case study on Liu's writings. On the one hand, Booth's theory contends that observers at large can disclose an author's intention from the text, which underpins the research approach that starts with objective text but concludes with subjective matters, including, for example, both intention and self-image. On the other hand, preliminary research on two selected Liu Xiaofeng's Straussian writings, "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss" (Liu 2002) and "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition" (Liu 2009), indicates that Liu's intention as the author concerns predominantly persuading other Chinese intellectuals to follow Chinese Straussians' path to rescue their moral-political characters and to revive Chinese traditions (Liu 2002; Liu 2009). As I define self-image of Chinese intellectuals as the role in

relation with China's society that Chinese intellectuals prescribe for themselves, Liu's intention as such manifests his self-image to be the instructor or educator of other Chinese intellectuals.

Source of Data

In this thesis, I will focus on Liu Xiaofeng's writings between 1999 and 2009. There are two reasons. Firstly, during this period, Liu Xiaofeng's writings focused mainly on Leo Strauss and Straussian topics, and Liu recognized himself as a Chinese Straussian publicly (Liu 2009). Comparing to Liu's writings in other episodes when his Straussian consciousness is not publicly manifested by himself, writings between 1999 and 2009 have a more direct connection with Liu's identity and therefore his self-image as a Chinese Straussian. Secondly, Liu Xiaofeng's writings between 1999 and 2009 are distinctive from his later writings in terms of their broad readership that ranged from high school students and mass culture audience to academic researchers. For example, Liu Xiaofeng published only 5 out of 46 works on university journals between 1999 and 2009. Most of his works in this episode were published on non-academic journals such as *Dushu* (读书 in Chinese), *Shucheng* (书城 in Chinese) and *China Book Review* (中国图书评论 in Chinese). Between 2010 and 2020, however, Liu published no article on *Dushu* or *Shucheng* and only 10 out of 87 works on *Open Times* (开放时代 in Chinese), *Thinking* (思想战略 in Chinese), *China Book Review* or other nonacademic journals. Most of his writings between 2010 and 2020 were posted on university journals, whose readership therefore included narrowly scholars of Chinese *academia*.² The unique readership of Liu Xiaofeng's writings between 1999 and 2009 has an implication that Liu had participated in preponderantly public intellectual debate during this period, where contestations between the Liberals and neo-conservatives had taken place in post-1989 China.

In addition to the 46 works Liu Xiaofeng published separately between 1999 and 2009,³ *The Modernity of the West: Complication and Development* (西方现代性的曲折与展开 in Chinese) edited by He Zhaotian (贺照田) in 2002 comprised a long introduction chapter contributed by Liu Xiaofeng, "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss" (He, 2002; Liu 2002). In 2011, Liu compiled "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss" into his essay collection in the same name (Liu 2011). Although Liu has not published "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss" separately in the form of journal article, this work is as important as the 46 works Liu published separately between 1999 and 2009 because it has manifested Liu Xiaofeng's role as the main introducer of Leo Strauss's works into mainland China (He 2002).⁴ In this regard, I will choose its data from the 47 works.

² The data can be found at the website of CNKI:

<https://kns.cnki.net/kns8/AdvSearch?dbprefix=CFLS&&crossDbcodes=CJFQ%2CCDMD%2CCIPD%2CCND%2CCISD%2CSNA%2CCBDZK%2CCCJD%2CCCVD%2CCJFN>.

³ Among the 46 texts, 15 were published on *Dushu* (读书 in Chinese) or *Shucheng* (书城 in Chinese), 10 on *China Book Review* (中国图书评论 in Chinese), 6 on *Open Times* (开放时代 in Chinese), 3 on *Journal of Sun Yat-sen University* (中山大学学报 in Chinese), 3 on *Zhejiang Academic Journal* (浙江学刊 in Chinese), 3 on *Seeking Truth* (求是学刊 in Chinese), 2 on *Foreign Literature* (国外文学 in Chinese), 1 on *Thinking* (思想战线 in Chinese), 1 on *Journal of Northwest Normal University* (西北师大学报 in Chinese), 1 on *Journal of Sichuan International Studies University* (四川外国语学院学报 in Chinese) and 1 on *College Times* (大学时代 in Chinese).

⁴ The first issue of *The Modernity of the West: Complication and Development* edited by He Zhaotian is about Leo Strauss. This issue contains one article by Liu Xiaofeng, seven translated articles by Leo Strauss, and one translated article by Strauss's student Stanley Rosen. Liu's article "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss" serves as the introduction and overview of the whole issue, and Liu Xiaofeng himself was the editorial consultant of this issue (He 2002).

A quick review shows that 15 of the 47 works involve and mention Leo Strauss directly in their main text. Among the remaining 32, 21 works involve Straussian topics such as philosopher-king (Liu 2008; Liu 2008b), the saint (Liu 2002b), and liberal education (Liu 2006; Liu 2006b), without mentioning Strauss in their main text or footnotes. In the other 11 works I found no explicit or implicit linkage with Strauss or Straussian topics.⁵ Due to limitation on capacity, I am unable to conduct analyses on every writing of Liu Xiaofeng in this thesis. Instead, I will analyze the three most representative writings selected from the 15 works that have a direct and clear connection with Strauss, “The Docility of the Hedgehog” (Liu 2001), “The Road Sign of Leo Strauss” (Liu 2008), and “Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition” (Liu 2009). The reason is two-fold. Firstly, only 4 out of the 15 works revolve Straussian topics only,⁶ while the rest 11 works blend Straussian topics with other topics. For example, the theoretical presumption and analytic method of “The Apology of Thomas Hobbes (霍布斯的”申辩” in Chinese)” are both derived from Leo Strauss’s classical philosophy and thus Liu’s conspicuous Straussian stance. The main content of this work, however, is how Thomas Hobbes defended himself for not being gentile (Liu 2007). Comparing to writings with mixed topics, I think Liu’s writings that revolve Strauss and Straussian topics only correspond more precisely to the purpose of this thesis to reveal Liu’s self-image as a Chinese Straussian. Secondly, comparing to the other three works, “Leo Strauss and Enlightenment Philosophy I: Reading Early Script of Strauss *Cohen and Maimonides*” has a weaker linkage with the research question of this thesis, because its content involves nothing substantive about China, let along the social role of Chinese intellectuals.

Analytic Framework

I propose to deploy thematic analysis for case study. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research approach, which was originally developed for psychology research by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke. Braun and Clarke define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data, which comprise significant aspects of the data in relation to the research question (Braun and Clarke 2008). There are two reasons for which I choose thematic analysis instead of the other two methods of textual analysis, discourse analysis or qualitative content analysis, to study Liu Xiaofeng’s writings (the data). Firstly, discourse analysis entails uncovering how discourse constructs legitimacy and meanings for social practices and institutions (Gee 2014). I do not propose to reveal the relationship between Liu Xiaofeng’s text and its social context but focuses on particular content within Liu Xiaofeng’s writings that manifests his self-image as a Chinese Straussian. In other words, I will not illustrate how Liu Xiaofeng’s writings endorse, legitimize, or underpin his self-image as a Chinese Straussian, which is precisely what a discourse analysis work can do. Secondly, qualitative content analysis does not match the research question of this thesis either, because qualitative content analysis is inherently a method of data collection (Halperin and Heath 2020), while the self-image of

⁵ I use “Straussian topics” to refer to a range of topics that Leo Strauss had articulated in his original works, including for example the conflict between philosophers and the polis, Socrates’s death, and classical liberal education. However, since Strauss’s discussion included a wide range of topic, it is difficult to give a specific definition for “Straussian topics” here. However, this concept helps us to identify topics that have no relevance with Strauss’s original works and Strauss himself. In Appendix 1, I have listed all 47 works and classifies them into three genres in accordance with their relevance to Leo Strauss and what I named as Straussian topics.

⁶ “The Docility of the Hedgehog” (Liu 2001), “The Road Sign of Leo Strauss” (Liu 2002), “Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition” (Liu 2009) and “Leo Strauss and Enlightenment Philosophy I: Reading Early Script of Strauss *Cohen and Maimonides* (施特劳斯与启蒙哲学<上>: 读施特劳斯早期文稿《柯亨与迈蒙尼德》 in Chinese)” (Liu 2009b)

the author is not a category of data that can be collected directly from the text. Even though qualitative content analysis assumes the possibility to expose latent content of a text, including for example, the meanings, motives, and purpose embedded within the text, qualitative content analysis is still about the lexicon of a text, instead of the subjectivity of an author (Kohlbacher 2006). On the contrary, the research question of this thesis has an overwhelming emphasis on the author.

I agree with the six-step analytic framework developed by Braun and Clarke. (1) Familiarizing with the data; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes; (4) Reviewing themes; (5) Defining and naming themes; (6) producing the report (Braun and Clarke 2008).

For my research, the first, second, and third steps entail searching through the three texts of Liu Xiaofeng for fractions of text (or what I call “noticeable remarks” in the subsequent section) that are relevant to Liu Xiaofeng’s self-image. A preparatory scrutiny on the three writings (the first step) suggests that their main content is Liu’s reading report on Leo Strauss’s works,⁷ and that Liu has not formulated any original argument but has made an array of comments (remarks) involving China and Chinese intellectuals in the main text of his writings. These remarks include, for example, Liu Xiaofeng’s rhetoric expressions that denote Athens as China, Socrates as Chinese philosopher (Liu 2001) and his explicit suggestions for Chinese intellectuals to study classical political philosophy (Liu 2009). With a primary examination, I find these remarks can manifest Liu’s self-image as a Chinese Straussian directly or indirectly. For example, at the end of Chapter 2 of “Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition”, Liu Xiaofeng contends that “we Chinese intellectuals” should save “our” moral-political character by appealing to classical political philosophy that Leo Strauss advocated (2009, 63). This remark implies that Liu believes that Chinese intellectuals including himself, should learn from Strauss, and it has disclosed some clues about the role that Liu prescribes for himself. Remarks as such appear only two to four times in each writing, and thus have a limited total number. My preliminary review of these remarks suggests that there are also explicit or implicit clues about Liu Xiaofeng’s self-image within each of them. In this regard, my thematic analysis should code Liu’s remarks as such. The standard for coding is two-fold.

Firstly, the code should be a fragment of the main text in Liu Xiaofeng’s writings. That is to say, I will not merely focus on single words or expressions at the coding process but pay attention to specific integral parts that convey what the author intends to tell us. Sometimes, the author may have used several long paragraphs to address what I consider to be an integral and undividable message. In other cases, the author may have addressed a point with only one or two sentences. Therefore, the length of these codes can be different depending on where I think an integral meaning/message ends in the text.

