Contents

Introduction: A Pre-Modern Thinker on International Relations

Abstract: *A revisit to Gongsun's debates could contribute to postmodernity because Gongsun adopted an ontology and epistemology that, in many ways, parallel postmodern thinking and allow the discovery of pre-modern parallels to postmodernity, thereby challenging postmodern thinkers to face in retrospect a political theory in which the "absence of modernity" (as a typical Western construct) leads to similar thinking. Second, Gongsun's time was a period of transition from a hierarchical world order, dominated by a few major kings, to a warring period of many competing powers. This can be related analogously to the collapse of the so-called "European Concert" or the end of the Cold War. Finally, Gongsun dealt with the quest for order in a world that was losing normative consensus.*

The epistemological incapacity of International Relations (IR) scholarship to sufficiently explain the evolution of IR and provide a moral foundation to reflect upon the killing by the hegemonic state in the name of the global liberal order brings severe discredit to current scholarship. Nascent critical literature calls for the recognition of various practices and understandings that are inexpressible in the mainstream discourse of IR to search for meaningful IR outside of the power-oriented, state-centered, and Anglophonic circle of IR of the West. The new name of "post-Western" IR emerged to categorize such efforts of searching.[1] Presumably, this intellectual longing for alternatives ought to transcend the epistemological rigidity imposed by the powerhouse in the United States (US) and its Western allies – be they national regimes, global enterprises, or liberal or conservative scholars – and their respective pursuit of rational interests. The post-Western campaign is determined to provincialize the West and re-World the non-Western world to achieve transcendence. Deconstruction of mainstream IR of the West relies on cultural resources available everywhere and mainly in the non-Western world.

One of the non-Western cultural resources is from the Chinese classics, which many Chinese scholars painstakingly retrieve to support the construction of a new Chinese school of IR. These scholars are undertaking a quest for different IR. The context typically used to be a Chinese dynastic court, dominating the rest of the world amidst the widespread perception of the rise of China and the revitalization of the Chinese classics. The past Chinese Empire and the emerging Chinese superpower are – in their peculiar intellectual association – obliged to generate the image of threat, especially from the perspective of the incumbent hegemonic US. However, a significant lacuna exists in the nascent Chinese school, a kind of silence that is not difficult to understand. The lacuna is about the School of Name in the Spring and Autumn Periods (770–476 B.C.), which gathered a small group of eloquent debaters who vigorously condemned anyone preaching the use of naming or the rectification of name to establish an "all-under-heaven" order. If the post-Western quest originated from Western academe to deconstruct the global liberal order promoted by Western academics, the School of Name could be the counterpart of the post-Western critics. It was simultaneously an internal plea to stop preaching the system of right name pursued by Confucian/Legalist philosophers of its time.

The School of Name adopted two approaches to deconstruct the order desired by kings and their Confucian and Legalist advisors. One was the

indiscriminative approach, which contends that all seemingly differentiated things – each with a name and a duty – are actually of no innate essence, such that names to position things separately are artificial. The other was the discriminative approach, which argues that the seemingly harmonious order governed by name, to which all subscribe, was the artificial disguise of actually unrelated things or processes. The School of Name emerged in the pre-modern time and was considered in this book the earliest harbinger for postmodern deconstructive debates two millennia later. The best-known discriminative approach was represented by Gongsun Long (320–250 B.C.).[2] Gongsun's sensibility toward distinctive reality, which only the utterer could express for him or herself, resembled the post-Western recognition of sited agency in recombining Western and indigenous cultural resources. Creative recombination to survive the forceful intrusion of Western imperialism would distinguish each sited reality. That each post-Western site has its own geo-cultural reality is in line with Gongsun's argument that each reference by an utterer is preoccupied with a particular reality.

China contains many plausible sites of post-Western lineage, each benefiting from a fast-rising intellectual and material capacity. Gongsun's exclusion from the literature on the Chinese School would be a missed opportunity to provide a non-holistic component of the Chinese classics. The rest of the book tackles its potential lessons directly for advocates of the post-Western IR and indirectly for the Chinese School of IR.[3]

This book presents a study of Gongsun Long's thoughts and their modern and post-modern implications, especially those for the post-Western quest. Gongsun Long was a thinker who lived 2,300 years ago during the Chinese Spring and Autumn, and the Warring Period. He was distinct from most thinkers during his time in that he wanted to look away from a solution to political disorder; he was against the mainstream that found solutions in rectifying roles by designating duties and nomenclature. A system of names and signs had to be preached for universal application and reaching harmony. Gongsun was critical of these various proposals. He insisted that names and categories must be distinctive for each specific thing and that the phenomenon and the context of each thing should be faithfully studied and represented. He was critical in a double sense: on the one hand, his philosophy of name/naming could prevent anyone from claiming legitimacy by simply taking a role that carries a name of nobility; on the other, it could deny transcendental and metaphysical thinking that sought to connect to an

amorphous ontology as if reality was irrelevant. In other words, he was simultaneously against Confucianism, Legalism, and Daoism.

