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Andrea Balbo, Ahn Jaewon (Eds.)

# CONFUCIUS AND CICERO

OLD IDEAS FOR A NEW WORLD, NEW IDEAS  
FOR AN OLD WORLD

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ROMA SINICA

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## **Confucius and Cicero**

# **Roma Sinica**

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Mutual Interactions between Ancient Roman and  
Eastern Thought

Edited by  
Andrea Balbo and Jaewon Ahn

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## **Volume 1**

# Confucius and Cicero



Old Ideas for a New World, New Ideas for an Old World

Edited by  
Andrea Balbo and Jaewon Ahn

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# Roma Sinica and Confucius and Cicero: extending the boundaries and constructing relationships

This volume marks the official birth of the new De Gruyter series *Roma Sinica: Mutual Interactions between Ancient Roman and Eastern Thought*.<sup>1</sup> This series<sup>2</sup> aims to cover a gap in scholarly publishing on the relationships between Ancient Greek and Roman culture and Chinese, Korean, and Japanese thought, and to draw a more precise picture of these connections, focusing on subjects such as philology, literature, philosophy, politics. In fact, the number of studies on the historical features of the contacts between Ancient East and West has grown in recent years, as testified by certain works.<sup>3</sup> However, even if we are satisfied with our level of knowledge of historical and economic connections, we cannot say the same for the history of thought in its various facets. For instance, ancient evidence about connections among ancient Roman, Greek, and Chinese authors is very poor. But, in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, the Jesuit fathers, such as Ricci, Intorcetta, and Longobardi, described and discussed in many passages of their books the thought of Chinese philosophers and writers by using their own cultural memories as cultivated Western men. These writers were well-versed not only in Christian texts and the Vulgate, but also in Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and many other ancient authors. They read ‘their’ China, ‘their’ Korea, and ‘their’ Japan with the eyes of men deeply rooted in their culture, making comparisons – implicit or explicit – between Confucius, Meng Zhou, and Roman writers. Moreover, they composed their books in Latin and had thus to develop effective linguistic strategies to allow Western readers to understand Eastern thought. This fact authorizes us to investigate the modality, the features

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1 <https://www.degruyter.com/dg/newsitem/279/neue-open-accessprojekte-in-den-altertumswissenschaften-fr-de-gruyter>

2 The directors of the series are Andrea Balbo (University of Turin) and Jaewon Ahn (Seoul National University). The Advisory Board includes Michele Ferrero (Beijing Foreign Studies University); Lee Kangjae (Seoul National University); David Konstan (New York University); Fritz-Heiner Mutschler (em. Technische Universität Dresden); Carlo Santini (Former professor of Latin Language and Literature at the University of Perugia); Alessandro Schiesaro (University of Manchester); Aldo Setaioli (em. University of Perugia); Stefania Stafutti (University of Torino).

3 Our bibliography does not aim to be exhaustive and stresses more recent texts. After the classic Ferguson (1978), we can refer, for instance, to Leslie/Gardiner (1996), Mutschler/Mittag (2008), and to the very recent Michelazzi (2018), a survey of the most important sources on the topic seen from a historian’s point of view, and Renger (2018).



and the history of this cultural reception. With *Roma Sinica*, we hope to build a meaningful contribution to the composition of this history. More than just a series, *Roma Sinica* sets out to open new perspectives in comparative studies, taking a multidisciplinary approach within the humanities and offering scholars interested in this field an opportunity to exchange ideas, to discuss their work, and to have it published by a publisher as prestigious as De Gruyter.

The first step of this project was the international conference held in Turin on September 5-6th, 2017, with the title, “Confucius and Cicero: new ideas for an old world, old ideas for a new world.” The organizers approached two pivotal figures of Eastern and Western civilization from an unusual angle. While Latin Jesuit sources seem more frequently to bring together Seneca and Confucius, papers in this volume have taken original approaches to search out connections between the two thinkers that are not always so clear.

The volume opens with an introductory section where Fritz-Heiner Mutschler (*Comparing Confucius and Cicero: Problems and Possibilities*) addresses the subject of the conference, examining in depth the meaning and value of an inquiry into the opportunities and limits of the comparison between Cicero and Confucius. His concluding remarks are worth noting: “The comparison between Confucius and Cicero may not be without pitfalls, but if it is done with circumspection and caution towards hasty conclusions it can teach us much, not only about the two individuals but also about the two cultures to which they belong.”

The second section creates, as it were, the philosophical background from which a comparison between Confucius and Cicero can develop. Tongdong Bai (*The Private and the Public in the Republic and in the Analects*) draws a comparison between Plato’s *Republic* and Confucius’ *Analects*, two essential texts of political philosophy in Western and Eastern Culture, exploring which model can better account for the conflict between the private and the public spheres. G. Parkes (*Confucian and Daoist, Stoic and Epicurean. Some Parallels in Ways of Living*) looks for possible opportunities of comparison between the philosophical ideas of the Stoics, Epicureans, and Daoists. Parkes’ perspective devotes great attention to modern problems of ecology and the survival of the Earth. Jungsam Yum (*Mind and Ritual in the Xunzi*) carefully explores the meaning of Li 禮, ritual, going beyond Confucian boundaries in order to encounter Xunzi’s thought.

The third section deals with problems of translating Confucius into Latin as a means of making his thought accessible to Western readers. M. Ferrero (*The Latin translations of Confucius’ Dialogue – Lun Yu –. A comparison of key concepts*), in an extensive and rich paper, examines the translation choices of key Chinese concepts into Latin proposed by Ruggieri, Couplet, Zottoli, Cheung, and other translators from the end of XVIth century. Jaewon Ahn (*Is Confucius a Sinicus Cicero?*) reflects on the character of the Latin translations of some Chi-

nese treatises in the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia Sinensis*, published by order of Louis XIV in Paris in 1687. His conclusion supports the significant role played by this book in the reception of Chinese culture in the West.

The fourth section tackles the problem of examining some key concepts which are of great importance both in Ciceronian and in Confucian thought, even if they are expressed in very different ways. Christian Hoegel (*Humanitas: Universalism, equivocation, and basic criterion*) examines the essential elements of the Roman – and Ciceronian – doctrine of *humanitas*, accurately highlighting its features and limitations. Stéphane Mercier (*Becoming human(e): Confucius' Way to 仁 and the Imitation of Christ in Yi Byeok's Essence of Sacred Doctrine* (聖教要旨; *Seonggyo yoji*) deals with the concept of *ren*, the meaning of which is in some ways quite close to that of *humanitas*. This is a unique study, making particular reference to Korean scholars who converted to Christianity. Kihoon Kim (*Pietas in pro Sexto Roscio of Cicero and Confucian 孝 xiao*) works on the problem of *pietas* in the Ciceronian speech. He compares it with the idea of Confucian *xiao*, underlining the closeness of the two ideas. Stefania Stafutti (*“Be modest and avoid wastefulness”: table manners and beyond from Confucius to Xi Jinping*) reflects from a contemporary perspective on the role of the ‘old Master’ in the politics of China enacted by modern leaders such as Xi Jin Ping (and others).

The final paper, which forms an ideal ring composition with Mutschler’s introduction, is offered by Yasunari Takada (*Cicero and Confucius: Similitude in Disguise*). Takada shows how the similarities and the dissimilarities between the two philosophers should be explained by taking into consideration the cultural differences and their respective roles in the building of the civilizations of West and East, although Confucius’ role in this regard appears stronger than Cicero’s.<sup>4</sup>

As demonstrated by its contents, this volume aims more to raise questions than to offer definitive solutions: further inquiries – the first to take place in Seoul in 2019, under the title “Empire and Politics in Eastern and Western Civilization” – will enrich the colors of the fresco and provide new opportunities for comprehending the role of antiquity in forming modern civilization. However, this is another story, and still to be written.

One must remember here that this project and the related conferences would not have been possible without the generous support of many sponsors: among them we should mention the SIAC (International Society of Cicero’s friends), Daewon Food Inc, the University of Turin, the Confucius Institute of the Univer-

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<sup>4</sup> We want to thank also J.L. Ferrary and A. Andreini, who gave interesting papers in Turin, but, for different reasons, could not transform their communications into revised articles.

sity of Turin (with the pivotal aid of S. Stafutti), and the Seoul National University.

Special thanks also goes to the generosity of friends, colleagues, and students who helped to make for enjoyable days in Turin, taking an active part in the organization. We give particular thanks to Ermanno Malaspina, Simone Molea, Elisa Della Calce, and Philippe Rousselot. We also express our gratitude to the members of the De Gruyter staff, Serena Pirrotta and Marco Michele Acquafredda, who made a decisive contribution to the publication of the volume.

At the close of this introduction the final thanks are due to Cicero and Confucius. It comes from two humble *famuli* of their wisdom, who once more have had the opportunity to learn something from them and also from each other, trying to introduce their findings in an accessible way to all readers who will have the patience and kindness to read this book.