Secondly, the code should involve either “China” or “Chinese intellectuals” directly. As the bulk of the three writings are reading reports on Strauss’s original works, one shall be able to spot the few words, expression, and/or integral messages in relation with China or Chinese intellectuals quickly when reading the three writings.

After coding the selected three writings of Liu Xiaofeng (the second step) separately in the section “Remarks in Liu Xiaofeng’s writings”, I will categorize all codes into different themes and analyze these themes in “Interpretation: Self-image of Liu Xiaofeng” (the third, fourth, and fifth steps).

⁷ In all three writings, Liu interprets and paraphrases Leo Strauss’s original works and arguments without formulating his own theory. Although “Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition” is primitively Liu Xiaofeng’s speech at an academic conference, the main content of this article is still Liu’s reading report on Strauss’s work *Thoughts on Machiavelli*.

CASE STUDY: SELF-IMAGE OF LIU XIAOFENG

Remarks in Liu Xiaofeng's Writings

The Docility of the Hedgehog

“The Docility of the Hedgehog” was initially published on *Shuwu* in 2001 and was later compiled into Liu’s essay collection in the same name in 2002. In 2011, Liu compiled “The Docility of the Hedgehog” into his self-edited essay collection *The Road Sign of Leo Strauss*, which has been revised into its second edition in 2020. There is little substantive difference in the basic content between the 2001 version and the 2020 version. However, Liu changed two rhetorical expressions in the 2020 version, which is significant to the discussion in the next section. While this thesis will refer to the 2001 version of “The Docility of the Hedgehog” for case study, it will also compare the different rhetorical expressions in two versions when necessary. That is because, the academic field where this thesis proposes to be engaged is the intellectual debate and intellectuals’ self-images in post-1989 China. Current research of this field concentrates on the time range during 1989 to the early 2000s. Therefore, the 2001 version has a stronger chronological proximity with the field than the 2020 version does. Liu’s editorial changes on his own text, however, is supposedly able to reveal his primary intention to underline or conceal specific content embedded within rhetorical expressions to a degree.

By its content, “The Docility of the Hedgehog” is less about Liu’s original thesis on Leo Strauss than about a synthesis of his reading notes on Strauss’s works, including for example *What is Political Philosophy? Liberalism Ancient and Modern*, and *Natural Right and History*. This article comprises an “Preface” part, nine subsequent chapters in the main text and ending note part. In the “Preface” part, Liu indicated that he had begun to write “The Docility of the Hedgehog” at the end of 1998 but had failed to complete the writing at the end of 1999. He completed the “Preface” in June 2000 with a remark that “Fortunately, it is still not too late to farewell the twentieth century (幸好现在告别二十世纪还来得及 in Chinese)” (Liu 2001).

Pursuant to the two-fold standard that I set in the “Analytic framework” part, there are four noticeable remarks in the main text of “The Docility of the Hedgehog”.

The first remark (A1) appears in the tenth paragraph of Chapter 5, entitled “The Conflict between the Athenian Philosopher and Political-Theology of the Multitude (雅典哲人与民众的政治-神学冲突 in Chinese)”. Before Liu’s own insert, this chapter has been unfolding itself surrounding the Straussian question “What/who is the (Socratic) Athenian Philosopher in the Platonic dialogue *Laws (Νόμοι)*?” Liu notes that “to be a Socratic philosopher in Athens” is to question the convention and law of the polis and to challenge the political authority of the multitude so that the Socratic philosopher can ascend to *nature*. Liu further claims that the Socratic philosophers impose on themselves a political hazard plight where the multitude accuse them of perverting morality of the youths. Liu Xiaofeng’s first remark begins with a fictional encounter between “deputy to the National People's Congress of China (全国人大代表 in Chinese)” Euthyphro and Socrates on his way to trial. Liu “zooms out” from interpreting the text of *What is Political Philosophy?* by Leo Strauss and hypothesizes: Where would Socrates flee if he were convicted to be an ideological dissident in China (假如苏格拉底在中国被判为思想异见分子, 他可以逃到哪里去 in Chinese)? Liu specifies two options for Socrates in his

hypothesis. The first is the United States of America (the USA), and the second is Southeast Asia. On the one hand, Liu contends that both China and the USA are countries with a legal system. The authority of both legal systems originates from either the convention of the multitude or the divine revelation of “gods.” In this regard, Socrates would be convicted as dissident as well in the USA even if the “god” in the USA is completely different from the “god” in China, because Socratic philosophers object all conventions and all gods. On the other hand, Liu contends that legal system of Southeast Asia is imperfect and thus cannot protect Socrates from being killed by “barbarians”. In Liu’s remark, Socrates would choose to stay “in China (Athens)”⁸ and waiting for being sentenced to death under such a circumstance, which is the noblest political choice after Socrates’s prudent consideration. Liu further asks the reason for which Strauss thought Socrates’s decision of staying in Athens (China) and waiting for death is the noblest choice, rather than fleeing bringing philosophy to the USA for living especially considering that the USA is a liberal state (Liu 2001).⁹

The second remark (A2) appears in the eighth paragraph of the Chapter 5, entitled “Virtue Transformation of Philosophers (哲人德性的转变 in Chinese)”. The preceding text discusses the divergence between the educational institutions of ancient and modern democratic regimes. Liu argues that modern democratic regimes demoralize technology and pursue economic growth, while ancient democratic regimes attached significance to acquiring virtue through education. Liu zooms out for the second time contending that the “elites nowadays” (优才 in Chinese) are those who know high-techs or how to manipulate in stock market, and they are completely indifferent to the issue of being a good man (好人 in Chinese). In the following paragraphs, Liu keeps on discussing the same topic and claiming that so-called philosophers nowadays understand only technologies of philosophy but scarcely have any knowledge about the soul. Liu criticized this specific modern phenomenon to be absurd (Liu 2001).

The third remark (A3) appears in the twentieth paragraph of Chapter 5. The preceding text focuses on the confrontation between the lifestyle of Socratic philosopher on the one side, and the people and the people’s government (人民政府 in Chinese) on the other side. Liu claims that this confrontation is the very political problem (政治问题 in Chinese) for philosophy and philosopher, which is the same plight that Liu has discussed in the first remark A1. At A3, Liu Xiaofeng once again discusses an imagined encounter between Socrates and Euthyphro. He notes that Socrates had finally acquired such a political consciousness (政治意识 in Chinese) on his way to “the people’s court (人民法院 in Chinese)” that philosopher must learn to coexist in harmony with faith of the people. Liu further argues that Socrates’ political consciousness emerged not from his fear of the authority of the people and people’s government, but from his prudence (审慎 in Chinese) which requires philosophers to conceal their opinion by writing esoterically(Liu 2001).

The fourth remark (A4) appears in the thirteenth paragraph of Chapter 9, entitled “To Burden the Severity and Ruthlessness of Life (承负生活的严峻和残酷 in Chinese)”. The preceding text of this remark revolves mainly Liu Xiaofeng’s interpretation of Leo Strauss’s original work *What is Political Philosophy?* and *Laws* by Plato. Liu argues that if young Socrates had comprehended how to conceal

⁸ “China (Athens)” and “Athens (China)” are both Liu’s original expressions. In the text of “The Docility of the Hedgehog”, Liu puts “中国” (or “雅典”) in parentheses next to “雅典” (or “中国”). This thesis conceptualize Liu’s usage of “雅典(中国)” and “中国(雅典)” as an intentional “Athens-China” rhetoric. For the same reason, Liu also intentionally uses “Crete-the USA” rhetoric for discussion. Both “Athens-China” and “Crete-the USA” appear for six times throughout the text.

⁹ The original text has used a distinct font to highlight the word “liberal” (自由的).

his opinion and to coexist in harmony with faith of the people, (the Athenian philosopher in Plato's *Laws*) as the Athenian philosopher in Plato's *Laws* and invited legislator to Crete, he would imitate the convention and faith of the people. By doing so, the Athenian philosopher as legislator of Crete established a regime that combines the convention and faith of the people with freedom within a given scope for philosophic contemplation. Liu claims that a regime as such is not only stable but also feasible for almost everyone, including the philosophers, to conform and live in. Therefore, Liu considers this regime a docile political ideal of the Athenian philosopher. At the final remark A4, Liu zooms out from interpreting Strauss's discussion on Plato's *Laws*, and repeats his question raised in preceding chapters about Socrates's choice of waiting for death in China instead of fleeing to the USA. Liu Xiaofeng asks his readers again why Socrates's choice is the noblest decision, and gives his own answer in the following part, where he replaced "China" in the main text with "Athens." The reason Liu recognizes is that the liberal democracy (自由的民主 in Chinese) of Athens (instead of China) is the most suitable regime for philosophers to live in, because it permits philosophers to freely contemplate within a certain scope (Liu 2001).

Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition

"Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition" was originally a topic paper that Liu Xiaofeng delivered to an academic conference held by University of Birmingham in 2007 (Liu 2009).¹⁰ In 2009, Liu Xiaofeng modified his paper and published it on the first issue of *Thinking*. Both English version and Chinese version of this article have five sections including an introduction where Liu Xiaofeng outlines his confusion about the reason why both Chinese and Western scholars¹¹ had paid particular attention to the rise of Chinese Straussians. In the four subsequent sections, Liu responds to the query regarding the personal or intellectual? incentives of Chinese Straussians to introduce Leo Strauss's works into mainland China. In the first section, Liu discusses his understanding of Strauss's political philosophy and its fundamental divergence from modern doctrines such as liberalism and conservatism. He emphasizes that modern Western doctrines have "a clear purpose" of getting practiced in political reality. This particular character distinguishes modern Western doctrines from Strauss's political philosophy. In the next three sections, Liu Xiaofeng lists three reasons to justify the introduction of Strauss's political philosophy into China. First, Liu Xiaofeng thinks Strauss's political philosophy can help Chinese intellectuals to get rid of their obsession with modern Western doctrines. Second, Liu Xiaofeng thinks that Strauss's political philosophy reminds Chinese intellectuals to be cautious about the educational system of the modern West. Third, Liu Xiaofeng considers Strauss's political philosophy an approach to liberate Chinese intellectuals from their longtime fallacy of using modern Western doctrines to evaluate China's classical *Logos* (道 in Chinese). By learning Strauss's political philosophy, Liu believes that Chinese intellectuals can relieve themselves from fanatical political imagination that they obtained from Western educational system. Throughout the text, Liu Xiaofeng preponderantly cites and analyzes Strauss's work *Thoughts on*

¹⁰ In any version of this paper (Liu 2009; Liu 2009b; Liu 2011; Liu 2015), however, there is no clear record or description of the name, theme, date, venue, or organizer of what Liu called as "an academic conference held by University of Birmingham in 2007".