The construction and deconstruction of names and categories are usually two separate processes, but Gongsun's thoughts combined them into one single process. He maneuvered the use of language to bring out reality in the eyes of the utterer. Such a language destroyed the discursive foundation of normative order desired by the political elite, and it provided legitimacy to the quest for a distinctive reference that signified the reality of only a particular being. His peculiar approach of deconstruction and reconstruction generated contrasting understandings of the effect of his reconstruction. One could take it as the foundation for the regime to prosecute dissidents according to their own conditions and without paying attention to any universal standard. However, this particular understanding seems historically and practically implausible. One could alternatively find an emancipative potential in his sensitivity toward particularity so that anyone is capable of self-emancipation from the alleged universal order. Only the latter potential is discussed in the rest of the book.

The core of Gongsun's conceptualization is categorically different from Confucianism, which is the rectification of the name by kinship. Rather, his sensibility is focused on rectifying names to disempower the elite from stretching the name to distort reality in the eyes of each person. Implicitly, individuals – instead of kinship – have subjectivity and singularity, which are two important aspects that would be echoed thousands of years later in Western postmodernity.[4] However, Gongsun's combination of construction and deconstruction is a challenge to post-modernity, which is similarly multi-sited, but – as the book will argue – largely deconstructive. A revisit to Gongsun's debates could contribute to postmodernity because of at least four parallels in their contexts:

1 Gongsun's time was a period of transition from a hierarchical world order dominated by a few major kings to a warring period of many competing powers. This can be related analogously to the collapse of the so-called "European Concert" or the end of the Cold War.

2 Gongsun dealt with political subjectivity that was losing its target of loyalty. His thoughts could shed light on all cases of color revolutions, by either justifying the overthrowing of a legal (or named) order or challenging the alleged representation (or name) of the population by the color rallies.

3   Gongsun dealt with the quest for order in a world that was losing normative consensus. His suspicion toward the grandeur of ideas can be a foundation in developing a discursive method for analyzing and understanding the normative breakdown of global governance or abuse of humanitarian intervention in the 21st century.

4   Gongsun adopted an ontology and epistemology that, in many ways, parallel postmodern thinking and allow the discovery of pre-modern parallels to postmodernity, thereby challenging postmodern thinkers to face in retrospect a political theory in which the "absence of modernity" (as a typical Western construct) leads to similar thinking.

This book compares Gongsun with his own contemporaries to explain his thoughts and relates his perspective to (Western) post-modernity, globalization, and multi-culturalism – thus, post-Western IR in actuality. All of these schools of thought emphasize the importance of difference but have not noticed the symbol or the name that represents the difference, being often either suppressive or lacking flexibility. Implicit in Gongsun's thought is a dialectical method that encourages the continuous devising of distinctive names to reflect the changes of purpose in a specific reality, which is usually transient. Such a method would allow self-evaluation of the global intervening forces to be constantly alert during the changing situations and the changing needs of the target nation, regime, or group. Such a method would help in breeding a sophisticated and open-ended self-understanding that no longer rests upon any imperative to either remaining different or becoming universal.

Part II shows the detailed process of reasoning in his debate speeches to bring out his philosophy and the epistemology behind his arguments. His philosophy is compared with Confucianism and other major movements to show major differences in terms of their thoughts on political order. In short, Gongsun Long paid great attention to the difference between the purpose of naming and the actual practice or actual thing, whereas the establishment of a hierarchical order was (and is) widely believed to be the solution to disorder, Gongsun Long's sensibility to a wide range of divergences that exist between different ideals of hierarchy and between center(s) and the periphery(ies) or self(s) and other(s) made him preach at political actors to appreciate different purposes and

dimensions of their political differences. He told kings to accept the duty of using names only cautiously, which means getting away from their universal pretensions. By contrast, Confucianism and Legalism asserted the importance of a ruling center. The Confucian center was embedded in a system of morality and fitted people to names and categories, whereas the Legalist center relied on a code of conduct and almost entirely abided by abstract definitions. Gongsun Long perceived and criticized both Confucianism and Legalism as sources of political problems rather than solutions.