Andrea Balbo

Jaewon Ahn

The Editors thank a lot Kihoon Kim and Aldo Setaioli for helping them revising the book.



## **A General perspectives**



Fritz-Heiner Mutschler

# Comparing Confucius and Cicero: Problems and Possibilities

As author of this contribution, I have to start with some clarifications. I am not a Cicero specialist. I am a Latinist and as such have read quite a bit of Cicero, and I have taught Cicero, but I am not a Cicero specialist. And it is worse concerning ‘the other side’. Because my professional life developed as it did, at some point I came to China, learned, to a certain – limited – extent, Chinese, and – many years ago – read the *Lunyu* in the original. But I am not a sinologist, let alone a Confucius specialist. So what could have induced the organizers of this comparative enterprise to invite me to participate? It must have been the fact that I have done some work in the field of comparative studies between the Greco-Roman world and China: on Greek, Roman, and Chinese historiography,<sup>1</sup> on the concept of empire in China and Rome,<sup>2</sup> and on the Homeric epics and the Chinese *Book of Songs* as foundational texts.<sup>3</sup> Thus, I assume that I am expected to comment on the comparison of Confucius and Cicero from a relatively general perspective, discussing both problems and possibilities that come into view when approaching this task.

## 1 Problems

It may be best to start with what the initiators of the project announced in their invitational letter as its purpose: a “scientific comparison between the two intellectuals, i.e. Confucius and Cicero, taken as symbols of their respective cultural worlds”. This formulation seems to indicate that the ultimate interest of the organizers lay in expanding our understanding of the commonalities and differences between Chinese and Western civilizations *in toto*, and that they believed that a comparison of Confucius and Cicero could serve this aim. If this is so, there arise at least two questions: 1. Is the relationship between Confucius and

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I am grateful to Achim Mittag and Heiner Roetz for commenting on an earlier version of this paper.

1 During the period from Mutschler (1997) to Mutschler (2015).

2 Mutschler/Mittag (2008).

3 Mutschler (2018).

Cicero and between their respective cultural worlds really as similar as the commonly applied term “symbol of” indicates? 2. Is the concrete material we have in both cases so similar as to allow for a direct comparison? I think that these questions point to certain problems concerning the significance and feasibility of the intended comparison; problems, however, that can be dealt with and need not deter us from the undertaking as a whole.

I start with the first question concerning Confucius and Cicero as “symbols of their cultural worlds” and, taking literature as a case in point, I will state: only if two authors (or groups of authors) or two texts (or groups of texts) can be considered as representative of the larger cultural entities to which they belong is it reasonable to assume that the results of comparing them will also be meaningful for the comparison of the larger entities. Let me give two examples from my own work. When, by and by, I became acquainted with Chinese Classical texts, I realized that the occupation with the past played a similarly important role in early China as it did in ancient Greece and Rome. Thus, historiography appeared as a potentially interesting object of comparative research, since a society’s relation to its past is an important aspect of its cultural character, and since there seemed to be texts that could be directly juxtaposed and investigated. The problem was that there were actually many more texts than could be analyzed by one individual.<sup>4</sup> So a selection had to be made, but it had to be a selection that would guarantee that the comparison of selected texts would reveal something about the two (or three) historiographic traditions in their entirety. In the end, my idea was to concentrate on the ‘classics’, i.e. on works that from a certain point had achieved recognition as exemplary models and thus had exercised a formative influence on their respective traditions.<sup>5</sup> My assumption was that the observation of commonalities and differences between this limited number of works – because of their status as ‘classics’ – would be meaningful not only for these works themselves but also for Chinese, Greek, and Roman historiography in general.

It was a similar idea that drove me to initiate more recently a conference on “The Homeric Epics and the Chinese *Book of Songs*”.<sup>6</sup> These two textual corpora are not just the fountainheads of the Chinese and Western literary traditions; for centuries, they played a central role in education and communal life and thus

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Mutschler (1997) 213–216.

<sup>5</sup> Thus I had the works of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Polybius represent Greek historiography, the works of Sallust, Livy and Tacitus represent Roman historiography, and the *Book of Documents*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the *Zuozhuan*, and Sima Qian’s *Shiji* represent Chinese historiography.

<sup>6</sup> Mutschler (2018).

exercised a lasting influence on both civilizations.<sup>7</sup> They are true foundational texts. A comparison could therefore be expected not only to inform us about the commonalities and differences between these texts themselves but also to lead us to a deeper understanding of Chinese and Western civilizations, their common human basis, and their characteristic differences in general.

Independently of whether, in these two concrete cases, one finds the selection of authors or texts convincing, I believe that the reflections underpinning it are valid. Thus the question we have to ask is whether Confucius and Cicero – or the texts we have from and about them – are representative for the ‘cultural worlds’ to which they belong to the same degree as the Homeric epics and the *Book of Songs* are for these same worlds, or as the historical ‘classics’ are for their respective historiographic traditions.

As far as Confucius is concerned, one can certainly argue for such a view.<sup>8</sup> From his teaching grew a school of thought that after some time reached the status of a kind of state-ideology. Confucianism, as we Westerners are accustomed to call it,<sup>9</sup> succeeded in remaining in a privileged position for more than two thousand years. The ‘Confucian’ Classics served as the basis for the imperial examination and thus exercised an enormous influence, not only in the sphere of ideas but also in the socio-political sphere. In this sense, one is justified in considering Confucius as one of the most representative figures of Chinese civilization or, if we want, as a ‘symbol of his cultural world’.

The situation is different with Cicero.<sup>10</sup> There has never developed a Ciceronianism in the West that would correspond to Eastern Confucianism. Cicero’s writings have not become the privileged object of research and teaching at any governmental institution. Nowhere has Ciceronian thought served the ethical-political orientation of a political elite for an extended period. No state examinations for the recruitment of civil servants were held anywhere with Ciceronian texts as their basis. All of this means that Cicero has not influenced Western civilization with the same intensity with which Confucius can be said to have influenced Chinese civilization or even Asian culture writ large. It does not mean,

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. in particular, the contributions of Most, Schaberg, and Zhang Longxi in Mutschler (2018) 163–223.

<sup>8</sup> The literature on Confucius is, of course, immense. For the significance of Confucius for Chinese culture, a classic is Creel (1960). For more recent surveys of Confucius’ influence through the centuries, see Ess (2003), Nylan/Wilson (2010), Littlejohn (2011), and parts III and IV in Goldin (2017).

<sup>9</sup> For the problematic nature of the term, see Nylan (2001) 2–5.

<sup>10</sup> The classic work on the reception of Cicero in Western civilization, still worth reading given its scope and brilliance, is Zielinski (1929); most recent is Altman (2015).



however, that Cicero is not representative of Western civilization at all, but it means that he is so to a lesser extent and in other ways than Confucius. If we compare him with the Chinese sage in order to learn more about China and the West we have to keep this difference in mind.

Then there is the second question as to what material a comparative study of Confucius and Cicero has at its disposal. Here another problem arises. The amount and kind of evidence that is available in both cases is very different. For Confucius, we do not have any undoubtedly authentic text. The *Lunyu* (the *Conversations* or rather the *Collected Sayings*) in all probability contain authentic material, but it is disputed when the text found the form in which we have it, and which of its parts really go back to the time of Confucius.<sup>11</sup> Also disputed is his exact relationship to the ‘Confucian’ Classics like the *Shujing* (*Book of Documents*) or the *Chunqiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), with Western sinologists being rather skeptical concerning his editorship – let alone authorship – of any of these works.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the first biography we have appears in Sima Qian’s *Record of the Historian*, which came into being about 350 years after Confucius’ death. Thus, every representation of Confucius’ life and thought has to work with assumptions, inferences, and reconstructions. With Cicero the situation is very different. Thanks to his own testimony, in particular his letters, and to the testimony of others, his life is probably better documented than that of any other person of Greco-Roman antiquity. In addition, there are his works. His speeches, treatises on rhetoric, and philosophical writings are, to a large extent, preserved and offer access to his thinking. The contrast with Confucius is striking and, though it need not deter us from comparing the two, it is obvious that such a comparison demands particular reflection on the available material and on the problem of what information it can provide and what not.

With these *monenda* in mind, I will look now at three subjects which it seems both possible and worthwhile to investigate: first, Confucian and Ciceroian ethics as presented in the *Lunyu* and *De officiis*; second, the role of *ren* and *humanitas* in Confucius’ and Cicero’s thinking; and, third, the personalities of Confucius and Cicero in their potential capacity as role models. In each case, I will not provide any final word on the subject but only point to some possible avenues of research including their pitfalls.

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<sup>11</sup> See now e.g. Hunter (2017).

<sup>12</sup> For a comprehensive discussion see Nylan (2001).