¹¹ Throughout "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition", Liu Xiaofeng does not specify any specific figure that belongs to what he names as "Chinese scholars" or "Western Scholars".

Machiavelli to endorse his propositions of reforming Chinese universities and educational system.¹² Two thirds of the whole text is about Liu's interpretation of Strauss's original work, and only one third of the text is about Liu's propositions. In this regard, "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition" is substantively a reading report on *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, although it is formally a response to the query from what Liu names as "the West"¹³ (Liu 2009). Pursuant to the two-fold standard that I set in the "Analytic framework" part, there are three noticeable remarks in "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition."

The first remark (**B1**) appears at the end of Chapter 1. Liu claims that the only reason for which Strauss's political philosophy may distress some Chinese intellectuals is that Chinese intellectuals have received their education in the "project of modernity (现代性构想 in Chinese)", which inherently adheres to Robespierre's political idea of "establishing the great building of wisdom, justice and virtue on this earth (在地上建立智慧、正义和美德的大厦 in Chinese)." Liu notes that to implement the "project of modernity" requires the establishment of corresponding educational system, which has been a mature practice in the USA and Europe but not yet in China. Liu Xiaofeng contends that China thus still has an opportunity to reverse the trend of reforming educational system to pursue "project of modernity" ever since the 1990s. In this regard, Liu considers that Strauss's political philosophy will exert pragmatic influence on China to a greater extent than on the West.

After a long analysis on Strauss's *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, Liu Xiaofeng returns back to the topic of B1 at the second remark (**B2**) which appears in the last paragraph of Chapter 2. At B2, Liu Xiaofeng firstly repeats his warning that Chinese intellectuals should be cautious about the negative effects of "Western educational system". Liu then advocates that "We Chinese intellectuals" must save "our" moral-political character by appealing to classical principles. He described the choice between Platonic-Straussian classical political philosophy and modern Western doctrines as a life-and-death juncture for Chinese intellectuals (Liu 2009).

The third remark (**B3**) appears in the first paragraph of Chapter 3, where Liu Xiaofeng briefly illustrates the contention between the Liberals and the New-Left at first. Liu Xiaofeng indicates that Leo Strauss's political philosophy has imposed formidable challenges on liberalism and the Liberals. These challenges are fundamentally different from the challenges from the New-Left because, in Liu's opinion, Strauss's political philosophy is intrinsically on the opposite side of Enlightenment, to which either the Liberals or the New-Left still adheres. In other words, Straussians are opponents of both the Liberals and the New-Left as Straussians have fundamentally rejected Enlightenment tradition. In the subsequent critique on Enlightenment tradition, however, Liu Xiaofeng has targeted only on the Liberals and has kept silent on Straussians' opposition against the New-Left. The New-Left has not appeared in the text until Liu Xiaofeng concludes his discussion at the end of Chapter four, where he classifies both liberalism and the New-Leftism once again as Western doctrines based on faith of progress and Enlightenment tradition (Liu 2009).

The fourth remark (**B4**) appears in the last two paragraphs of the article, which concludes the whole discussion. Liu Xiaofeng zooms out from his long and detailed analysis on Strauss's original

¹² There are 12 footnotes in "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition" (Chinese version), which was published on *Thinking* in 2009. Among the 12 footnotes, 7 ones are quotations of Leo Strauss's work *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, and one is quotation of Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

¹³ Liu Xiaofeng uses "the West" to denote the agent who concerns about the revival of Chinese tradition. Liu does not define this broad term in his work, neither does he specify any specific state, institution, or people that "the West" refers to.

works *Thoughts on Machiavelli* and *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* and returns to the theme question that he raised in the introduction section: Why did some Western scholars have a particular concern about the introduction of Leo Strauss's political philosophy into China? Liu Xiaofeng contends that the anxiety of Western scholars stems from their awareness that learning Leo Strauss's classical political philosophy might enable Chinese intellectuals to revive China's moral-political tradition, which will in turn impose significant challenge on the modern Western moral-political conceptions. In the end, Liu Xiaofeng argues that Western scholars will only appreciate and easily accept that some contemporary Chinese scholars conceptualize Confucianism as the source of neo-authoritarianism (新权威主义 in Chinese) and Zhuangzi (庄子) as a great fighter standing for Liberalism (伟大的自由主义斗士 in Chinese) (Liu 2009).

The Road Sign of Leo Strauss

This thesis has already introduced the publication information of “The Road Sign of Leo Strauss” in “Data”, which is the second section of “Sources and Scope”. By its content, “The Road Sign of Leo Strauss”, like “The Docility of the Hedgehog”, is also a complicated reading report on the synthesis of an array of Leo Strauss's works, mainly *The City and Man*, *On Plato's Symposium*, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy*, and *Natural Right and History*. There are two noticeable remarks in “The Road Sign of Strauss.”

The first remark (C1) appears in the ninth paragraph of Chapter 3, entitled “Still No Moral Order Protects Philosophers (仍然没有道德秩序可以保护哲人 in Chinese)”. In the preceding text, Liu Xiaofeng introduces Strauss's interpretation of *Apology of Socrates* by Plato, which ends up with Strauss's conclusion that Socrates had intentionally infuriated the jurors who insisted on sentencing him to death. Liu therefore inquires into the identity of those in the jury who stuck to executing Socrates. Similar question appears in “The Docility of the Hedgehog,” where Liu interprets Socrates' death the consequence of his confrontation with the convention and faith of the people. However, at C1 Liu Xiaofeng changes his statements by replacing “the people” with “the democratic politicians in Athens (雅典的民主政治家 in Chinese)”. He further probes into the connotation of “the democratic politicians in Athens” and equates them with modern liberal intellectuals (自由派知识分子们 in Chinese) living in liberal democratic regimes. Liu Xiaofeng therefore argues, it was the opposition between philosophers and the liberal intellectuals who recognize themselves representatives of the people that had sentenced Socrates to death, because the people are not interested in or barely have any knowledge about philosophy (Liu 2002).

The second remark (C2) appears in Chapter 6, entitled “The Intersection of the Middle Ages (中世纪的岔路口 in Chinese)”. In the preceding text, Liu Xiaofeng has mentioned Leo Strauss's critique on his teacher Hermann Cohen, which is confusing for Liu himself because Hermann Cohen was a reputational philosopher in the Nineteenth century who had paid considerable attention to the medieval philosophy of Judaism (中世纪的犹太教哲学 in Chinese), in which Leo Strauss had a particular interest as well. At C2, Liu Xiaofeng notes that to mention Hermann Cohen reminds people his counterpart Mu Zongsan (牟宗三). That is because Mu Zongsan was a master of neo-Confucianism philosophy (新儒家的哲学大师 in Chinese), who had likewise devoted himself to reinterpreting Confucianism by comparing Confucianism with Kantianism. Liu Xiaofeng then contends that Mu Zongsan is divergent from Hermann Cohen in terms that Cohen endeavored to reconcile Judaism with

Greek philosophy, while Mu strove to manifest the superiority of Confucianism to Western rationalism. In the subsequent part, Liu Xiaofeng argues that Mu Zongsan's understanding of Western rationalism had, however, restricted his horizon when he reinterpreted Confucianism. At the end of C2, Liu Xiaofeng asks whether a nation can genuinely revive its cultural tradition by reinterpreting the national tradition through the lens of Western rationalism philosophy. He then questions if Cohen's attempt to reinterpret Judaism through the lens of Kantian rationalism had fundamentally misunderstood the relation between Athens and Jerusalem (Liu 2002).¹⁴

Interpretation: Self-image of Liu Xiaofeng

Threads of Discussion

Having filtered 10 codes, A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, B2, B3, B4, C1, and C2 out from the data, I will analyze these codes and categorize them into different themes in this section. My analysis finds that these codes revolve around two themes: (1) A2, B1, B2, B3, and C1 revolve how Liu Xiaofeng distinguishes what he names as "genuine philosophers" from modern intellectuals and his comments on Chinese intellectuals, especially the Liberals and the New-Left; (2) A1, A3, A4, B3, B4, and C2 revolve Chinese philosophers' relation with China and Chinese people, including Liu's discussion on Chinese philosophers' harmonious coexistence with Chinese people and his propositions for Chinese intellectuals to revive Chinese tradition. I will illustrate in the subsequent analysis that each theme contains one aspect of Liu Xiaofeng's self-image as a Chinese Straussian.

Theme One: To Enlighten Chinese Intellectuals

The first theme concerns the role to enlighten other Chinese intellectuals that Liu Xiaofeng has prescribed for himself. By analyzing A2, B1, B2, B3, and C1, I find there is a conceptual hierarchy among genuine philosophers, Chinese Straussians, the New-Left, and the Liberals deep in Liu's mind. In this hierarchy, either the New-Left or the Liberals are inferior to Chinese Straussians as they are obsessed with modern Western doctrines and they can only rescue their moral-political characters through the redemptive approach provided by Chinese Straussians. I also find that Liu Xiaofeng's attitudes towards the New-Left and the Liberals respectively are different. I think, for Liu Xiaofeng, there are similarities between the New-Left and Chinese Straussians, which reminds me that there is other aspect than mere anti-Enlightenment stance in Liu Xiaofeng's self-image as a Chinese Straussian.

A2, B1, and B2

At A2, Liu Xiaofeng criticizes elites in contemporary era for knowing only high-tech or how to manipulate in stock market firstly. Liu Xiaofeng then considers the demoralization of contemporary elites as the consequence of modern education because modern educators do not have adequate virtues. In the subsequent session, however, Liu Xiaofeng transforms the question of "who are educators with virtues" into the question of "who are genuine philosophers" and argues that genuine philosophers are different from modern intellectuals who nevertheless claim themselves to be philosophers. Therefore, the logic of Liu's discussion at A2 is that the lack of genuine philosophers in the modern era has led to the demoralization of contemporary elites. I think the key question here is what helps to distinguish a

¹⁴ "Athens and Jerusalem" is a set of analogy in Leo Strauss's original works. Strauss used "Athens" to represent "philosophy" and used "Jerusalem" to represent "revealed religion".

genuine philosopher from modern intellectuals. Liu Xiaofeng's answer is that genuine philosophers have holistic knowledge about the soul, while modern intellectuals only know terminologies and technologies of philosophy. What is "terminologies and technologies of philosophy"? In the 2001 version, there is no further description of this term. In the 2002 version, which was compiled into Liu's essay collection *The Docility of the Hedgehog* (Liu 2002c), Liu lists "symbolic logic" and "linguistic analysis" to exemplify the knowledge of modern intellectuals.

