

Liberating the Repressed Form of Self in Post-Traditional Ru-Influenced Chinese: A  
Theoretical Study of the Responses of Tu Weiming and Jürgen Moltmann

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**ABSTRACT**

The repressed form of self (RFS) that is caused by repressive social impositions in its different degrees is prevalent in post-traditional Ru-influenced Chinese (PTRIC) societies. Certain non-Confucianist (*non-Ruist*) scholars identify it as a significant factor causing a variety of emotional, psychological, interpersonal and communicative problems, to the extent that in some cases it acts as a risk factor towards suicide. Accordingly, the need to analyse, reflect on, and overcome this problem related to a relational understanding of selfhood in PTRIC contexts is imperative. However, many post-traditional Ruists, such as Tu Weiming, claim this problem is caused by a relational selfhood derived from the small folk tradition of Confucianism (*Ruism*) that is not directly related to orthodox Ruist traditions.

This research starts by exploring Tu Weiming's responses to this research problem through examining critically his interpretations of and arguments for New Ruist relational selfhood, which he claims to be stemming from orthodox Ruist traditions. In terms of his attitudes, I claim that the *responsive Tu* possesses a potential to solve the problem, but not the *resistant Tu*. In terms of his interpretations, I demonstrate that the features of Tu's relational selfhood are not significantly different from the features of PTRIC relational selfhood in shaping a closed and repressively imposed relational self.

Subsequently, this research presents and examines critically Jürgen Moltmann's responses to this research problem through his account of Christian social trinitarian relational selfhood. One of the most important features of Moltmann's account is an open relational self embedded within a *dynamic diversity in unity* as well as a *unity in diversity*. Though there are other issues that complicate Moltmann's claims, I argue that his account of relational selfhood contains a positive potentiality to liberate the RFS.

Finally, this research critically compares these two theoretical accounts of relational selfhood by means of a thorough analysis of the similarities and essential differences in their presuppositions and claims. In conclusion, three possible alternative solutions for the problem are put forth: 1. the responsive Tu's account; 2. the selective combination of the resistant Tu's account and Moltmann's account; and 3. Moltmann's account.