## 2 Possibilities

### 2.1 The ethics of the *Lunyu* and of *De officiis*<sup>13</sup>

The renown and impact of Confucius is first of all connected with his ethics, an ethics that is, to be sure, conceived of as general, but aims in particular at those active in or about to enter the political sphere. The text on which knowledge of his ethics rests, and whose continuous tradition of interpretation and commentary constituted the heart of Confucianism as it developed over the course of time, is the *Lunyu*. As far as Confucius is concerned, it is, obviously, this text that will have to serve as the basis of our investigation.

Cicero discusses ethical questions in many of his literary productions: in his speeches, in his philosophical writings, of course, and also in some of his letters. To take all these texts into account would be quite arduous and, in addition, there would be an imbalance with the *Lunyu* in mere quantity. Fortunately, however, there is one text that by itself can serve as a counter-piece to Confucius' *Collected Sayings*: Cicero's last major work, *De officiis*. Several characteristics qualify it for comparison with the *Lunyu*. Cicero speaks here in his own name and not through any *persona* as in many of his other philosophical writings. The subject of the treatise is his basic ethical ideas, and he presents them to his son, who is approaching the age of entering a public career. Written towards the end of his life, *De officiis* represents Cicero's final statements on the issues discussed. Finally, to touch upon the question of representativeness, *De officiis* is the one philosophical text of Cicero's that has been received most intensely through the centuries, with readers from the elder Pliny to the church-fathers, from the medieval philosophers to the Renaissance humanists, from a reformer like Melanchthon to stars of the enlightenment like Montesquieu and Voltaire.<sup>14</sup> Thus, even if it may not compare to the *Lunyu* in terms of concrete socio-political impact, its impact on the Western history of ideas is such that at least a certain general representativeness – and in this respect a certain equality with the *Lunyu* – cannot be denied to it.

There is, however, also a point in which the positions that the *Lunyu* and *De officiis* hold within their respective cultural traditions differ. This difference has

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<sup>13</sup> For a well-wrought and comprehensive, though not undisputed, representation of Confucian ethics, see Roetz (1992) and (2018). Particular aspects are dealt with in Van Norden (2002), Shun/Wong (2004), Tiwald (2011) and (2018). For comprehensive analyses of Cicero's *De officiis*, see e.g. Dyck (1996), Lefèvre (2001), and Fiori (2011).

<sup>14</sup> See Zielinski (1929) and Altman (2015).

to be noted as well, and it can even be the starting point for our comparative study of the texts proper since it has an effect on the way in which they present their ethical issues. The point is that Confucius and the *Lunyu* are part of Chinese culture and that Chinese culture developed for many centuries on its own, relatively un-influenced by the outside world.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, Roman culture is characterized by the fact that from early on it was influenced by an older neighbor, Greek culture, in particular with respect to art, literature, and philosophy. A consequence of this difference can be observed in our two texts. Confucius' *Lunyu* belongs to the formative phase of what we can call Chinese philosophy. Earlier texts referred to are few, they are Chinese, and they are non-philosophical, with the *Book of Songs* or *Classic of Poetry* being the most important one. In contrast, the Roman Cicero writes after Greek philosophy, which came into being more or less contemporaneously with its Chinese counterpart,<sup>16</sup> had already produced several ethics, and, taking advantage of his excellent knowledge of this lore, Cicero bases his *De officiis* on the work of a Greek predecessor, the *Peri tou kathêkontos* of the Stoic philosopher Panaetius (c.180 – c.110 BCE).<sup>17</sup>

Against this backdrop, we can now compare our texts with respect to the first concrete topic: the significance of tradition for the ethics of the present.<sup>18</sup> The role of tradition is of central importance in the *Lunyu* and it is relevant in Cicero's *De officiis* as well. For Confucius – and I follow here the interpretation of Heiner Roetz<sup>19</sup> – it is clear that ethics do not start from point zero but that man finds himself always embedded in a cultural context that provides him with recommended patterns of conduct. This complex of rites, etiquette, decorum, and morals is called *li* in Chinese, and it is obvious that Confucius has a positive affective attitude towards it. On the other hand, he is also aware of the fact – and in this he is a typical representative of Jaspers' Axial Age – that tradition may be

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**15** This is not to say that there was no outside influence at all (e.g. from India or Central Asia), but what can be observed with respect to Rome is certainly of a different scale.

**16** Namely in Karl Jaspers' "Axial Age", for which Confucius and, on the Western side, Socrates – not Cicero – are key figures.

**17** The relationship between the two works has, of course, been intensely analyzed. See more recently Dyck (1996) and Lefèvre (2001), and, for a concise survey, Fiori (2011) 199–205.

**18** The investigation of the literary form of the two texts seems less rewarding than the discussion of questions of content. The difference, to be sure, is obvious. On the one hand, we have a collection of conversations, on the other hand, a treatise in the form of a letter to the son. The problem is that the literary form of *De officiis* is not typical for Cicero's philosophical writings, the majority of which – like the *Lunyu*, though in a different way – are dialogical in form. Thus a comparison of the literary form of the *Lunyu* and *De officiis* could not lead to results of more general validity.

**19** Roetz (1992) 67–82 and 195–241. See also Roetz (1995) 46–96, esp. 69–79, and Roetz (2018).

come subject to questions. The requirements of *li* may develop into something merely formal, they may degenerate in other ways, and they may turn out to be in conflict with each other. Therefore, ethical conduct cannot be reduced to blindly following the requirements of tradition. There has to be an agency that reflects and examines these requirements and which is able to decide whether to follow them or not, whether to accept them as they are or to modify them. This agency is the self-cultivated responsible self,<sup>20</sup> and its instruments are humaneness and the Golden Rule. Because of its humaneness, the self-cultivated responsible self is able to adopt the position of the other and thus to test whether a certain action corresponds to the Golden Rule or not.<sup>21</sup> As a result, it is able to overcome its own desires and conduct itself in a moral way.

The relationship between tradition and ethics is also dealt with in Cicero's *De officiis*, however, rather implicitly. As both his political actions and many passages of his works show, Cicero cherishes the Roman tradition. There arises, therefore, the question as to how the traditional Roman value system, the famous *mos maiorum*, the 'custom of the ancestors', relates to an elaborate ethical theory such as that which Greek philosophy had developed from Plato and Aristotle down to the thought of someone like Cicero's 'source', Panaetius.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, Cicero does not discuss this question explicitly. Instead, he follows the design of Panaetius' work, correcting and supplementing it where necessary, and – important for our question – illustrating the Greek philosopher's prescriptions concerning 'appropriate actions' with Roman material from past and present.<sup>23</sup> The question of how the Roman *mos maiorum* relates to middle-Stoic ethics and how both are applicable to cases of the present does not seem to be a problem for Cicero. Rather, one gets the impression that for him – the philosophical adherent of the skeptical Academy, for whom there exists no final certainty but only probability anyway – Panaetius' un-doctrinaire version of Stoic ethics and the Roman moral tradition point in the same direction and provide sufficient ori-

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**20** Concerning the Confucian concept of the self, apart from Roetz (1992), see also the contributions in the second section of Shun/Wong (2004).

**21** Roetz's interpretation of the relationship between *li* and *ren*, which is the basis of the above presentation, is, of course, not the only one possible. For other interpretations of this relationship, see Shun (2002). In basic agreement with Roetz is Tiwald (2011), though his discussion focuses on Neo-Confucianism.

**22** On the relationship between tradition and philosophy in Cicero, cf. now Sauer (2017a and b) with literature.

**23** The main purpose of the references to the present, as Dyck (1996, 59) has correctly pointed out, was to "provide ... commentary on currently significant political topics" like "the recent civil war, Caesar's policies and murder" etc.

entation concerning the ethical and political problems with which a member of the Roman elite might be confronted.

Thus, at least at first sight, in this case Confucius appears as the deeper thinker, Cicero as the cavalier pragmatist. Yet only a more thorough investigation can lead to safe conclusions. And even if such an analysis should confirm the first impression, the opposition between profoundness and ready-made pragmatism should not be generalized but rather attributed to the specific circumstances of the composition of *De officiis*.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, this analysis is certainly not suitable for characterizing Chinese and Western ancient ethics in general.

A second topic worth investigating is the complex of virtues. Independently of whether Confucian and Ciceronian ethics qualify as virtue ethics or not, it is obvious that positive moral qualities play a central role both in the *Lunyu* and in *De officiis*.<sup>25</sup> The *Lunyu* discusses *inter alia* the following virtues (here in alphabetical order of the Chinese terms): *li* (ritual correctness, decency, civility), *ren* (humaneness), *xiao* (piety), *xin* (reliability), *yi* (justice), *yong* (courage), *zhi* (wisdom, judiciousness), *zhong* (loyalty), *zhong-yong* (moderation, sense of the middle). In *De officiis*, *inter alia* the following virtues are addressed (here in alphabetical order of the Latin terms): *beneficentia* / *liberalitas* (generosity, beneficence), *cognitio* / *prudentia* / *sapientia* (insight, wisdom), *fides* (loyalty, reliability), *fortitudo* (courage), *humanitas* (humaneness), *iustitia* (justice), *magnitudo animi* (high-mindedness), *moderatio* / *temperantia* (moderation, sense of measure). These lists could, of course, be varied and/or extended, but I think that they reflect more or less correctly the state of affairs.