Part III relates the previous discussions to a few contemporary topics in post-Western IR. It adopts Gongsun's perspectives to examine the concept of global liberal order. A number of concepts related to the global liberal order are addressed here: peace, the color revolution, the China model, and humanitarian interventionism. The analysis focused on how the abuse of names associated with global liberal order could have prevented hegemonic power holders from self-interrogation and thus allowed human suffering to take place or exacerbate the courses of conflict resolution, revolution, development, and intervention. The emphasis is not on human suffering as such but on the intellectual incapacity for critical self-evaluation as the cause of such suffering. The color revolution is a specific IR topic and seems to be the beginning of an endless cycle of revolutions. The focus is not on the color revolution itself, which took place in post-communist states in the name of civilian disobedience toward suppression and was alternatively called the flower revolution in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Instead, Gongsun's perspective enables our critical sensitivity toward the peculiar irony that representation of population must be articulated through a symbolic color. Color establishes the image of the masses, and the masses then claim their representation of the population although they are not the population. The incurred name "population" does not mean what the term presumably designates, thus calling to mind Gongsun's well-known statement that "the white horse is not (a) horse."

In the brief conclusion, a practical lesson is drawn from Gongsun's teaching and provides hope for post-post-Western IR, where hegemonic order is no longer the starting point in tracing the site's geo-cultural distinction and where the site is not burdened to seek representation through re-Worlding. Gongsun would probably hope to explore the philosophical possibility of globalizing forces to consciously acquire the duty of always using names in designating specific contexts, purposes,

and changes, without linking them to any universal moral principles that justify or reproduce a resource allocation system that is not beneficial to reality in the eyes of the target of intervention.

Notes

1   Rosa Vasilaki, "Provincializing IR? Deadlocks and Prospects in Post-Western IR Theory," *Millennium Journal of International Studies* 41 (September 2012): 13–22; Giorgio Shani, "Towards a Post-Western IR: The *Umma*, *Khalsa Panth* and Critical International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review* 10, 4 (2008): 722–734; Terry McDonald, "Battered, but Unbroken: Epistemological and Theoretical Challenges to Western IR Theory," *European Scietific Journal* (June 2014): 449–453; Zhang Yongjin and Barry Buzan, "The Tributary System as International Society in Theory and Practice," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5 (2012): 3–36; Joyce C. H. Liu and Nick Vaughan-Williams (eds.), *European-East Asian Borders in Transition* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014).

2   Chung-ying Cheng, "Philosophical Significance of Gongsun Long: A New Interpretation of Theory of 'Zhi' as Meaning and Reference," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 24, 2 (1997): 139–177.

3   Such a lesson is strongly urged in Zhang Yongjin and Teng-chi Chang (eds.), *Constructing a Chinese School(s) of International Relations: Ongoing Debate and Critical Assessment* (Oxon: Routledge, 2015).

4   Rolf Trauzettel, "A Sophism by the Ancient Philosopher Gongsun Long: Jest, Satire, Irony – or Is There a Deeper Significance?" *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 26,1 (1999): 21–36.

Part I
Teaching for the Time

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1
Engaging in Our Time

Abstract: *Gongsun denounced artificial intervention based on ideas and reasons. He could debate the liberal global governance as he did Confucianism because his criticism of the Confucian ritual and would-be criticism of the liberal due process could rest upon the same sensibility toward individualized condition. Gongsun and post-Western quest are in line with each other in that they shared alert to any overarching claim of legitimacy for interventionary action. However, Gongsun was not interested in detecting the geo-cultural root as the "objective" foundation – and thus, legitimacy – of a declared distinctive hybridity. For him, a distinctive claim based on sited objectivity could be either redundant or dangerous because of various manipulative purposes that such a claim is meant to achieve. He was suspicious toward the naming of any claimed hybridity.*

One immediate practical relevance of Gongsun's pre-modern debate to the post-Western pursuit is humanitarian intervention. For Gongsun, the originality of things coming from heaven and earth is the ultimate guide. Gongsun's preaching for both distinction and originality deconstructs the legitimacy of humanitarian intervention embedded in the global liberal order. His argumentation would be a conceptual advice to seek a circumstantial arrangement without directly challenging the overarching principle of social and political order in a so-called failing state. An original order is to be restored if it corresponds to a spontaneous order that is existent and naturally evolving. Gongsun denounced artificial intervention based on ideas and reasons. He debated liberal global governance as he did Confucianism: his criticism of the Confucian ritual and would-be criticism of the liberal due process rested upon the same sensibility toward the individual's situation. This particular sympathy toward the individualized condition easily allies with the contemporary quest of post-Western international relations, which emphasizes the geo-cultural characteristics of sited and distinctive identities that do not naturally fit into the liberal order.