Back in early 2000s China, both "symbolic logic" and "linguistic analysis" had been prevalent topics among Chinese intellectuals since the 1980s. The two examples Liu Xiaofeng lists, along with high-techs and stock market manipulation that appear in the preceding text, are concrete and specific categories in contemporary Chinese society. In my view (if I were a reader in the early 2000s), Liu Xiaofeng's exemplification could have at least two implications. First, Liu Xiaofeng's critique on modern intellectuals at A2 targets at specific and concrete Chinese intellectuals instead of an abstract conceptualization entitled "modern intellectuals" itself. Second, Liu Xiaofeng considered most Chinese intellectuals were not genuine philosophers, but merely modern intellectuals familiar with terminologies and technologies of philosophy by the time he produced the text of "The Docility of the Hedgehog". Despite Liu's critical stance to disparage modern intellectuals at A1, however, I think there is no suggestion about whether or not Liu regarded himself as a genuine philosopher. This is because Liu Xiaofeng has not specified any specific Chinese figure to be a genuine philosopher throughout the text, neither has Liu suggested that he considered himself or other Chinese Straussians genuine philosophers. In my opinion, what Liu Xiaofeng's critique stance can indicate is that he refused to recognize himself as a member of "modern intellectuals" and decided to differentiate himself from other Chinese intellectuals by emulating genuine philosophers in the early 2000s.

B1 and B2 correspond to A2 as both B1 and B2 have a focus on Chinese intellectuals' choice of being either genuine philosophers or modern intellectuals, which are the same two types that Liu has specified at A2. I find there are two noticeable clues at B1 and B2. The first clue is the first-person expressions in the main text, including for example "We Chinese intellectuals" and "our moral-political characters". The second clue is Liu's proposition for "We Chinese intellectuals" to appeal to classical political philosophy to save "our" moral-political characters. The two clues have informed me of three implications concerning the author's intention.

First, as Liu Xiaofeng proposes this text to be a response to the query from what he entitles as "Western scholars" who have a concern for the introduction of Strauss's works into China, the first-person expressions suggest that Liu is not discussing the incentives of Chinese intellectuals from the objective stance of a third party. Instead, he is responding on behalf of "We Chinese intellectuals" since he recognizes himself to be a member of "We Chinese intellectuals". What is also clear for me is, "We Chinese intellectuals" is different from "genuine philosophers", because in Liu's reading the latter have not been corrupted by modern Western doctrines and therefore do not need to save their moral-political characters as the former does.

Second, I perceive that Liu has made an exclusive distinction between "We Chinese intellectuals" and "modern intellectuals", because Liu considers himself to be a member of "We Chinese intellectuals" at B1 and B2 while refusing to recognize himself as a member of "modern intellectuals" at A2. This raises the question of what is the exact character that differentiates the third type "We Chinese intellectuals" from "modern intellectuals"? For Liu, "We Chinese intellectuals" have now realized the

necessity to save moral-political characters by learning from genuine philosophers. On the contrary, “modern intellectuals” are still obsessed with modern Western doctrines. In this regard, “We Chinese intellectuals” at B1 is an exceptional group of modern intellectuals, who has acquired the consciousness of abstaining from modern Western doctrines and returning to classical principles.

Third, Liu’s differentiation of “genuine philosopher”, “We Chinese intellectuals” and “modern intellectuals” thus entails a potential hierarchy of the three types in the author’s mind, with “genuine philosophers” at the top, “We Chinese intellectuals” at the middle, and “modern intellectuals” at the bottom. This hierarchy is, however, not permanent, as Liu contends that modern intellectuals at the bottom of the hierarchy can save themselves by turning to Leo Strauss’s instructions and classical political philosophy. In other words, “modern intellectuals” can ascend to “We Chinese intellectuals” through the redemptive approach that Chinese Straussians introduced. Therefore, the conceptual hierarchy Liu’s mind is more than a classification but contains a hidden relation between Chinese Straussians and other Chinese intellectuals, in which Chinese Straussians rescue other Chinese intellectuals by providing them with a redemptive approach to save their moral-political characters. Therefore, deep inside Liu’s intention when he produced the texts above is that Chinese Straussians should save and enlighten other Chinese intellectuals.

In a brief summary, my analysis reveals that Liu Xiaofeng prescribed himself with *the role of enlightening Chinese intellectuals*.

B3 and C1

At B3, Liu Xiaofeng has mainly argued that Chinese Straussians are fundamentally divergent from the Liberals and the New-Left because Chinese Straussians reject the Enlightenment stance but embrace classical political philosophy. Thus, the central topic at B3 is the distinction between Chinese Straussians and modern intellectuals, also between classical political philosophy and modern Western doctrines, including liberalism and conservatism. At B3, Liu Xiaofeng criticizes liberalism and the Liberals for their attacking Leo Strauss’s political philosophy and the introduction of it on the Enlightenment stance. Liu then advises the Liberals to reconsider their Enlightenment stance. However, there is no further mention on the New-Left in the subsequent text, neither has Liu given any explanation for his silence on the New-Left. I consider the absence of Liu’s critique on the New-Left and its potential reason to be strange yet critical issues that I will discuss below.

At C1, the discussion focuses on the death of Socrates, which is a quintessential topic in the original works of Leo Strauss. At C1, Liu considers the opposition between genuine philosophers and liberal intellectuals (自由派知识分子 in Chinese) to be the real cause of the death of Socrates. At A1, A3, and A4, however, Liu recognizes the cause of Socrates’s death to be the opposition between philosopher and the people.¹⁵ While the opposition between philosopher and the people (or their faith and convention) is an articulation Liu Xiaofeng extracted from Leo Strauss’s original works, the opposition between genuine philosophers and liberal intellectuals is Liu’s own formulation. There are four implications.

First, there is a clear suggestion at B3 that Liu Xiaofeng considers the Liberals and the New-Left are both modern intellectuals obsessed with the Enlightenment and modern Western doctrines, and that they are fundamentally at the opposite side of Chinese Straussians and classical political philosophy.

¹⁵ This thesis will analyze A1, A3, and A4 in the subsequent section Theme Two.

Therefore, in Liu's opinion, both are at the bottom of the conceptual hierarchy, and hence both need to be enlightened by Chinese Straussians.

Second, the fact that the author has intentionally concealed his critique on the New-Left without explanation indicates that Liu Xiaofeng has not equally criticized the Liberals and the New-Left. In specific, as a reader, I do expect that Liu will homogeneously criticize both intellectual groups in the subsequent section, since he has suggested that Chinese Straussians are fundamentally different from both groups and the modern Western doctrines they represent. My explanation is that Liu Xiaofeng holds different attitudes *de facto* towards the two groups of Chinese intellectuals, even if he has ostensibly suggested that Chinese Straussians are divergent from both.

Third, Liu's partiality also reminds me that the author does not evade demonstrating his aversion towards the Liberals. Liu's discussion at C1 is another evidence, which clearly manifests his repudiation and hostility towards the Liberals. At C1, he has highlighted “自由派知识分子们 (liberal intellectuals)” by using a distinct font, which suggests that the author has a particular intention when formulating the text. “Liberal intellectuals” as a concrete signifier in Chinese language system cannot signify a historical category in Athens of Ancient Greece directly. The signifying structure, however, may emerge from a circuitous formulation containing an analogy where characters of modern Chinese liberal intellectuals are compared to features of sophists in ancient Athens. “Liberal intellectuals” at C1 therefore refer to a specific group of modern Chinese intellectuals in the first place before the signifying structure can further involve other categories with similar characters. Wherever the signifying structure finally ends, Liu's phrasing at C1 suggests that his deep intention is not to discuss the abstract philosophy issue of Socrates's death but a specific yet historical topic concerning modern Chinese “自由派知识分子” and hence the political reality in modern China. In contrast, Leo Strauss's original articulation focuses on the abstract philosophy theme of Socrates's death. By its nature, Socrates's death in Strauss's original discussion is no longer a specific incidence taking place within the concrete historical context of Ancient Greece. I think the divergence between Leo Strauss and Liu Xiaofeng, also between abstract and specific, philosophy and history, is a consequence of Liu's concern with the irreconcilable conflict between genuine philosophers (including Chinese Straussians) and liberal intellectuals.

Fourth, Liu Xiaofeng's partiality at B3 also reminds me to question: What is it that has made Liu Xiaofeng less critical of the New-Left than of the Liberals? In other words, what is the difference between the New-Left and the Liberals that is essential to Liu's Straussian stance? One informative clue at B3 that I have discovered is that the New-Left, like Chinese Straussians, is also opponent of the Liberals, even though the opposition between the New-Left and the Liberals is not fundamental since the former also adheres to the Enlightenment and modern Western doctrines. This clue informs me that Chinese Straussians share similarities with the New-Left in some respect. Although the exact content of the similarities between Chinese Straussians and the New-Left is still unknown, its existence itself does have disclosed that Liu's conception of Chinese Straussians contains some aspects other than the anti-Enlightenment stance. What is also clear to me is, both Chinese Straussians and the New-Left diverge from the Liberals in these aspects.¹⁶ Therefore, the similarities and differences between the three intellectual groups can be demonstrated by *Chart 1* below.

¹⁶ This thesis will discuss the aspects other than the anti-Enlightenment stance in Liu Xiaofeng's conception of Chinese Straussians in the next section revolving Theme Two.

Chart 1

Intellectual type	Feature 1	Feature 2	Other Features
Chinese Straussians	Reject the Enlightenment stance and modern Western doctrines.	Similarities between Chinese Straussians and the New-Left, which are still unknown to us.	Unknown
The New-Left	Embrace the Enlightenment stance and modern Western doctrines.	Something that both Chinese Straussians and the New-Left reject.	
The Liberals			

Theme Two: To be of Chineseness and to Revival Chinese Tradition

The second theme is about Liu Xiaofeng’s concern for what I call “Chineseness” and the role that he has prescribed for himself to instruct other Chinese intellectuals about the righteous approach to revive Chinese tradition. I find that Liu concerns about the precondition for Chinese intellectuals’ contemplation to be tolerated and esteemed by Chinese people. I further point out that this precondition, in Liu’s mind, is that Chinese intellectuals should contemplate the revival of Chinese tradition and the question of China’s ethical identity.

A1, A3, and A4

As I have already outlined in the section “Remarks in Liu Xiaofeng’s writings” and explained in footnote 17, Liu Xiaofeng has used rhetorical expressions such as “Athens-China” throughout his discussion at A1, A3, and A4. I consider these rhetorical expressions to be conspicuous reminders of Liu’s concealed intention and find two possible explanations for his rhetoric usage at A1, A3, and A4.