It is striking that, at first glance, the lists look rather similar. There are several overlaps, and one gets the impression that with respect to the basic virtues there exists a notable accord between the two texts. On the other hand, on closer investigation, differences come to the fore as well, perhaps not so much in the selection of the virtues dealt with, but certainly in the nuancing of apparently identical virtues (e.g. the more practically-oriented *zhi* vs. the more theoretically-oriented *sapientia*) and in the significance attributed to each virtue (e.g. *ren* and *humanitas*<sup>26</sup>). Thus, the task – which cannot be carried out in this framework – is clear. It has to be determined which virtues are discussed in both

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<sup>24</sup> The treatise came into being within a few weeks in the autumn of 44 BCE, at a time when Roman politics was more than turbulent and Cicero was becoming once again one of the main players involved in the action. Cf. Dyck (1996) 21–23.

<sup>25</sup> Concerning virtue, ancient and modern, cf. now Snow (2018). Of particular interest for our purposes are Becker (2018) on Stoic ethics, and Tiwald (2018) 172–176 on Confucian ethics as virtue ethics.

<sup>26</sup> See below the section on “Confucian *ren* and Ciceronian *humanitas*”

cases, how exactly each of them is characterized, and in what relationship they stand to each other.<sup>27</sup> The similarities and differences that can be observed in these respects should provide a valid impression not only of the ethical views of the *Lunyu* and of *De officiis*, but can also be expected to give at least an indication of the Chinese and the Roman/Western view of things in general.

Yet caution is always advisable, as one example can demonstrate. Confucius and Cicero are both, so to speak, of unmilitary nature and thus have reservations concerning the virtue of courage/bravery in its military manifestation. Thus, Confucius stresses in several passages that *yong* (courage, bravery) has to be subordinate to *li* (etiquette, morality)<sup>28</sup>, *ren* (humaneness)<sup>29</sup>, and *yi* (justice)<sup>30</sup>. Similarly, Cicero, in his treatment of *magnitudo animi* – which tellingly appears in the place of *fortitudo* as the third cardinal virtue<sup>31</sup> – takes great pains to demonstrate that the *res urbanae*, civilian deeds, performed by *fortes* and *magni animi* are much more significant than their military counterpart, *res bellicae*.<sup>32</sup> The question is whether or to what extent these attitudes are representative of the Chinese and the Roman or Western ‘cultural worlds’. And here we probably have to give different answers in the two cases. The civilian orientation of Confucianism and, under its influence, of much of Chinese culture has become a cliché for good reason.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, in Rome, Cicero’s is a lone voice when he tries to push *fortitudo* – whose status as one of the four cardinal virtues is never questioned – toward the civil sphere. In Rome, military achievements always impressed people more than civilian efforts and, at least to a considerable extent, this holds true for Western culture in general, within which most of the time men like Alexander the Great or Caesar exercised greater appeal than the civilian consul Cicero. This example shows that a comparative analysis of the *Lunyu* and *De officiis* must not only be performed with care and precision, but that its results have to be tested

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27 The topic of virtues has always played an important role in the secondary literature on both *Lunyu* and *De officiis*, so there is a solid basis on which to build a comparative analysis (which does not yet exist). The most important of the differences listed above is undoubtedly the fact that *li* is, besides *ren*, the most important value notion in the *Lunyu* (I avoid the term “virtue” since *li*, to be sure, can denote a virtue in the sense of “decency”, “politeness”, but more often means simply “ritual”, “etiquette”). There is no real correspondence to it on the Ciceronian side. To clarify the significance of this difference will be central for a proper appraisal of Confucian and Ciceronian ethics.

28 *Lunyu* 8.2.

29 *Lunyu* 14.4.

30 *Lunyu* 17.21.

31 *Off.* 1.61–92.

32 Cf. especially 1.74–78.

33 See Ess (2003), 33, with the necessary qualifications.

as to how representative they really are before they are used for more general conclusions concerning the two ‘cultural worlds’.

Besides the virtues, a further potentially fruitful object of investigation could be other values like wealth, reputation and fame. They receive attention in both texts,<sup>34</sup> and to analyze how Confucius and Cicero think a person should behave regarding these values will further widen our understanding of their respective ethics. Finally, it would make sense to pay tribute to the fact that both the *Lunyu* and *De officiis* are very much oriented toward the political sphere, and to look at concrete problems of political ethics that are discussed in both texts. To give an example: there is the problem of how to behave vis-à-vis an unethical ruler or officeholder. Both Confucius and Cicero have their say about this,<sup>35</sup> and it could be rewarding to compare their opinions.

Perhaps these observations suffice for the first subject of our comparison, the ethics of the *Lunyu* and *De officiis*.

## 2.2 Confucian *ren* and Ciceronian *humanitas*

The second subject that I would like to suggest for analysis is closely related to the first. It is the comparison of Confucian *ren* and Ciceronian *humanitas*. It was this comparison that I immediately thought of when the invitation to the Torino conference arrived, and (unsurprisingly) it turned out to be one of the topics to be dealt with in a special pair of papers at the conference.<sup>36</sup> What I myself have to offer are, once again, only some introductory remarks.

The first observation one makes is relatively surprising; namely, that the roles of *ren* in the *Lunyu* and *humanitas* in *De officiis* are rather different. *Ren* is the most frequently used ethical term in the *Lunyu*, where it appears around 60 times.<sup>37</sup> Its significance corresponds to the frequency of its appearance. As we have seen, for Roetz *ren* is the decisive value in the ethics of the *Lunyu*, the value which in cases of conflict takes precedence even over *li*, the other fun-

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<sup>34</sup> Concerning wealth, see *Lunyu* 1.15, 4.5, 6.3, 7.11, 7.15, 8.13, 11.16, 13.8, 13.9, 14.11, 15.31 and *Off.* 2.52–87, 3.62–78; concerning reputation and fame, see *Lunyu* 1.16, 4.14, 12.20, 14.32, 14.37, 14.42, 15.18, 15.19, 16.12, 19.23, 19.24, 19.25 and *Off.* 1.38,74–84, 2.31–51.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Lunyu* 7.30, 11.23, 13.6, 13.15, 14.7, 14.17, 14.18, 14.22, 14.23, 17.7, 18.4 and – with reference to men like Sulla and Caesar – *Off.* 1.26, 1.43, 2.2–5, 2.19, 2.23–29, 2.77–80, 3.3, 3.29, 3.79–85, 3.89–90.

<sup>36</sup> See the contributions by Høgel and Mercier in this volume.

<sup>37</sup> Roetz (1992) 196.

damental norm of conduct.<sup>38</sup> Most other interpreters likewise see *ren*'s relation to *li* at the heart of Confucius' ethical thought, though they interpret this relation differently.<sup>39</sup> Yet more or less everybody who attempts to give an account of the ethics of the *Lunyu* lists *ren* as one of the decisive concepts of the *Collected Sayings* and then tries to define it and determine its position in the whole construct.<sup>40</sup>

In contrast, *humanitas* is only of limited importance in *De officiis*. Though the text is much longer than the *Lunyu*, *humanitas* occurs here only around 10 times,<sup>41</sup> and it is not one of the 'cardinal virtues', wisdom, justice, fortitude and moderation, which – with telling Ciceronian modifications<sup>42</sup> – determine the structure of the work. Rather, it appears, so to speak, as a positive but secondary quality.

Yet *humanitas* is an important concept for Cicero. To see this, one has to look beyond *De officiis* to all of Cicero's writings, including the letters. It is at this point that the problem of the different evidential bases between Confucius and Cicero becomes significant. If one wants to get a full picture of the Ciceronian side, one has to use the whole textual corpus, which in terms of quantity and generic variation surpasses that of Confucius many times over. A possible remedy for this dilemma could be to broaden the textual basis on the Confucian side and to include texts like the *Kongzi jiayu*, the *Family Conversations*, and Confucius-passages in the *Book of Rites*, the *Liji*, texts that seem to contain authentic material and may open additional views of Confucian *ren*. This is, of course, only a suggestion for future research. In the meantime, let us accept the imbalance between the source materials and look briefly at the semantic content of *ren* in the *Lunyu* and of *humanitas* not only in *De officiis*, but also in other Ciceronian texts.

An initial survey shows an important difference. The range in meaning of *ren* is more limited than the range in meaning of *humanitas*. Experts distinguish between a narrower and a more general meaning.<sup>43</sup> In its narrower meaning, *ren* denotes a relatively specific quality that we can circumscribe as "love of, sympa-

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<sup>38</sup> See above p. 13 n. 21. Cf. also King (2012).

<sup>39</sup> For a survey, see Shun (2002).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. e.g. Van Norden (2001) 20, 27; Littlejohn (2011) 28–30; Tiwald (2018) 178–179.