However, geo-cultural characteristics presuppose development away from the original order because all geo-cultural trajectories exhibit their own genealogy, in which traits are combined because of encounter, choice, coincidence, and constant innovation. Gongsun's original order refers to the objective condition produced by heaven and earth. In the 21st century, determining which order is spontaneously evolving from heaven and earth is difficult. None of the contemporary orders can be exempted from serious human manipulation or external intervention, and Gongsun's respect for heaven and earth can be taken as a philosophical metaphor in a pre-modern condition. Gongsun proceeded with his anxiety toward the mixing of original things that produced neither–nor relationships. In contrast, the post-Western quest aimed to acknowledge that hybridity is one of a kind.[1] During Gongsun's time, only powerful kings were capable of manipulating symbols and names to create their favored amalgam.

In one sense, Gongsun and the post-Western quest are in line with each other, in that they were both alert to any overarching claim of legitimacy for intervention. The post-Western quest is premised upon a geo-cultural trajectory that is distinctive from Western intellectual history: hence the epistemological objectivity of each post-Western site. For Gongsun, a geo-cultural trajectory should develop an expressible language that specifically acknowledges its distinctive reality to

be entitled to self-claimed identity, distinctive policy, and institutional and spiritual arrangements. However, Gongsun was not interested in detecting the geo-cultural root as the "objective" foundation – and thus, legitimacy – of a declared distinctive hybridity. For him, a distinctive claim based on sited objectivity could be either redundant or dangerous because of various manipulative purposes that such a claim is meant to achieve. He was suspicious of naming any claimed hybridity. Instead, he preferred to think of the claimed hybridity as a non-synthetic composition of the original components that cannot be re-named.

Gongsun demanded that distinction be provided in all post-Western conditions to each specific site, without sacrificing or subduing the original components that jointly made the new, synthesized identity. In other words, a hybrid condition cannot eliminate the original order upon additionally acquiring a hybrid identity. For Gongsun, legitimately winning the acknowledgment of its sitedness would require the preservation and coexistence of the original reality as a separate category. However, the post-Western notion of sitedness is similar to the postmodern condition prescribed in Roland Barthes' formula, in which the author is always dead once a word is uttered. In Gongsun's debate, no geo-cultural tradition can legitimately monopolize a population into a singularly similar, if not identical, post-Western identity. Gongsun is interested in how the population is different from itself: the two original identities and the emerging hybridity coexist separately.

The post-Western quest further pursues why the population is inevitably different from the hegemonic specification. As long as a reason is provided, the reason will be tantamount to a source of legitimacy. Post-Western International Relations (IR) uses this legitimacy to resist hegemony.[2] Gongsun wanted to keep pre-hybrid things in the referable condition without being superseded and as a rhetoric base of criticism against the potential abuse of hybridity. Such abuse took place frequently in his time because the sited leadership invented its own politically correct image and title by mixing symbols and rituals at will. The global hegemony could re-appropriate any alleged hybridity into a marketable symbol in mainstream IR to the effect of freezing a hybrid identity through naming.[3]

According to Gongsun's perspective, a hybrid identity arising out of the mix of global influence and the indigenous condition must be recognized as a parallel rather than a new identity. Logically and practically, a creative mix of the indigenous and the imported/hegemonic cannot replace each of the individual components. Logically, the hybrid kind must be a third

kind; Gongsun is with the post-Western quest in this regard. Practically, Gongsun refused the possibility of mixing and argued instead a quick back-and-forth movement between the two sides. This condition creates a delicate difference from the post-Western quest because the restoration is unlikely in the latter, whereas the original state is never lost in the process of a site becoming hybrid in Gongsun's argument. Gongsun acknowledged that the hybrid could be a paralleling third kind. The very concept of hybridity in itself meant to Gongsun that neither side could win over the other – both sides could still be referred to as realities by utterers who would remain attached or return to the original order.

In the postmodern condition, the difference is individualized and – according to Roland Barthes – constantly and momentarily giving rise to yet another difference.[4] Gongsun could be politically incorrect in light of the post-Western quest in that his insistence on preserving the original reality could be a reason for nationalist or fundamentalist appeals to an imagined, spontaneously, and indigenously pure state. Fundamentalism would be functionally useful to Gongsun if it does not subdue non-fundamentalist conditions during the resistance to hegemonic indoctrination of global liberalism. All claims, through the language of naming, should be understood by analyzing their purposes in the mind of utterers who enlist the language.[5] Non-fundamentalism should acknowledge the reality of fundamentalism, with or without the latter's acknowledgement, in return for the reality of non-fundamentalism. According to Gongsun, acknowledgement of reality would not be treated as an exchange of favor, although fundamentalism should likewise acknowledge the reality of non-fundamentalism.