The first explanation is, Liu attempts to make his discussion more tangible and understandable to readers of *Shuwu* by paraphrasing “Athens” with “China,” “Crete” with “the USA,” and “court” with “People’s Court” and referring “Euthyphro” as “deputy to the National People’s Congress of China.” This explanation is valid for me only given that Liu Xiaofeng presumes his readers had little knowledge about characters in Plato’s *Apology of Socrates*. This explanation, however, is not applicable to the Athens-China (and also Crete-the USA) rhetoric, where Liu has blended the Platonic plot with international relation between China and the USA in contemporary reality and has thus multiplied layers of meaning for his readers to understand. I find the Athens-China rhetoric actually makes Liu’s text more confusing, rather than more understandable to me. The second explanation is that Liu deliberately involves contemporary political reality as a dimension of his articulation. Therefore, rhetoric at A1, A3, and A4 conveys substantive messages from Liu, which involves Platonic-Straussian allegory about Socrates’s death on the one hand, and contemporary political reality on the other hand.

At A1, A3, and A4, Liu’s interpretation for Socrates’s death revolves the conflict between philosopher and polis (or the people). Liu notes that philosopher’s contemplation will inevitably confront the faith and convention system in polis, from which political authority derives. Within the context of contemporary China’s political reality, which Liu has deliberately engaged into his discussion, this interpretation refers to the opposition between Chinese intellectuals and the regime of

People's Republic of China (PRC) represented by the National People's Congress, People's Court, and People's Government. Therefore, a direct implication for me is that Liu recognized philosophers including Chinese philosophers politically hazard due to their objection of status quo of PRC's regime.

A1 and A4 also encompass a comparison between China, the USA, and Southeast Asia, which is a dimension other than the opposition between intellectuals and the regime. At A1, Liu discusses the reason philosophers will live in either China or the USA instead of fleeing to Southeast Asia, where social order is not stable and legal system is imperfect. At A4, Liu argues that Socrates would stay in Athens-China and reject to live in Crete-the USA, because the Athenian liberal democracy is the most compatible regime with philosopher's lifestyle. In the subsequent section where Liu explains his argument, however, he conceals the Athens-China rhetoric, instead of contending that "the Chinese regime" is the most compatible one with philosophers' lifestyle. In other words, Liu utilizes the character of the "Athenian regime" to answer the question "why would Socrates stay in China," which I consider to be either a deliberate misplacement or a negligent mistake.

If Liu has mistakenly concealed the Athens-China rhetoric at A4, the corrected answer to his own question should be, the liberal democracy of PRC is the most suitable regime for philosophers, because Chinese people are lenient and esteem philosophers. Then, the author's intention at A4 is to indicate that Chinese people esteem philosophers more than American people do. The conspicuous fallacy of this explanation is two-fold. Firstly, in the 2001 version, Liu underlines with distinct font that "the USA is a liberal state" at the twenty first paragraph of Chapter 5. Therefore, I do not think Liu's intention is to indicate that China is a liberal democracy while the USA is not. Secondly, in the 2020 version of this essay, Liu has replaced "the USA is a liberal state"¹⁷ with "Crete is a liberal state"¹⁸ at A1, and "Socrates had chosen to die in China"¹⁹ with "Socrates had chosen to die in Athens"²⁰ at A4. These editorial changes suggest that Liu has paid attention to the Athens-China rhetoric and has consequently modified two expressions. However, Liu has not modified the previously mentioned hypothetical mistake at the reasoning part of A4. In this regard, I do think the absence of the Athens-China rhetoric at the reasoning part of A4 is his negligent mistake either. In other words, I realize the misplacement is intentional, and it conveys the author's purpose to prevent his readers from misunderstanding A4 as a specific comparison between Chinese people and American people regarding their esteem for philosophers. Thus, I believe there should be substantive messages that Liu proposes to convey through the intentional misplacement at A4.

The first possible interpretation is that Liu's intention at A4 is to discuss an abstract issue transcending the specific opposition between China and the USA. Therefore "Athens" refers to a type of regime at large that tolerates and esteem philosophers. For the same reason, "Socrates" serves as a generic referring to "philosophers" as an abstract type of beings, instead of concrete philosopher figures living in China or the USA. This interpretation, however, fails to answer why Liu deliberately uses the Athens-China rhetoric at A1 to present Socrates's choice, as I would argue that Liu could have

¹⁷ This remark appears at the twenty first paragraph of Chapter 5 (excluding the "Preface" part) "The Conflict between the Athenian Philosopher and Political-Theology of the Multitude" in the 2001 version.

¹⁸ This remark appears at the twenty fourth paragraph of Chapter 5 (excluding the "Preface" part) "The Conflict between the Athenian Philosopher and Political-Theology of the Multitude" in the 2020 version.

¹⁹ This remark appears at the thirteenth paragraph of Chapter 9 (excluding the "Preface" part) "To Burden the Severity and Ruthlessness of Life" in the 2001 version.

²⁰ This remark appears at the fifteenth paragraph of Chapter 9 (excluding the "Preface" part) "To Burden the Severity and Ruthlessness of Life" in the 2020 version.

asked his readers directly without assuming Socrates had died in China. Aforementioned analysis on A1, A3, and A4 as a whole has already indicated that Liu's usage of the Athens-China rhetoric has a purpose for conveying substantive messages. This conclusion cannot reconcile with the interpretation that Liu's discussion at A4 has no relevance with his specific opinion on China (Chinese People), the USA (American people) and their relationship with philosophers either.

The second interpretation which may reconcile contradictions above is that Liu's reasoning part at A4 is subject to the premise that even if "Socrates" and "Athens" are generics referring to a type of beings and a type of regime respectively, Liu has premised that there is still a kinship between "Socrates" and "Athens" since Socrates was a philosopher from Athens. In this regard, Chinese "Socrates" as a philosopher from China is compatible with the regime of PRC instead of the USA, and Chinese people also do tolerate and esteem philosophers who are also Chinese rather than American. As Liu regards philosophical contemplation to be what confronts with the faith and convention of the people, the reason Chinese people tolerate and esteem Chinese philosophers should be that the philosophers' contemplation is beneficial (at least unharmed) to Chinese people. This is not only the prerequisite character for Chinese philosophers to live and contemplate in China but also a character that has a linkage with the specific polis, China, itself. In other words, Liu thinks a philosopher's contemplation should be parochial to at least the people of the polis, because a contemplation which is universal in appearance will be homogeneous to different peoples and thus will not get special treatment (toleration and esteem) in a specific regime.

My discovery is therefore that, for Liu Xiaofeng, Chinese philosophers would better stay in PRC than flee to other state since only Chinese people would tolerate and esteem the contemplation of Chinese philosophers. This can be valid, however, only when the contemplation itself has specific characters that have a linkage with China.²¹

In the previous discussion of Theme One, I have argued that in Liu's opinion there is no genuine philosopher in contemporary China. If "Chinese philosophers" at A1, A3, and A4 has an embodiment in reality, this embodiment should refer to a type of Chinese intellectuals who have at least partially acquired characters of genuine philosophers. In Liu's conception, Chinese Straussians should be the most suitable analogue of "Chinese philosophers." This is because, in Liu's articulation, to learn from genuine philosophers and to appeal to classical political philosophy are exactly the propositions of Chinese Straussians, which differentiate Chinese Straussians from other Chinese intellectuals. Therefore, the nationality linkage between Chinese philosophers and Chinese people is applicable to Chinese Straussians for Liu. Thus, I think there is a "Chineseness" dimension within Liu's recognition of Chinese Straussians.

B3, B4, and C2

Preceding discussion of Theme One reveals that Liu Xiaofeng's understanding of Chinese Straussians has two dimensions. On the one hand, Liu's understanding involves Strauss's anti-Enlightenment stance, by which Liu distinguishes Chinese Straussians including himself from the Liberals, the New-Left and other mainstream intellectuals. On the other hand, Liu's understanding also includes aspects revolving substantive issues, which I consider to be the similarity between Chinese Straussians and the New-Left. This similarity is, however, not the deduction of Strauss's original works but materialization of Liu's concern with Chineseness. I find two ways in which Liu illustrates his

²¹ For further discussion, this thesis refers to this character as Chineseness.

concern with Chineseness in his discussion at B3, B4, and C2. One is his emphasis on the opposition between China and the West. The other is his substantive proposition for reviving Chinese tradition, which is also advocated by the New-Left and neo-conservatives at large.²²

In the first way, Liu's discussion at B3 and B4 underlines the opposition between China and the West. Liu uses three binary structures to embody this opposition. The first binary structure is the inherent structure throughout "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition". In this text, the West and Western scholars are on the query side, while China and "We Chinese intellectuals" are on the respondent side. The second binary structure appears at B3, where Chinese intellectuals are followers of Enlightenment principle imported from the West, while the West is the instructor of Chinese intellectuals. The third binary structure appears at B4, within which Chinese intellectuals who begin to turn to Leo Strauss and classical political philosophy become the stimulus of Western scholars' anxiety. Akin to the premise on the nationality linkage between philosophers and regimes that I think to have underpinned A1, A3, and A4, a potential clue regarding Chineseness has sustained the binary "self-other" structures at B3 and B4. Although B3 and B4 along with A1, A3, and A4 as a synthesis is insufficient to indicate that Liu Xiaofeng is immanently a Chinese nationalist, the clue at B3 and B4 does implement and reinforce my finding at A1, A3, and A4, suggesting that Chineseness is central to Liu's consciousness when he produced the text.

In the second way, Liu proposes at both B3, B4, and C2 that Chinese intellectuals should revive Chinese moral-political traditions and resolve the question of *what China's ethical identity should be* (中国的伦理身份是什么 in Chinese). That is because, the resolve this question can help Chinese people to overcome and get rid of Western modernity and the moral-political conceptions stemmed from it. Though the proposition is implicit, I find two aspects of this proposition are both explicit.

First, Liu Xiaofeng's proposition targets at all Chinese intellectuals including Chinese Straussians and mainstream intellectuals with Enlightenment stance. That is because Liu uses Sinicization of Marxism and its combination with Chinese traditions in globalization era as examples to illustrate the trials Chinese intellectuals already have, which, Liu considers helpful to them to reach the goal of his proposition. Second, Liu Xiaofeng's proposition concerns the revival of Chinese tradition in a specific way that is righteous by his standard. Though Liu has not clearly specified this standard, there are cases which Liu considers to be erroneous. For example, Liu criticizes neo-Confucianists for misinterpreting Confucianism as a source of Western democracy or new authoritarianism at B4. Liu also repudiates Mu Zongsan's attempt to combine Confucian traditions with Kantianism at C2, which indicates that Liu thinks his proposition to revive Chinese tradition is not compatible with modern Western doctrines. Therefore, I think Liu's proposition for the revival of Chinese tradition is more about the approach to it than about the substantive content of Chinese tradition. He has not raised a particular understanding of Chinese moral-political tradition but a righteous approach to the revival of it, which is to imitate Strauss's interpretation of Western classics and to understand Chinese tradition in a Straussian way. In a brief summary, I find Liu's proposition contains a persuasion for all Chinese intellectual groups that they should follow the Straussian approach to understand and hence revive Chinese tradition, which, Liu reckons, is still a task for all Chinese intellectuals.