<sup>41</sup> 1.62, 1.90, 1.145, 2.18, 2.51, 3.32, 3.41, 3.89 (2).

<sup>42</sup> Thus, Cicero speaks of the third cardinal virtue more often as *magnitudo animi* than as *fortitudo* (e.g. in 1.61–92), which makes it easier to claim the superiority of achievements in the civil sphere over military feats.

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., Shun (2002) 53, Van Norden (2002) 20, Tiwald (2018) 178–179.



thy with, respect for one's fellow-beings".<sup>44</sup> Thus, in the most quoted pertinent passage, Confucius, asked for a definition of *ren* (仁), answers *ai ren* (爱人) "to love men/the others".<sup>45</sup> In its broader meaning, *ren* refers to a master virtue "humaneness", "which is universal and fundamental and from which all other virtues ensue",<sup>46</sup> "an all-encompassing ethical ideal that includes all the desirable qualities".<sup>47</sup> In both meanings, and this is decisive, *ren* remains within the sphere of ethics.

If we turn to Cicero's *humanitas* we meet with a considerably greater variation of meanings.<sup>48</sup> One of them, 'humanity, mankind', can be left aside since it does not concern the kind of human quality that interests us at the moment.<sup>49</sup> Whereas this usage of the word is rare, the usage of *humanitas* in the sense of 'humaneness, human sympathy, philanthropy etc.', that is, in a sense close to that of Confucius' *ren*, is frequent and it occurs in Cicero's philosophical writings<sup>50</sup> as well as in his speeches<sup>51</sup> and in his letters<sup>52</sup>. Similarly, but with less gravity, *humanitas* can denote simple 'friendliness'.<sup>53</sup>

And there are still other meanings of *humanitas*. One is 'education, cultural formation, *Bildung*'. *Humanitas* in this sense implies familiarity not only with the Roman tradition but also, and in particular, with Greek literature and philosophy. Such familiarity leads to the ability to accompany the praxis of daily life with reflection and give it a deeper intellectual foundation. Cicero speaks of *humanitas* in this sense both in private and in public contexts.<sup>54</sup>

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44 The reach or extension of *ren* is disputed in the scholarly literature. Is it perhaps limited to the members of the upper layers of society? Is it limited to Chinese people, or does it even include non-Chinese human beings, i.e. the "barbarians"? These are interesting questions, not least in regard to a possible comparison with Cicero, but they lie beyond the scope of this paper.

45 *Lunyu* 12.22. Mengzi, the most important successor of the Master, compares *ren* to the natural affection children feel towards their parents (7 A15) and the spontaneous compassion one feels with other beings when they are suffering (1 A7, 2 A6).

46 Chan (1975) 107, quoted by Roetz (1992) 196.

47 Shun (2002) 53.

48 The literature on *humanitas* is rich. On *humanitas* in Cicero, as collection of material still fundamental is Mayer (1951); most recent is Martínez Sánchez (2014). On *humanitas* from Cicero onward, cf. now Høgel (2015), where most of the former contributions can be found.

49 In an impressive passage in *De officiis*, Cicero states about cruel tyrants like Phalaris that because of their beastliness they have to be cut off from the *corpus humanitatis*, the "body of mankind" (3.32). For the text critical problem, see Dyck (1996) ad locum.

50 Cf. e.g. *Off.* 2.51 and *rep.* 2.27.

51 Cf. e.g. *Flacc.* 57 and *Balb.* 19.

52 Cf. e.g. *Quint. fr.* 1.1.27 and *Att.* 16.16.10.

53 Cf. e.g. *Fam.* 4.13.2 (about Caesar!).

54 Cf. e.g. *Fam.* 5.21.3 (letter to L. Mescinius) and *Arch.* 3 (speech on behalf of the poet Archias).

A further aspect of *humanitas* comes into view *ex negativo* in a passage of *De officiis* where Cicero points out that being in a state of deep concentration on the difficulties of a law case, and for this reason absent-minded and unsociable, is in order when one walks through the woods on one's estate, but is *inhumanum* at a gathering with friends.<sup>55</sup> In contrast, what *humanitas* in the latter kind of context looks like is illustrated in the opening conversation of *De oratore*: Crassus, the perfect host, succeeds by his charm and amiability, *iucunditas*, and his elegant wit, *lepos* – in one word, by his *humanitas* – in helping his guests to overcome the somber mood that had depressed them in view of the grave political situation.<sup>56</sup>

Overlooking this little survey, we can state that Confucius' *ren* both in its narrower and its broader meaning is a purely *ethical* notion, while Cicero's *humanitas*, where it refers to personal qualities and not to 'mankind', can and often does denote an *ethical* quality similar to Confucian *ren*, but just as often points to an *intellectual* or *educational* disposition or to a much appreciated – but, so to speak, ethically neutral – *behavioral* or *social* competence.

This is not the moment to draw any far-reaching conclusions. But we can at least have a brief look at the problem of representativeness. And with all necessary caution, we can say that in this case there is a chance that both Confucius' and Cicero's views are, at least to a certain degree, representative of their 'cultural worlds'.

Few will doubt that, starting at the latest with the Han period, Confucianism exercised an intense influence on the Chinese world. Of course, its position was not always undisputed. At times, it stood in competition with other world views like Daoism and Buddhism and in the modern period also with Christian faith and Western political ideologies. Accordingly, it underwent modifications and developments.<sup>57</sup> Yet, in spite of all this, it is probably fair to say that (a) from the Han dynasty onward until right into the 20<sup>th</sup> century Confucianism found itself for extended periods in a privileged ideological position and that therefore (b) *ren*, even though it experienced alterations in the nuances of its meaning,<sup>58</sup> stayed a central concept in Chinese thinking during this long stretch of time. Thus, even if not every Confucian scholar-official, let alone all the other men and women, lived up to the moral demands inherent in the concept, Confucius'

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<sup>55</sup> *Off.* 1.144.

<sup>56</sup> *De orat.* 1.27.

<sup>57</sup> For two concise presentations of the development of Confucianism through the centuries, see Ess (2003) and Littlejohn (2011).

<sup>58</sup> For the Neoconfucian attempt to reconcile the narrower and the broader meanings of *ren*, see e.g. Tiwald (2018) 178 f.

*ren*, as a widely accepted ethical value, must have had its effect on people's moral thinking and, at least to some extent, behavioral patterns.

How about Cicero's *humanitas*? The last years of the republic, full of inner strife and conflict, were not favorable to humaneness and benevolence. And yet even Caesar, who in the course of time became something like Cicero's *bête noir*, on many occasions made a point of surprising defeated enemies with his *clementia*, undoubtedly a kind of *humanitas* in the ethical sense of the word. In addition, in view of his wide-ranging *Bildung*, his literary taste, his temporary charm and wit even Cicero, at certain moments, could not help conceding him the socio-cultural or behavioral *humanitas* we were discussing.<sup>59</sup> As for the further development of the concept, even though *humanitas* never had the central significance in the Roman socio-political environment that *ren* had in the Chinese context, it surfaced in its different forms again and again in Western antiquity and beyond.<sup>60</sup> During the Principate, when the social and cultural, as opposed to political, activities of the upper classes gained a value of their own, *humanitas* in the sense of *paideia* attained significance as a cultural ideal.<sup>61</sup> For Christians, like Lactantius, the philanthropic component of *humanitas* as empathy and compassion was important (while *humanitas* could also denote human fragility). The Renaissance rediscovered *humanitas* as education, *Bildung*, in particular as familiarity with the ancient authors, and thus gave birth to humanism, while the enlightenment developed the ideal of 'Humanität', stressing the unity of humankind, the equality of human civilizations, and the importance of religious tolerance.

On the whole, the idea of humaneness, or of what is the essence of being human, is definitely worthy of investigation if one is interested in coming to a deeper understanding of Chinese and Western civilizations, and a comparison of Confucius' *ren* and Cicero's *humanitas* is an appropriate starting point.

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. *Fam.* 4.13.2: *Caesaris summam erga nos humanitatem.*

<sup>60</sup> Cf. the pertinent sections in Zielinski (1929), and the pertinent papers in Steel (2013) and Altman (2015).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Gellius' statement (13.17.1): *Qui verba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, 'humanitatem' non id esse voluerunt, quod vulgus existimat quodque a Graecis philanthropia dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam benivolentiamque erga omnes homines promiscam, sed 'humanitatem' appellaverunt id propemodum, quod Graeci paideian vocant, nos eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artis dicimus. Quas qui sinceriter cupiunt adpetuntque, hi sunt vel maxime humanissimi. Huius enim scientiae cura et disciplina ex universis animantibus uni homini dast idcircoque "humanitas" appellata est.*

## 2.3 Confucius and Cicero as Role Models

The third possible subject that I see as allowing a comparison of Confucius and Cicero is that of the personalities of the two protagonists. Since the assumption that they exercised their cultural influence not least through being who they were and acting as they did, i. e. by serving as role models, it is probably not unreasonable to compare their personalities with the hope of deepening our understanding of the cultures on which they had their impact.

