thus rethinking the basis of their own electorate and avoiding populist drift?

Finally, among the most relevant factors that the book highlights, which is certainly not limited to Agarwala's chosen geopolitical context, are gender relations and the interconnections between public and private spheres and between productive and reproductive work. In such case, the crucial question is: Will contemporary labor movements be able to oppose the patriarchal model that has insofar dominated the labor market?

The challenge seems to be, at a global level, that of constructing (and examining) new forms of organization and mobilization that are able to claim the same rights for formal and informal workers, in the public and working sphere as well as in the private one. Agarwala's research brilliantly enters this emerging debate and undoubtedly contributes to the development of interesting reflections in this direction.

Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities. By Anna Sun. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013. Pp. xxii+244. $35.00.

Andrew Stuart Abel
Hastings College

Confucianism as a World Religion is destined to become a classic, especially in Confucian studies and comparative religion. Anna Sun readdresses the tired question of whether Confucianism is a religion or a philosophy to yield an abundance of insights; this is discourse analysis at the right place—and at exactly the right time, given the increasing importance of Confucianism in China.

After emigration to the United States, Sun was surprised to find Confucianism routinely trotted out as an example of Chinese *religion*. Few Chinese see it this way, in part due to China's official definition of religion, which includes only Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam. Following Nietzsche's dictum that "only something that has no history can be defined," Sun sidesteps common definitional entanglements to trudge through the historical/political swamp in which discourses over Confucianism are mired. A thoughtful exploration of this terrain has been long overdue.

The opening chapters center on Sun's meticulous archival research of four key historical phases of controversy. The first of these, the Chinese rites and terms controversy, pitted Jesuit missionaries against Catholic hardliners. The Jesuits, who lost the debate, had argued that Confucian ancestor worship is not a religion. A similar debate surfaced at the end of the 19th century; what Sun calls "the term controversy" was settled in favor of James Legge and Friedrich Max Müller, the latter being especially influential through his pioneering work in comparative religions. After

Müller included Confucianism among the major world religions, it became difficult for subsequent comparative religionists to not follow suit. The third controversy Sun considers, "the Confucianity movement," concerned the adoption of Confucianism as a state religion. A lively discourse emerged in the early days of the republic, but soon lost steam due to association with Yuan Shikai's antirepublican power grab. These three controversies inform a fourth that was especially vigorous between 2000 and 2004 and continues to the present. This last discourse looms large in the second half of the book.

It is impressive that Sun presents multiple research projects. Her archival analysis represents deep scholarship at its best. To this data source she adds field observations at Confucian temples, numerous discussions and interviews, chapters on conversion and the demographic problematic of counting Confucianists, and analysis of contemporary media presentations. Wow.

The chapter on "emerging voices of women" lacks the analytical rigor of the other chapters, but overviews interesting developments, such as the rock-star popularity of Yu Dan. Sun's chapter on conversion, written originally for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion*, contributes to the general understanding of what conversion entails in cases where there are little to no institutional bases or required beliefs. Alas, this chapter is too short; Demerath's concept of "cultural religion" deserved a mention and some consideration of other conversion patterns that do not require belief would have been helpful—Episcopalians or the Jewish experience, perhaps. Nonetheless, this chapter now stands as the definitive statement on Confucianism and conversion, and it is certainly an interesting case.

Sun's orientation is vaguely Durkheimian, mostly in line with the late Robert Bellah's thought on civil religion. Indeed, the question of whether Confucianism is a religion is for Sun ultimately less meaningful than whether it is or could become a civil religion. She writes: "What we hope to see in China today is precisely the beginning of the process of the democratic emergence of civil religion" (p. 181). In this regard, it is unfortunate that Sun does not dwell more upon the 1990s scholarship concerning the social and economic impact of Confucian mores on the economic flourishing of the "four little dragons." To be fair, this lack is not an oversight on Sun's part—that scholarship did not concern Confucianism as a religion. However, some of these authors reconsidered Confucianism in popular books that were widely discussed—Hwang Kwang-Kwo, for instance. The discourse at that time concerned an important Weberian question: How compatible is Confucian culture with modernity and capitalism? This controversy directly concerned the social utility of Confucianism either as a civil religion or simply as culture. It generated a literature that was marred by cultural triumphalism, a tendency to oversimplify Weber, and the embarrassment of the subsequent economic downturn, but the question remains: How well adapted is the Confucian moral system to the large-scale insti-

tutions that characterize China's hyperurban modernity? Assuming Confucian ritual indeed inculcates an ethic of reciprocity and respect for authority, it is not hard to imagine how it therefore undergirds such common Chinese social problems as bribery, nepotism, and vote buying—problems that have roiled China's social critics since the May 4th Movement. In the little-dragons scholars' Weberian terms, reciprocity is associated with the personalism that conceivably undermines the rationalization of Chinese institutions.

Whether it works or not as a civil religion, the mainland Chinese Communist Party's on-again, off-again interest in Confucianism (e.g., Hu Jintao's vaguely Confucian "harmonious society" campaign) makes for some fun reading. Stentorian Confucianesque pronouncements of party officials sometimes border on the comical, but because no one can laugh the effect is somehow tragic. I remember seeing in Beijing a Hugo Boss perfume advertisement that featured two Italianate lovers locked in an almost violently passionate embrace. The slogan read, "Harmony is overrated." I laughed aloud, startling the strangers near me on the escalator. For those of us who love the Confucian classics, Boss's marketers may be on to something. The writings of Mencius, for instance, open with a diatribe against too great a focus on profits—not a bit "harmonious" with the current CCP line! Harmony may indeed be overrated as a Confucian value, a point Sun graciously soft-pedals.

Although some sections might be difficult for undergraduates, this text is likely to be very popular in graduate seminars on comparative religion, Confucianism, and the sociology of religion. More of an introduction to Confucianism may be necessary for a full understanding of what Sun is up to, but this book is certainly one of the most important English-language texts on Confucianism.

Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society. By Rich Ling. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2012. Pp. xiv+241. $34.00.

Wesley Shrum
Louisiana State University

Few sociologists will disagree that the mobile phone has "rearranged the social furniture of our experience" (p. 81). This unprecedented phenomenon of diffusion, along with its social consequences, is analyzed in Rich Ling's outstanding new book on mobile telephony, *Taken for Grantedness: The Embedding of Mobile Communication into Society*. Mobiles, as my African colleagues call them, have reorganized the experience of personal communication throughout the world and are the closest technology we have to a (1) true extension of the body that is (2) likely to become virtually universal. Ling's contribution in the present volume is twofold. First, he pro-