²² In the Literature Review section, this thesis has listed several studies which reveal that neo-conservatives, including the New-Left, had a proposition for reviving Chinese tradition in the post-1989 era (Xu 1999; van Dongen 2019).

Therefore, my discovery at B3, B4, and C2 is that Liu's recognition of Chinese Straussians contains a concern with the revival of Chinese tradition. Although Liu does not consider the revival of Chinese tradition a task exclusively for Chinese Straussians, he does hold that Chinese intellectuals can accomplish the task only by approaching Chinese tradition in the Straussian way. In other words, Liu still attributes to Chinese Straussians, including himself, *the role to instruct other Chinese intellectuals about the righteous way of reviving Chinese tradition*.

CONCLUSION

Findings

My analysis on Liu Xiaofeng's three texts, "The Docility of the Hedgehog", "Leo Strauss and China: Encountering a Classical Disposition", and "The Road Sign of Leo Strauss", reveals two themes concerning Liu Xiaofeng's self-image as a Chinese Straussian. Theme One concerns the way Liu Xiaofeng considers other Chinese intellectuals. I find that Liu Xiaofeng prescribes Chinese Straussians with the role to enlighten other Chinese intellectuals by providing them with an approach to rescue their moral-political characters. Theme Two concentrates on Liu Xiaofeng's concern with the revival of Chinese tradition. I find that Liu Xiaofeng prescribes Chinese Straussians with the role to instruct other Chinese intellectuals about the righteous way of reviving Chinese tradition. In summary, the self-image of the quintessential Chinese Straussian Liu Xiaofeng is that Chinese Straussians have the role to enlighten other Chinese intellectuals and to instruct them about the righteous way of reviving Chinese tradition. In my opinion, this dual-dimensional discovery can be interpreted from three angles in relation with the self-images of the Liberals and neo-conservatives that I have reviewed in "Self-images of Mainstream Intellectuals" section.

Firstly, I think there is a same enlighten-enlightened structure embedded within the self-images of different Chinese intellectual camps. As the existing literature has discussed, the Liberals and neo-conservatives have prescribed themselves with the role to enlighten Chinese nation at large. My research reveals that Chinese Straussians have also recognized themselves to have the role to enlighten someone, despite that Chinese Straussians regard other Chinese intellectuals, including the Liberals and neo-conservatives, instead of Chinese nation at large to be the object they ought to enlighten.

Secondly, one could argue that the common enlighten-enlightened structure is not necessarily essential because the self-images of the three intellectual camps have fundamentally divergent substance. For the Liberals, they consider themselves to be genuine inheritors of the Enlightenment. Therefore, their role to enlighten Chinese nation is consistent with the Enlightenment values and so-called modern Western doctrines. On the contrary, for Chinese Straussians, their roles to enlighten either Chinese intellectuals is exactly derived from their rejection of the Enlightenment and its values. Even though some studies argue that neo-conservatives also reject the Enlightenment as Chinese Straussians do (Xu 1999; Xu 2001; van Dongen 2019), Chinese Straussians differ from neo-conservatives as they propose to return to classical political philosophy, which is a more fundamental rejection of the Enlightenment. From this angle, I think the self-image of Chinese Straussians is intrinsically different from the self-images of the Liberals and neo-conservative.

Thirdly, I find both Chinese Straussians and neo-conservatives have a concern for what I name as Chineseness. My analysis reveals that Chinese Straussians concern for the revival of Chinese tradition

and the resolve of China's ethical identity question in a righteous way. Previous studies that I have reviewed illustrate that neo-conservatives recognize themselves as prudent defenders for Chinese reality (Xu 1999; Xu 2001). While the contents of the two camps' concern for Chineseness are different, I think their motivations are similar to each other. For Chinese Straussians, Chineseness is what makes their philosophical contemplation tolerable to the regime and its people. Therefore, one could argue that Chinese Straussians' concern for Chineseness is virtually about protecting themselves from being charged by the regime and its people. Likewise, previous research on neo-conservatives and their anti-radicalism shows that the traumatic experience in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest and suppression was the deep cause for their self-image as prudent defenders for Chinese reality. Therefore, I believe there is a similar fear of political persecution residing beneath the concern for Chineseness within the self-image of both Chinese Straussians and neo-conservatives.

Contribution

My thesis engages with two genres of scholarship concerning Chinese intellectuals and the intellectual field in the post-1989 era. One genre of scholarship focuses on the self-images of Chinese intellectuals, mainly the Liberals and neo-conservatives, in post-1989 China. The other genre of scholarship sheds a light on one marginal group of intellectuals in the post-1989 era, Chinese Straussians, and their contestation with the Liberals and neo-conservatives. Current understanding of the self-images of Chinese intellectuals in the post-1989 era is imperfect as previous research has neglected the self-image of Chinese Straussians, which were also significant participants of the intellectual field in post-1989 China. Therefore, my thesis envisages a research question about the self-image of Chinese Straussians and proposes to give a primary answer by analyzing and interpreting three writings of Liu Xiaofeng, who is a representative and founding member of Chinese Straussians.

My research contributes to existing scholarship on Chinese intellectuals and the intellectual field in the post-1989 era in two ways. First of all, my study supplements current research on the self-images of Chinese intellectuals by shedding a light on the self-image of Chinese Straussians. Secondly, my study contributes to the discussion on the intellectual debate in post-1989 China by providing a better and more sophisticated understanding of one participant camp, Chinese Straussians, and their propositions. My research result imposes a challenge on the understanding of the contestation among Chinese Straussians, the Liberals, and neo-conservatives, because I find the self-images of the three camps are all, at least partially, about enlightening some objects. My research therefore helps us to have a better and more sophisticated understanding of the intellectual field in post-1989 China.

However, my research has at least two limitations. Firstly, my analysis only focuses on the self-image of Liu Xiaofeng, thereby neglecting other prominent Chinese Straussians, such as Gan Yang (甘阳) and Zhang Xu (张旭). Consequently, my research findings are insufficient to suggest what the self-images of other Chinese Straussians are, and whether, and if so how, their self-images are different. Secondly, my research scope has included only three writings of Liu Xiaofeng. This limited selection may have inadvertently overlooked other relevant texts that hold significance to the research question. Especially, I have intentionally excluded two categories of Liu's writings, which, I think either incorporate non-Straussian topics, such as Thomas Hobbes's political thought (Liu 2007), alongside discussions on Strauss, or have no direct mention on Strauss at all. These omitted writings, however,

may possibly provide valuable insights into other dimensions of Liu's self-image as a Chinese Straussian.

To propel the field forward, future research can make valuable contributions in two ways. First, researchers can build upon the foundation laid in this thesis by conducting comprehensive analyses of other writings, speeches, or interviews by Liu Xiaofeng. These endeavors will facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of his self-image. Second, scholars can also delve into the self-images of other Chinese Straussians, such as Gan Yang and Zhang Xu, by analyzing their writings, speeches, or interviews. My research can help this sort of studies to make a comparison between the self-image of Liu Xiaofeng and those of other Chinese Straussians, from which researchers can identify both shared characteristics and divergences among them.

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APPENDIX 1

This appendix lists the 47 works that Liu Xiaofeng Published between 1999 and 2009, including 46 journal articles he published separately, and 1 chapter compiled in *The Modernity of the West: Complication and Development* edited by He Zhaotian.

Genre 1	
Involve and mention Strauss in the text directly	
1	Liu Xiaofeng. 2000. “六译圣人赞.” 读书 11:45-53.
2	Liu Xiaofeng. 2000. “尼采的微言大义.” 书屋 10:4-22.
3	Liu Xiaofeng. 2001. “刺猬的温顺.” 书屋 2: 4-27.
4	Liu Xiaofeng. 2002. “历史终结了? ——从约阿希姆到柯耶夫.” 浙江学刊 3:75-83.
5	Liu Xiaofeng. 2002. “施特劳路标.” Chapter in 西方现代性的曲折与展开 edited by 贺照田. 吉林: 吉林人民出版社.
6	Liu Xiaofeng. 2004. “‘我们共和国的掌门人’: 伊壁鸠鲁.” 开放时代 3:134-8.
7	Liu Xiaofeng. 2005. “‘误解’因‘瞬时的理解’而称义.” 读书 11:139-47.
8	Liu Xiaofeng. 2006. “人类学的‘欲望’与古典.” 中国图书评论 11:64-70.
9	Liu Xiaofeng. 2007. “霍布斯的‘申辩’.” 中山大学学报 (社会科学版) 6:8-15.
10	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “阿威罗伊的柏拉图.” 求是学刊 3:6-9.
11	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “关注我们这个时代的哲学: 经典与解释——文本解读与古典学问的样式 (笔谈).” 求是学刊 3:5-6.
12	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “风流人物古难数.” 中国图书评论 7:4-6.
13	Liu Xiaofeng. 2009. “施特劳斯与中国: 古典心性的相逢.” 思想战线 35(2): 59-65.
14	Liu Xiaofeng. 2009. “施特劳斯与启蒙哲学 (上) ——读施特劳斯早期文稿《柯亨与迈蒙尼德》.” 西北师大学报 (社会科学版) 46(3):1-9.
15	Liu Xiaofeng. 2009. “关注我们这个时代的哲学 阅读的德性——柏拉图经学五题 (笔谈).” 求是学刊 36(2):5-6.

Genre 2	
Involve Straussian topics but not mention Strauss in the text	
1	Liu Xiaofeng. 1999. “遗留给下这个世界什么问题.” 读书 1: 95-8.
2	Liu Xiaofeng. 2002. “《斐多》中的‘相’.” 读书 10:14-24.
3	Liu Xiaofeng. 2003. “司马迁属于什么‘家’.” 读书 8:39-44.
4	Liu Xiaofeng. 2002. “圣人的虚静.” 读书 3:51-60.
5	Liu Xiaofeng. 2004. “《安提戈涅》第一合唱歌的启蒙意蕴——纪念康德逝世二百周年.” 外国文学 2:27-41.
6	Liu Xiaofeng and Gan Yang. 2005. “大学改革与通识教育.” 开放时代 1:4-44.
7	Liu Xiaofeng. 2005. “《王制》与大立法者之‘德’.” 书城 6:41-7.
8	Liu Xiaofeng and Su Guoxun. 2006. “中国学术的文化自主性.” 开放时代 1:4-53.
9	Liu Xiaofeng. 2006. “当今教育状况的几点观察.” 中山大学学报 (社会科学版) 2:1-3.