Yet ‘personalities’ constitutes a potentially questionable term, or at least a term that demands explanation. Access to the historic personalities of Confucius and Cicero is, at any rate in the case of the former, very difficult or even impossible. The difference in the quantity and quality of evidence available in each case is particularly striking here. But it is less the historic personalities of our protagonists with which we are concerned than the general impression their personalities left on their contemporaries and on posterity. This impression can in each case be summarized in a short biographical sketch, and so I will give two such sketches as a basis for further reflections.<sup>62</sup>

Confucius (551–479 BCE) was the possibly illegitimate son of a member of the (lower) nobility in the state of Lu. Since his parents died early and the family became impoverished, Confucius grew up in moderate circumstances, which meant, as he says himself, that he acquired knowledge in many simple things. In addition, we may assume, he acquired the kind of knowledge usually conveyed through noble education. And it was education that became his profession. At some point he must have started to teach and in doing so to exert influence as one of the first free-lance educators in China. His disciples were probably second and third sons of noble families but also ambitious social climbers, both of which groups intended to offer their services to the rulers of one of the numerous states of the time. The subjects taught were the basics, like reading and writing, and aristocratic subjects, like archery, chariot-driving, etiquette, and music. But a central part of what Confucius offered was acquaintance with and understanding of the classical scriptures, like the *Changes*, the *Documents*, the *Rites*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and in particular the *Book of Songs*, which included an introduction to the ethical standards that these writings conveyed. As it seems, Confucius considered his teaching not only a profession but also as a calling, by which heaven mandated him with restoring the culture of the Zhou and leading the world back to the right ‘way’. It was entirely consistent with

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<sup>62</sup> I apologize for offering this kind of basic information, but, on the other hand, it may not be totally out of place at the beginning of the volume.

this self-understanding that, in order to attain this goal, he also sought direct access to politics. It is not clear which positions he held or when and where, or whether any at all, but some sources claim that at least for a certain period he was installed as Minister of Justice in his home state, Lu. Whereas this remains uncertain, it is not doubtful that, on the whole, he was politically unsuccessful. This comports also with his long years of wandering (497–484 BCE), which led him to many states without bringing him into any position of influence. After his return to Lu, he continued with his teaching and was the revered master of a growing number of disciples when he died in 479.

Cicero (106–43 BCE) was born in Arpinum, approximately 100 km east of Rome, into a wealthy equestrian family. He received an excellent education, from a certain point of time in Rome and later also in Greece. Full of ambition, he was determined to make his way into the political elite of Rome. Being an outstanding orator and a shrewd lawyer, he built up a reputation in the courts of Rome. At the same time, he pursued his political career, which at the minimum age of 43 brought him into the highest office in Rome, that of consul. It was in this capacity that he suppressed the conspiracy of Catiline, having some of the conspirators executed on the decision of the senate but without trial. This high-point of his political career was also its turning point. A few years later, Cicero was exiled because of the allegedly unlawful execution of the Catilinarians, yet after only a year he was honorably recalled. With Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus dominating Roman politics, Cicero felt powerless and frustrated, and thus, intellectually well-equipped and literarily-gifted as he was, he turned from praxis to theory. The fruits of this first period of extended writing (55–52) were works in which, *inter alia*, he presented his ideas about the development and standards of oratory, and about the best form of the state and of its legal system. There followed an unwelcome pro-consulship in Cilicia (51–50). On his return, civil war broke out between Pompey and the senate on one side, and Caesar on the other. This soon saw the unmilitary Cicero withdraw to southern Italy until he returned to Rome with the victor Caesar's permission. Yet, in view of the latter's dictatorship, Cicero once again turned to literary production, this time presenting the whole range of Greek philosophy to the Roman public in an impressive series of writings. However, after the murder of Caesar in 44 when the opportunity arose to play a part once again in the running of the state, there was no hesitation. Cicero engaged with all he had in support of the senate and the republic, which in consequence poised him against Caesar's lieutenant Marc Antony and Caesar's heir Octavian. The outcome could have been guessed. After their victory, the Caesarians drew up proscription lists and Cicero was among the first victims.

If we compare the two sketches, we note first a set of fundamental commonalities. We have here two personalities who combined intellectual and more specifically philosophical inclinations with the urge to engage and exercise influence in politics. Both tried to do this in an ethically-based way, and both were more oriented toward the civilian than the military side of affairs. In the end, however, both had to come to terms with the fact that concerning the concrete results of their efforts they were less successful than they would have wished.

Beside these commonalities, one can also observe a number of differences. They are connected partly with the distinct socio-political and cultural situations, partly with the distinct personalities. To start with the socio-political framework: In 6<sup>th</sup> cent. China, the only foreseeable political role for someone of Confucius' standing was that of a trusted adviser or minister in one of the monarchic states of the time. Such a role was not totally unrelated to the alternative activity, that of teaching young men in order to prepare them intellectually and morally for governmental service. In both cases, the lore of venerated texts played an important role. The conveyance of the values these texts contained, and of the ability and the will to implement them in accordance with the demands of the actual situation, was the primary goal of such guidance, whether advice or instruction. Personal communication was its usual form. In the Roman Republic, political practice – and closely connected with it, forensic practice – consisted to a large extent in public speech and its goal was the attainment of public office. The pinnacle of this ascent was the office of consul, where one was – temporarily – leader of the state. Cicero acted accordingly. The alternative activity – to which he turned when he was deprived of political influence – was not personal instruction, though in a few cases he engaged in such instruction as well, but literary production. One of the reasons for this was Greek philosophy, which existed in numerous writings of the highest intellectual and literary quality and which Cicero rightfully felt qualified to introduce to his compatriots in writings of equal scope, intellectual clarity, and stylistic excellence.

Confucius' and Cicero's personalities were as different as the socio-political circumstances in which they lived and were active. The Confucius of tradition seems indeed to have been something like a sage who went his way, unperturbed by difficulties and set-backs, and every now and then was even capable of self-irony. To observers from the outside he seemed "to know that what he was trying to do was impossible but to keep trying anyway".<sup>63</sup> Cicero, on the other hand, as we know him in particular from his letters, was certainly not a sage in this sense.

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63 *Lunyu* 14.38.

He was immoderately ambitious, prone to emotional ups and downs, vain and yet insecure, easily depressed but at the same time of inexhaustible intellectual energy, full of deadly hate against someone like Marc Antony, but sensitive and caring towards his daughter and his friends, and so on.

I stop here with my enumeration and turn to the question of to what extent these commonalities and differences can be transferred from the two individuals to ‘their cultural worlds’, i.e., to what extent Confucius and Cicero proved to be role models in the course of the centuries.

As for the former, it seems that – starting with the establishment of Confucianism as a state-sponsored ideology under the Han – the personality of the master as it appeared in the *Lunyu* did exercise a strong influence on an important section of society over extended periods of the next two millennia. One precondition for this was the continuity of the socio-political framework, which through the centuries remained that of a monarchically-ruled central state whose administration depended to a high degree on the proper functioning of its bureaucracy. As is well known, the recruitment for this bureaucracy was based on literary and intellectual performance, and in the different examination systems that were in place over time Confucian lore always played a decisive role. This is, of course, not to deny that in the course of the centuries dynasties rose and fell, periods of turmoil occurred, other dynasties brought new political and ideological developments, and that all of this could not leave Confucianism and its social, political, and cultural position untouched.<sup>64</sup> And yet, even if at times repressed, and at others undergoing the influence of rival world views, Confucianism lived on and, in the end, continued to serve as an ideological backbone of the Chinese state right into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This also meant that Confucius functioned as a role model for the members of the bureaucracy, the scholar bureaucrats, and that already this significance within the socio-political sphere alone may be considered as justification for calling him a “symbol of his cultural world”.

As far as influence in the socio-political sphere is concerned, Cicero cannot be said to be on a par with Confucius. Since role models always function in competition with other role models, a look at two anti-types of Confucius and Cicero is telling. On the Chinese side, Qin Shihuangdi, the forceful unifier of the Empire, over the course of two thousand years received mostly bad press, being perceived and condemned as a violent tyrant. With Caesar, on the other hand, who in terms of military achievement and violent pacification of an Empire can be considered

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<sup>64</sup> For a relatively recent, concise presentation of the history of Confucianism, see Littlejohn (2011).

the Roman counterpart to China's First Emperor, things were different. Cicero, in the end, probably hated him, but through the centuries this did not prevent many others from looking at him in admiration and awe. Friedrich Gundolf, in a famous book, presented the history of this reception under the title "Caesar. A History of his Glory",<sup>65</sup> a perhaps remote but nevertheless indisputable sign that Cicero's, the civilian politician's, success as role model was limited.