Compared with the proponents of post-modern deconstruction, Gongsun was more empirical than philosophical, because he was practically devoted to discovering the reality defined by the purpose of the utterer in his or her own condition. Such a reality would be a suspect construction in the 21st century because of its coincidental characteristics, and not a thing produced by heaven and earth under the postmodern condition. Although a postmodern interpretation – with which post-Western IR resonate in terms of shared desire for an anti-hegemonic order – is devoted to an author's subjectivity and difference,[6] Gongsun was more interested in subjectivity than difference. For Gongsun, the difference of one's reality from that of others is, by definition, true and needs no extra effort to prove. Thus, the difference between each one is a secondary issue. A self-denying method (i.e., the author dying

instantaneously) does not exist in Gongsun's thought to deny the validity or convenience of an entitlement, which Gongsun found practically useful to win acknowledgement of one's reality.[7] Gongsun granted legitimacy to a stable place, where all subsets of the population could develop and live on an entitlement that is distinctively uttered for their reality. However, because Gongsun was not interested in scientific "why" questions, the specification of a subset would incur no duty to demonstrate the geo-cultural distinction presumed in the hybrid situation of its own; thus, no rationalization or justification would be needed to claim sitedness. Entitlement to a different policy arrangement can be merely social and psychological, rather than geologically embedded. The practicality of Gongsun's sensibility toward each person's own reality is captured in several contemporary illustrations.

Entrance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) is a tedious negotiation that requires every two countries to negotiate on every item of goods, in line with Gongsun's methodology; no universal arrangement is automatically applicable to all goods or countries. The case of the WTO is reminiscent of old-fashioned tributary systems, wherein specific arrangements between the central state and the vassal state depend on the situation of the latter. No such tributary model could be universally applied to Chinese history;[8] even China could be a vassal state granted that a strong northern power could request China pay tribute.[9] This kind of bilateral arrangement is usually incompatible with a rule-based international relationship because it acknowledges the reality of both parties and involves mutual adjustment, preferably by disregarding the discrepancy between the bilateral settlement and the international rules. Instead, there is a universal rule, which transcends reality. The tributary relationship thus resembles the kind of bilateral relationship adopted by the WTO – both relaxing the universal rule so that the two parties could proceed to amend that rule. Nevertheless, the WTO has the long-term goal of moving toward a shared global liberal order. Gongsun would not appreciate this imposition of a future destiny.

Notes

1   Nathan Andrews, "Globalization, Global Governance, and Cosmopolitanism: A Critical Exploration of European Practice," *CEU Political Science Journal* 7, 4 (2012): 411–433.

2   Mustapha Kamal Pasha, "Islam, 'Soft' Orientalism and Hegemony: A Gramscian Rereading," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 8, 4 (2005): 543–558.

3   Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," *Critical Inquiry*, 20, 2 (Winter, 1994): 328–356.

4   Rolan Barthes, "The Death of the Author," (trans.) Richard Howard, *Aspen* 5–6 (Fall–Winter 1967): n.p.

5   Chunpo Zhang, and Jialong Zhang, "Logic and Language in Chinese Philosophy," in Brian Carr, (ed.), *Companion Encyclopedia of Asian Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1997); Hubert Schleichert, "Gong-sun Long on the Semantics of 'World'," in Lenk and Paul (eds.), *Epistemological Issues in Classical Chinese Philosophy* (Albany: SUNY, 1993): 113–117; Ernst Joachim Vierheller, "Object Language and Meta-Language in the Gongsun-long-zi," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 20, 2 (1993): 181–210.

6   Pauline Rosenau, *Post-Modernism and Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads, and Intrusions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

7   Daoism is echoed by Bather indeed in a peculiar way. According to the Daoist debate, the self should be always ready to jettison any particular form of subjectivity that the self is taking at the time. "I could leave myself behind anytime," said Zhuang Zi. The chapter on "Things Equalized" (qi wu) in *Zhuang Zi.*

8   Bongjin Kim, "Rethinking of the Pre-Modern East Asian Region Order," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 2, 2 (August 2002): 67–101.

9   For example, the Southern Song Dynasty was a tributary state of the Jin Dynasty.

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