10	Liu Xiaofeng. 2006. “略谈希罗多德的叙事笔法.” 外国文学 2:60-5.
11	Liu Xiaofeng, et al. 2007. “作为学术视角的社会主义新传统.” 开放时代 1:5-48.
12	Liu Xiaofeng. 2007. “奥德修斯的名相.” 中国图书评论 9:92-100.
13	Liu Xiaofeng. 2007. “诗人的‘权杖’.” 中国图书评论 10:82-90.
14	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “诗风日下.” 中国图书评论 1:50-60.
15	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “寓意叙事中的宗教之战.” 中国图书评论 5:4-6.
16	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “哲人王俄狄浦斯（上）.” 中国图书评论 8:42-51.
17	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “哲人王俄狄浦斯（下）.” 中国图书评论 9:59-71.
18	Liu Xiaofeng, et al. 2009. “专题：古典西学在中国（之一）.” 开放时代 1:4-30.
19	Liu Xiaofeng. 2009. “君子将军——读《从战争中走来》.” 中国图书评论 4:100-7.
20	Liu Xiaofeng. 2009. “‘诗学’与‘国学’——亚里士多德《诗学》的译名争议.” 中山大学学报（社会科学版） 49(5):123-31.
21	Liu Xiaofeng. 2008. “炳焉与三世同风.” 中国图书评论 2:35-44.

Genre 3	
Irrelevant to Straussian topics	
1	Liu Xiaofeng. 2000. “金钱·性别·生活感觉——纪念西美尔《货币哲学》问世一百周年.” 开放时代 5:19-26.
2	Liu Xiaofeng. 2000. “这女孩的眼睛为我看路——纪念罗念先生逝世十周年.” 读书. 12: 48-55.
3	Liu Xiaofeng. 2001. “透过她人的欲望看自己.” 书屋. 1: 49-52.
4	Liu Xiaofeng. 2001. “《拯救与逍遥》修订本前言.” 书屋 2:4-27.
5	Liu Xiaofeng. 2001. “灵知人马克安显灵.” 四川外语学院学报 2:62-5.
6	Liu Xiaofeng. 2001. “施密特与政治哲学的现代性.” 浙江学刊 3:19-25.
7	Liu Xiaofeng. 2002. “象征与叙事——论梅列日柯夫斯基的象征主义.” 浙江学刊 1:68-81.
8	Liu Xiaofeng. 2003. “民国宪政的一段往事.” 书城 8:55-60.
9	Liu Xiaofeng. 2003. “民国宪政的一段往事(下).” 书城 9:58-64.
10	Liu Xiaofeng. 2004. “愧对蓝色的死亡.” 书城 9:59-60.
11	Liu Xiaofeng. 2006. “爱的碎片中的惊鸿一瞥.” 大学时代 1:51-2.

APPENDIX 2

Remark	Original text
A1	<p style="text-align: center;">...</p> <p>要理解这个问题，首先得了解：何谓雅典哲人。</p> <p>按照苏格拉底的榜样，在雅典做一个哲人意味着“怀疑祖先的神圣性”——凡事不是诉诸祖先的权威，而是诉诸“自然”。在希腊，哲人最早被称为“自然的传喻者”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(The tenth paragraph)</p> <p>苏格拉底研究自然的事务的方法是，通过对话检查人们普遍认为的意见，使意见转变认识，这是一种理性的美德——依循自然的德性。然而，民众意见虽然不一定使理性的，却通常最具政治权威性，因为这些意见“是城邦及其法律——最庄严的约定——批准或认可的”。为了求得真正的认识，“苏格拉底甚至不得不超越法律或约定而追溯到自然”（《政治哲学史绪论》，页 4-5）。这样一来苏格拉底的理性难免与现存法律或习俗作对，在政治上处境危险；倘若这法律或习俗还生成自己敬神，苏格拉底就成了渎神的人。苏格拉底被控渎神和蛊惑青年后，在去法院聆讯的路上撞见了分管宗教事务的全国人大代表游叙弗伦，竟然缠住人家问：“什么是敬神”，何为“虔敬的本质，一切虔敬的事之所以为虔敬的特性本身”。与苏格拉底说过一阵子后，游叙弗伦终于发现这人是疯子，不理苏格拉底还要继续问“什么是……”，称有急事走了。</p> <p>《法律篇》以提到“神”开头，《申辩篇》以提到“神”结束，这本身就是特别需要解释的要点。施特劳斯没有皆是，却转而问：苏格拉底被人民法庭判死刑后，为什么不逃跑？苏格拉底没有被关押，不是没有机会逃，也不是没有地方可逃：不妨这样设想，假如苏格拉底在中国被判为思想异见分子，他可以提逃到那里去？一种选择是逃去美国、申请政治避难，再不然就买本护照逃到东南亚某个国家躲起来。</p> <p>中国和美国都是有法制的国家，苏格拉底在有法律的中国都会被判思想异端，到美国也不会成为思想正确的人。中国和美国法律都是人民的习俗约定的或敬拜的神传喻的，尽管这两个国家的神完全不同。哲人并非与这个神不和、与那个神不和，而是与所有的神都不和。</p> <p>逃到东南亚某个国家？哪里的国家法制还不完善，社会秩序根本谈不上——没有民众敬拜的神、或习俗没有成为法制，才会如此。在这样的地方，生活不安定不说，肉体生命也没有保障，不晓得那一天会在某个（通常因肾上腺素过多而）生性野蛮的人手下死于非命。施特劳斯设想，如果要逃，苏格拉底一定只会选择逃去美国——逃去克里特。</p> <p>如果苏格拉底逃到克里特，必然会把自已身上哲学的“疯狂”带到克里特，与那里的民众敬拜的神又发生冲突。《法律篇》中出现的那位“雅典哲人”，很可能就是苏格拉底，于是才会有《法律篇》中“雅典哲人”与当地长老讨论法律正当性的情形。</p>

	<p>苏格拉底事实上没有逃去美国，而是选择了接受人民法庭的宣判死在中国（雅典）。施特劳斯解释说，苏格拉底的这一选择经过了审慎考虑，是“最高尚的政治选择”：“苏格拉底宁愿在雅典保护哲学而牺牲自己的生命，不愿意为保全自己的性命把哲学引进克里特”（《什么是政治哲学》，页79）。</p> <p>问题来了。为什么要假设苏格拉底逃到克里特？如果这种设想不是毫无意义的，含义是什么？</p> <p>得看清楚：不是施特劳斯在假设，而是苏格拉底的所闻世弟子在假设（施特劳斯提到亚理士多德的提示）。假设不仅表明，苏格拉底曾经面临自己个人生命的生死抉择，而且表明，起码直到苏格拉底的所闻世弟子，希腊哲人都还在为哲人自己的生死抉择费神：苏格拉底的生死抉择，不是像存在主义者萨特所推荐的那样，无论选择逃生还是赴死，都证明了自己的个人意志自由；或者反过来说，无论选择什么都行，只要显明自己的自由能力苏格拉底经过审慎考虑的抉择，不是基于“我的自由”、而是基于“我应该如何生活”的考虑。这种考虑基于如下信念“我应该如何生活”的问题，应该会有一个正确的答案，而非逃去美国或死在中国都同样正确。</p> <p>...</p> <p>为什么施特劳斯说苏格拉底做出了“最高尚的政治选择”？仅仅因为他的选择是出于审慎的考虑？雅典（中国）和克里特（美国）不是都有法制吗？为什么应该在中国为了保护哲学而死，却不能为了活命把哲学带到美国？美国不是一个自由的国家吗？</p> <p>...</p>
A2	<p>...</p> <p>现代民主论与古代民主论的分歧，不在是否让人人有受教育的权利和机会，而在于如何搞到更多的钱。问题是，为了发展经济，现代民主政制主张将为发展经济所必须的技术非道德化，以至教育日益成了纯粹的技术训练，而不是品德修养。如今的“优才”就是掌握高科技或懂玩“股票”的人，“好人”的问题完全被排除了。</p> <p>教育事业需要教育者，他必须是有美德的人。这就是为什么，何为有美德的人是古典的“自由教育”的重心，而“自由教育”又是古典政治哲学的基本问题之一。对于苏格拉底来说，这个问题就是：哲人是怎样的人？</p> <p>按柏拉图的记叙，这个问题在苏格拉底那里没有明确答案，只有负面的说法：哲人不是诡辩家和政治家。哲人拥有知识、而不是意见。诡辩家和政治家这两号人看起来很有知识，但有的都是部分的知识。如果见到知识渊博、外语懂得多、小的好多七古八杂的事情且回说专业行话的人，就膜拜称颂，以为这号人有美德和真正整体性的见识，就搞错了。人向整体开放的部分只有灵魂，或者说，灵魂是人身上最靠近整体的部分。“哲学寻求的是关于整体的知识”，追求灵魂知识的人才是哲人。如今有人知道了一点所谓哲学的技术，就自诩为哲人，实在“搞笑”。</p> <p>...</p>
A3	<p>...</p> <p>苏格拉底真的想成为人民？肯定不是，否则等于认同社会美德、否定了自己的生活信念——哲人的生活方式。但苏格拉底的确真心要敬重人民敬神的</p>

	<p>习惯、尊重人民的生活方式。被人民法院传讯、甚至判刑，并灭有让苏格拉底觉得自己的哲人生活方式错了，而是让他产生了这样的政治意识：必须学会与人民信仰和谐相处。这不是畏惧人民和人民政府，而是审慎。哲人的美德不仅是疯狂，哲人还需要另一种美德。</p> <p>...</p>
A4	<p>...</p> <p>《法律篇》回答了这样的假设：如果苏格拉底还年轻，还要继续过自己的哲人生活，他不会再像过去那样与敬神的民众作对，而是懂得隐藏自己无畏的疯狂指挥。于是，《理想国》、《政治家》和《法律篇》构成的推演逻辑倒过来了：柏拉图将《法律篇》的终点变成了《理想国》的起点（<论柏拉图>，页87）。</p> <p>事实是，苏格拉底选择了死在中国。为什么苏格拉底的选择是“最高尚的政治选择”？</p> <p>这里的“高尚”，指为了哲学而死。为了这学而死指为了捍卫哲学勇于牺牲自己的生命？不是，选择死在雅典，仅仅因为这里有自由的民主，最适合哲人生活，这里的人民对哲人最尊重、最宽厚。这意味着，对于哲人的生活方式来说，最重要、最珍贵的是有选择过这种生活的自由、为沉思高贵提供时间和空间。“苏格拉底确实是被民主政治杀害的，但被杀害时已经七十岁，允许他享尽了天年。在反民主的斯巴达，苏格拉底可能在小时候就被流放致死”（<什么时政治哲学？>，页82）。是不是因为雅典城邦为哲人生活方式提供了自由，苏格拉底才在临终前让友人宰了那只公鸡，以示对城邦人民的敬意？</p> <p>...</p>