It is all the more interesting that as soon as one looks beyond the socio-political sphere one realizes that Cicero had a great impact on posterity as well. Not surprisingly, different times appreciated different qualities and achievements.<sup>66</sup> For Quintilian, the first state-employed professor of rhetoric, Cicero was the paragon of Latin language and literary style. It was the same with the church father Jerome, whereas other Christian authors like Minucius Felix, Lactantius, Ambrose, and Augustine partly leaned on, partly took issue with some of his philosophical writings. In the Middle Ages, the ecclesiastical institutions of education used (and thus preserved) his introductory works on rhetoric. The Renaissance humanists venerated him for his mastery of Latin style and his wide-ranging *Bildung*, and felt a deep sympathy for him as a special and articulate human being. Protagonists of the enlightenment were attracted by some of his theological and ethical ideas, while his republicanism, for better or worse, inspired some of the Founding Fathers in North America and some of the revolutionaries in France. Thus it seems that all in all we may call Cicero too "a symbol of his cultural world".

As a result of our reflections we may retain the following: The comparison between Confucius and Cicero is not without pitfalls, but if it is done with circumspection and caution towards hasty conclusions it can teach us much, not only about the two individuals but also about the two cultures to which they belong.

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<sup>65</sup> Gundolf (1924).

<sup>66</sup> See n. 10.





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## **B A philosophical approach**



Tongdong Bai (白彤东)

# The Private and the Public in the *Republic* and in the *Analects*<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Introduction

Plato's *Republic* and Confucius's *Analects* are two founding texts of political philosophy in the West and in China respectively. In spite of many differences, Confucius and Plato were facing a common problem: the threat of the private to the public. But they offered apparently radically different solutions. In this chapter, I will first present both models and then compare them with each other.

In Section 2, I will discuss how the *Analects* deals with the issue of the private and the public. The *Analects* consists of apparently scattered and brief conversations. To tease out hidden messages in the *Analects*, I will also use many passages from the *Mencius*, another important early Confucian text, with the assumption that these passages are consistent with and can be considered an elaboration of the related themes in the *Analects*. Given the limited space, I cannot justify this assumption, and have to take it for granted. So, 'the *Analects*' used in this chapter is a symbol that represents certain strands of early Confucian thought, especially that found in the *Analects* and in the *Mencius*. With this *caveat* I will show that, although recognizing the conflict between the private and the public, the *Analects* pays more attention to the elements of the private that are constructive to the public, and uses the private as the natural *locus* of instilling people with public-mindedness. Where there still remains conflict between the private and the public in the mentioned texts, it will be resolved in a contextual manner. But I will also show, very briefly, how Han Fei Zi, the early Chinese Legal thinker, challenged the adequacy of Confucian solutions.

If Confucian solutions are indeed inadequate, we may have to search for another model. This leads us to the discussion of the model put forth in the *Republic*. In Section 3, I will show that the *Republic* understands the private mostly as a threat to the public, and tries to suppress it nearly completely in order to protect the public. But this proposal also faces some fundamental challenges, which early Confucians would have, and Aristotle actually did make.

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<sup>1</sup> The research for this chapter was supported by the Program for Professor of Special Appointment (Eastern Scholar, second term) at Shanghai Institutions of Higher Learning, I also wish to thank the organizers of the Turin conference on Cicero and Confucius, and in particular, Prof. Andrea Balbo, for including me in this interesting project.

In the last section, I will offer some further reflections. First, I will show that the contrast between the two models is not between China/East and West. Rather, these models offer paradigms for us to reflect on the history of political thought and on some fundamental issues in politics and political philosophy. As examples, I will show how these two models can be compared with certain mainstream modern understandings of the relations between the private and the public and teachings based on these understandings. I will also reflect on the issue of how to solve the conflict between the private and the public in light of the apparent failures of these two models.

There are already numerous works dedicated to the study of these texts, and of the issue of the relationship between the private and the public. I will focus on a textual analysis of these two texts without diving into these studies that I choose not to cite, and this would not, to my knowledge, affect significantly the results and methods of this study. The contribution I wish to make in this chapter is limited: to put these two texts side by side, to show an intriguing contrast between them, and to discuss some implications of this contrast. By showing the ‘commensurability’ between these texts, I wish to pave the way for promising mutual engagements between the two great philosophical texts, and between the Confucian and the Platonic traditions, as well as their implications to the history of political philosophy and to certain problems in political philosophy and in political matters.

Before going into these texts, I will first offer some general discussions of the two key concepts in this chapter: the private and the public.<sup>2</sup> It should be first made clear that these two concepts are relative. The private is what is one’s own, and the public is what is beyond one’s own. But ‘one’s own’ has some indeterminacy. If we take the interest of one person as private, the interest of his or her family or extended family can be taken as a form of public interest. But with regard to the interest of a community that is not merely based on kinship, (one’s own) family’s interest should be regarded as private interest. Again, the interest of one’s own community can be considered private with regard to the interest of a collection of communities or the interest of the state. However, it seems that it takes little effort, perhaps no effort at all, for human beings to be self-interested (‘self’ here means the individual person), and, for the majority of people, it takes a little more effort, but is still quite natural (‘natural’ in the sense of ‘effortless’) – through either natural affinity to or the nurturing and supportive environment of

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<sup>2</sup> I wish to thank Loy Hui-chieh for encouraging me to clarify these concepts, and Hao Changchi 郝长擢 and especially Zhou Xuanyi 周玄毅 for helping me to see the relative nature of these concepts.

one's own family – to develop a concern with the interest of the family. Thus, although what is private is relative, one's own self-interest and one's own family's interest are often the primary sources of private interests, in spite of the relative nature of what is taken as private interest. However, we should also see that the interest in the family, including holding the interest of other family members above that of one's self, is the first step for a person to go beyond the narrow interest of the individual self and to be concerned with others. The double features of one's family interest, often 'naturally' (effortlessly) considered one's own (private) on the one hand, and being the first step to go beyond the private in its narrowest and most natural (most effortless) sense on the other, will play a significant role in the Confucian treatment of private-public relations. It should also be noted that one person's self-interest is not necessarily the same as his or her material interest. Indeed, both the *Republic* and the *Analects* argue that one's material interest should be subjected to the rule by some higher good. In the *Republic*, this idea is expressed through the belief that an ordered soul is just (434d-445e; c.f. 351b-352c) and the idea that even this 'just' soul (which is actually only partially just) can only be beneficial and useful when it is guided by the Good (504a-506b).<sup>3</sup> In the *Analects*, the hierarchy within what is considered an individual person's own is expressed through putting what is right (*yi* 义) above what is materially profitable (*li* 利): see, for example, 4.16 of the *Analects*.<sup>4</sup> With these two key concepts clarified, now let us first take a look at how the *Analects* deals with the private-public problem.

## 2 How to solve the conflict between the private and the public: the model in the *Analects*

During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods in Chinese history (SAWS for short, lasting roughly from 770 B.C.E. to 221 B.C.E.), when the early Confucians lived, the unity of the Zhou dynasty was increasingly challenged by the growing powers of its vassal states; the unity of each vassal state was more and more challenged by the growing powers of its powerful noble families; and the unity of each clan was more and more threatened by ambitious lesser lords. It was an age of political factions, and it was a jungle in which everyone

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<sup>3</sup> The translation of the *Republic* I am using in this chapter is Bloom (1991).

<sup>4</sup> For an English translation of various passages of the *Analects* mentioned in this chapter, see the corresponding parts of Lau (2000). The translations of the *Analects* in this chapter are all mine.

and every entity fought for his or its own survival and dominance, oftentimes by all means possible.

Underneath all the chaos is the conflict between the private and the public. Seeing it having gone wild on every level, early Confucians also saw the constructive aspect of the private, which could lead to harmonization of the conflict between the private and the public. As Confucius said in the *Analects*, “the way of practicing *ren* [benevolence or humaneness, a kind of public-spiritedness] is to find analogy from what is near at hand” (6.30). This means that what is near, or the private, is crucial for what is ‘far,’ or the public. In particular, for Mencius, to have stable possessions (property) is important for a member of the masses to have stable character (virtues) (1 A7 and 3 A3 of the *Mencius*).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in an encounter (1B5), a king confessed to Mencius that he had two weaknesses: he was fond of women and of money. But Mencius said that two humane rulers in the past had similar desires. But precisely because of these, they understood that their people must have had similar desires, which led them to make sure that, in the case of the ruler who was fond of women, there were “neither girls pining for a husband nor men without a wife” under his rule. What is implied in this passage is that, without the king’s own fondness of women – a private interest, he would not have been able to understand the interest of his people or the public interest.<sup>6</sup>

But it is crucial that we not only understand others’ needs, but also are motivated to satisfy them. The latter needs to be cultivated, and the best place for this cultivation, according to early Confucians, is within the family. As mentioned before, family plays the dual role of being both private (with regard to a larger community) and public (with regard to one’s individual self). Love among family members can then play the role of expanding one’s private interests to the public realm. You Zi (有子), someone considered almost an equal to Confucius, claimed in the *Analects*,

Exemplary persons concentrate their efforts on the root, for the root having taken hold, the way will grow therefrom. As for filial and fraternal responsibility, it is ... the root of humaneness. (1.2)

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<sup>5</sup> For an English translation of various passages of the *Mencius* mentioned in this chapter, see the corresponding parts of Lau (2003). The translations in this chapter are all mine.