APPENDIX 3

Remark	Original text
B1	<p>...</p> <p>施特劳斯的“古典政治哲学”在西方学界还不是显学，恰恰因为，现代的种种“主义”论说在如今的西方大学已经占据主导地位，就此而言，倘若欧美学者嘲笑中国的大学仍然接受马克思主义支配，本身就可笑。反过来看，施特劳斯的古典主张如果让一些中国新锐学人不舒服，乃因为我们同样是在罗伯斯庇尔的如下政治理想指引下被培养出来的：“在地上建立智慧、正义和美德的大厦”，这可称之为伟大的“现代性构想”。为了实现这一构想，得有与此匹配的“在地上”建立起来的教育制度。不同的是，如今，这种教育制度在欧洲和美国已经发展得非常完备，在我们中国，则还处于追求实现这种教育制度的进程之中——九十年代以来，中国的教育制度以飞快的速度努力要与这种制度“接轨”。由此似乎也可以理解，施特劳斯的古典政治哲学在中国的实际意义可能比在欧美要大得多。</p> <p>...</p>
B2	<p>...</p> <p>在 1980 年代，中国的知识人齐心想的是如何走出“统子楼”。1990 年代以降，随着商品房的出现，尽管知识界逐渐走向分化，主流乃是启蒙自由主义及其现代-后现代理论，这是我们长期不得已住“统子楼”引出的自然而然的的结果。当新左派出场时，自由主义论说便觉得自己可以理直气壮攻击新左派在给“统子楼”翻新搞装修。当遇到古典政治哲学时，自由主义实际感到了更大的、甚至根本性的威胁，却没法说古典政治哲学与“统子楼”有亲缘关系。在中国引介施特劳斯会收到一些莫名怒火的攻击，一点都不奇怪，因为这种攻击本身已经表明自己站在现代启蒙主义立场，而施特劳斯的确实甚至可以说反对现代启蒙主义——如果我自己已经是个坚定的启蒙主义或自由主义者，当然没什么好说。然而，如今的一些转向古典政治哲学的中国学人曾经也是热诚的自由主义者，这就表明，问题并非在于自己已经持有某种“主义”立场，而在于是否敢于反省自己的立场。倘若如此，那么，我们可以看到：施特劳斯实际上力图重新开放启蒙和民主政治的品质问题——如今，启蒙尤其民主政治和自由理念的正当性就会已经到了不容讨论和质疑的地步，作为哲人，施特劳斯坚定地要求哲人有质疑的权利。通过开启古典政治哲学的视野，施特劳斯让我们看到：与现代启蒙尤其民主政治为敌还是为友，早在古希腊时代就是古典政治哲学中的重大问题，从而，温习古典政治哲学，对我们学会审慎思考政治问题确有好处。</p> <p>...</p>
B3	<p>...</p> <p>有人会说：用施特劳斯的学说来皆是中国的古典，同样是同一种西方现代的学说来解读中国的古典。这种看法搞错了的地方在于，施特劳斯根本没有提出一种自己的学说（诸如解释学“学说”一类）来解释古典，而是主张用古典的目光来阅读古典。因此，即便我们从施特劳斯那里搬来一套“方法”，那也是古</p>

人的方法，而非施特劳斯在现代构想出来的“方法”。就此而言，施特劳斯所倡导的“古典政治哲学”与中国学界百年来引介过的任何一种西方学说都不同：它既非“主义”论说，也非一种“新的方法论”，而是一种学问方向，甚至更准确地说是一种古典心性。没错，我们在引介施特劳斯对政治和哲学的“理解”——这种“理解”来自美国的一位大学教授，但既然施特劳斯是古典心性的表率，而非一种学说，施特劳斯进入中国，其实是古典心性的相逢：在近三百年来的西方、近百年来的中国，这种心性流离失所，丧失了自己的家园——学堂，如今，这种新型无论在西方还是中国，都在努力从后现代的大学中寻回自身的地盘。

关心施特劳斯进入中国的欧美学者究竟是谁？我想大概不外乎两类。一类是有古典心性的西方学人——这种心性的人无论在西方还是中国，都只会是当今已然彻底民主化的学界和大学中的少数。差别在于：中国人口众多，这样的少数相对而言多些，如此而已；我们与你们相遇，感觉就像是“有朋自远方来”。还有另外一类西方学人，他们仅仅一因为中国如今的“崛起”才不得不把目光投向中国。这种目光本来是“尚同”的目光，中国的发展现实使得这样的目光陷入窘境。这并非是由于经济发展势头带来的惊惧，他们真正担心的是中国的重生在道德政治观念上将冲击“尚同”理想。对这类西方学人来说，施特劳斯的古典政治哲学进入中国恰恰是巨大的灾难，因为这会有助于中国学人尽快摆脱“尚同”理想，使得西方的现代性观念丧失政治优势——他们原有的观念认为，现代化就是“尚同”，也就是把中国文明拉低到与西方的现代性构想同样低的水平，这个前提一旦收到挑战，他们自然会感到“中国威胁”来了。西方的政治精英熟悉马克思主义，很清楚中国有自由主义志士，新左派也走进了西方的主流媒体，所有这些他们不仅都“可以理解”，而且喜闻乐见，因为凡此毕竟仍然在“尚同”观念中打转，最终方向都是现代西方普世价值的“进步”，因此他们不会来问我们为什么引介这些“主义”。唯有中国一旦提出源自自身老派传统的道德政治观念，他们才会从心底感到忐忑不安，因为他们不仅对中国古典传统的道德政治观念、甚至对西方古典传统的道德政治观念都心里没数。如今的中国学人如果把儒家重新解释为“不悖于民主”或者“新权威主义”的资源，把庄子说成伟大的自由主义志士，他们当然会喜闻乐见。但施特劳斯这个西方人却有可能教会我们，不要用西方人的现代尺度来度量我们中国的古典教诲……于是，当我们引介施特劳斯时，本来不关心中国的西方学者也开始关心起中国的事情来了。

...

APPENDIX 4

Remark	Original text
C1	<p>...</p> <p>施特劳斯在解读《苏格拉底的申辩》时让现代的读者注意到，对苏格拉底的死刑判决是陪审团在微弱多数下通过的，也就是说，代表人民的陪审团中不乏对苏格拉底有好感的人。看到这样的判决结果，苏格拉底提出了一个“令人惊异的提议”：罚点款算了，不要非处死不可。施特劳斯说，苏格拉底并非真的要以罚款的提议来逃避死刑判决，因为，他已经谈到过自己对于死刑、监禁、罚款、流放等等不同惩罚的看法，明确表示死刑对他来说最好。既然如此，为什么苏格拉底又要提罚款的建议？施特劳斯没有明确回答这个问题，仅仅暗示，苏格拉底故意用这个提议来激怒陪审团中那些非处死他不可的人——似乎苏格拉底是自己找死的。</p> <p>陪审团中那些非处死苏格拉底不可的人是谁？是雅典民主政体的政治家。由此可以想象到，真正憎恨苏格拉底的，并非雅典的人民，而是雅典的民主政治家——用今天的话说即自由民主政体中的自由派知识分子们。柏拉图所写的这出苏格拉底在法庭面前的戏剧表明，哲人与人民的对立是假象——因为人民既搞不懂也不关心哲人的言论，真相是哲人与自认为代表人民的自由民主知识分子的对立。</p> <p>...</p>
C2	<p>...</p> <p>然而，关注中世纪的犹太教哲学，并非施特劳斯的先见之明。早在十九世纪末，对西方哲学的历史有深入了解而且在当时的主流哲学中甚至占有总是地位的犹太裔哲人、新康德主义大师柯亨（Hermann Cohen）终身相当关注中世纪的犹太教哲学。施特劳斯的“路标”文集以他为柯亨的《出自犹太教渊源的理性宗教》英译本写的导言收尾，不是没有用意的——施特劳斯在诸多地方批评柯亨，又是怎么回事？</p> <p>提起柯亨，难免让人想到新儒家的哲学大师牟宗三。他们的心智终身奉献给了康德哲学（牟宗三临终前完成了康德三大批判的汉译），却心系本民族的思想传统。牟宗三并不像柯亨那样，力图要调和犹太教与西方哲学传统的冲突，而是彰显儒家心学论对存在论问题的解决比西方理性哲学传统高明，但他重新解释儒家心性传统仍然以他对西方近代理性哲学传统的理解为视域。施特劳斯盛赞柯亨能一手精研西方理性主义哲学，一手写诠释犹太教哲学的文章——有如后来的列维纳。然而，可以通过西方理性主义哲学赢回民族传统文化的信仰吗？柯亨用康德式理性主义哲学解释犹太教，会不会根本看错了雅典与耶路撒冷的关系？柯亨综合犹太教与希腊哲学传统的努力，会不会重蹈中世纪亚里士多德主义的覆辙？</p> <p>...</p>

APPENDIX 5

	Original text and context
遗留给下个世纪什么问题	<p>...</p> <p>我的问题提议是：“如何理解自己的偶在？”有好些哲学家和社会理论家叫好（会议录像为证）。现代社会是碎片版的生活世界，个体和社会的生活基础在现代化进程中日益脆弱。我以为，我的问题可以涵盖大部分问题。但作家和诗人们连连摇头：这个题目太过哲学化。一位诗人提议这样一个问题：“谁自由？”一时不少作家和诗人较好。一位哈佛来的哲学家皱着眉头、眯着两眼问：这是一个问题？在他看来，这问题提得过于飘忽，不是一个可以让人思考和回答的问题。文人和学人的思想方式不同，学人觉得文人连什么可以叫一个问题都不懂；文人觉得，学人故意把浅白的事情搞得稀奇古怪。</p> <p>作家和诗人大多关心个人的自由。自由理念在二十世纪的哲学和社会理论中，已讨论得太多。“谁自由？”的问题提法并非没有含义，知识不太细致。参加会议的知识人尽管各有说法，仍然有基本的价值共识，这就是肯定自由和宽容的价值。我提议把问题明确为：“这个世纪谁自由又宽容？在下一世纪如何可能既自由又宽容？”</p> <p>...</p>