<sup>6</sup> This understanding poses an interesting contrast to an example of the moral man Kant offered. This man is someone who by nature lacks sympathy and is cold and indifferent to the sufferings of others, and, indeed, his coldness and indifference is crucial for his philanthropic act to others to be considered moral: Kant (1998) 11; 4:398.

Throughout the Confucian tradition, the analogy between father-son relations and ruler-subject relations is prevalent (see, for example, 12.11 of the *Analects*). The state is not an enlarged individual, as Socrates suggested in the *Republic* (368c-369b). Rather, the state is an enlarged family. The devotion to the enlarged family is developed from the devotion to the natural family. As Mencius put it,

Treat the elderly of my own family [as they should be], and extend this treatment to the elderly of other families; treat the young of my own family [as they should be], and extend this to the young of other families... Thus extending one's humaneness outward can protect everyone within the Four Seas [the alleged boundaries of the world], and not extending one's humanity cannot even protect one's wife and children. (1 A7 of the *Mencius*)

Indeed, what Mencius suggested here is that through the expansion of care, eventually, one will embrace everyone in the world.

For early Confucians, however, those who can achieve this universal care are few in number. Even if it is achieved, the universal care will have to be hierarchical, and justifiably so. This is the Confucian idea of graded love (爱有差等). Mencius made a good illustration of this. He said,

an exemplary person is [...] holding his parents dear (*qin*亲) but is [merely] humane toward the people; he is humane towards the people but is [merely] sparing with things [or not wasting things; 爱]. (7 A45).

As indicated by the root metaphor in 1.2 of the *Analects*, our care for our fellow human beings is rooted in our care for our family members. The root has to be strong enough to hold the whole tree. Otherwise, it would be blown over easily.

For example, if I have only one loaf of bread, which is only enough to save one starving person, naturally and justifiably, I will use it to save a close family member rather than a stranger, even if I am a person of universal goodwill.<sup>7</sup> Does this mean that we always put our family duties first? Confucius 'seems' to think this way. In a passage in the *Analects*, a governor boasted to Confucius that the upright person in his village was someone who bore witness against his father who stole a sheep. Confucius replied by saying that the upright people in his (ideal) village behaved differently in that a father covered up for his son, and a son covered up for his father (13.18). But this passage should not be read as Confucius's always taking family interest as supreme. For, first, stealing a sheep is a petty crime. Second, the hidden rationale for Confucius's claim may have been that, if the son turned the father in, the father would lose trust in

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<sup>7</sup> A later Confucian Wang Yangming (王阳明 1472–1528) made exactly this point: Wang (1992) 108.



everyone in the world because his closest kin betrayed him. In the future, he may be law-abiding, but this will not be because he thinks that it is the right thing to do, but because of the fear of punishment. As Confucius put it in another passage, if we only used laws, people would be law-abiding but shameless (2.3 of the *Analects*). A society of shameless people is dangerous! Third, to conceal the father's misconduct does not mean letting him go free. Rather, by concealing a family member's misconduct, thus preserving the loving relationship and trust, one can more effectively help this person to right wrongs.

Therefore, with the premise that the public-spirit should be rooted in family care, Confucius tried to solve the conflict between the private and the public not by negating the private completely, and not by laws alone, which, as we will see, poses a sharp contrast to the treatment of the conflict in the *Republic*. Instead, Confucius tried to offer a contextual solution that addresses both private and public duties at the same time.

One problem with the aforementioned case, however, is that the crime involved was a petty one. What happens if the father committed a murder? Confucius didn't deal with this kind of case in the *Analects*, but Mencius did. In 7 A35, he is asked about a hypothetical case. In this case, the father of the sage ruler Shun's murdered someone, and Mencius was asked what Shun should do. Mencius suggested that, on the one hand, Shun should not stop the police chief from trying to arrest his father, in spite of the fact that Shun, as the ruler of *tian xia* (the world, as it was known to the Chinese), had legitimate authority to pardon his father; on the other, he should give up his throne and run to a remote place with his father as a fugitive. Again, based on the continuity picture between the private and the public, Mencius tried to strike a balance between two conflicting duties.

To sum up, for early Confucians, the opportunity to overcome the threat of the private to the public comes from the private as well. The constructive part of the private should be cultivated to serve the public. When there are still conflicts of duties, the solutions need to be found in a contextual manner. There is no pre-determined 'field manual', and cases in the early Confucian texts should be taken as inspiring examples to help us to think through the conflicts in our lives.

But a challenge still remains: can all conflicts be resolved? In the hypothetical case in the *Mencius*, what about the victim's family? What about the people the sage ruler Shun left behind? Shouldn't he be concerned with how they would live without his moral leadership? Han Fei Zi, a so-called Legalist thinker in the Warring States era who allegedly studied with another important early Confucian thinker, Xun Zi, and who thus might have known Confucianism well, raised his own powerful objections. To the Confucian point that laws, if they are used, should be based on a morality that begins with the family, he argued that the

cultivation of family care may come into conflict with what the public or the laws require. The Confucian can respond by saying that this conflict can be solved in a contextual manner. To this, Han Fei Zi has two counter-arguments. First, sometimes, the conflict is too deep to be resolved. Second, the contextual and sophisticated treatments offered by Confucius and Mencius are beyond the capacities of the masses, while to regulate them effectively should be the main goal of a successful regime. In particular, a state that is well-run should rely on laws and rules, because even the masses can understand them well.<sup>8</sup>

Han Fei Zi offered a few cases in which he wished to show that the conflicts between the private and the public are irresolvable, but it can be argued that there are Confucian solutions to these dilemmas. A challenging case I have discovered comes from *Shi Ji* (史记, *Records of the Grand Historian*), in which Sima Qian (司马迁) described the following historical case:<sup>9</sup> Shi She (石奢), a minister of Chu (楚), hunted a murderer down, only to find that the murderer was his father. Letting his father go, he turned himself in and asked the king to punish him with death penalty. The king forgave him. But Shi She argued that arresting his father would not have been the filial thing to do, but that it was also not loyal to disobey the King's law. Although it was up to the king's discretion and leniency to forgive him, it was his duty to pay for his crime. Then, he committed suicide. I doubt that a Confucian can offer a better solution than this. But this solution is an acknowledgement of the lack of harmonious solution to this kind of conflict. In this situation, the continuity between the private and the public breaks down, and the conflict cannot be overcome in a constructive manner. The Confucian continuity and harmony model fails in such extreme cases.

### 3 How to solve the conflict between the private and the public: the model in the *Republic*.

As we have seen, the two key challenges to the early Confucian model are about the effectiveness of morality-based contextual solutions and about whether the conflicts between the private and the public spheres can always be harmonized. As far as the problem of the conflict between the private and the public is concerned, the approach in Plato's *Republic* seems to consist in a total suppression of the private and an emphasize on establishing laws rather than cultivating

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<sup>8</sup> He made these arguments throughout the *Han Fei Zi*. In particular, please refer to Chapter 49 of this book. For an English translation, see Watson (1964).

<sup>9</sup> Sima (1986) 339.

family-based morals. In this section, let us focus on whether this approach works better than the Confucian one.

Although Plato's Athens and the city (*polis*) discussed in the *Republic* are different from the relatively large and populous states extant during the SAWS periods in China, both environments shared the problem of having to deal with factions, or the conflicts of different interest groups. In Plato's Athens, factions were often family- or clan-based. If we take the common good of the city as constituting the public, the interest of the family and the clan (as well as the interest of an individual person) should then be considered private. So, the problem of factions is a problem of the conflict between the private and the public.

In sharp contrast to the model in the *Analects*, however, the aspects of private interests and family matters that are commonly regarded as benign and even beneficial to the public are largely ignored in the *Republic*. A telling example is that, when discussing what laws to establish in the ideal city, Socrates<sup>10</sup> lists a few things as small and secondary conventions, for which no laws need to be established. Among these are appropriate conduct in treating the elders and the care of parents (which are taken as the root of Confucian morality by early Confucians); these are listed next to what are considered proper hair-dos (425a-c).

In contrast, Socrates pays far more attention to the clear distinction and conflict between the private and the public. For example, at one place, Socrates states that a private man cannot lie to the rulers, although it is appropriate for the rulers to lie for the benefit of the city (389b-c). Commenting on this, Allan Bloom – a well-known contemporary translator and a commentator of the *Republic* – points out that the “opposition between the private and public is an important theme in the *Republic* and, in some respects, it is the core of the problem of justice”.<sup>11</sup>

Given this sharp distinction, much of the *Republic* is then focused on how to suppress the private. In particular, almost anything private is forbidden to the two ruling classes (philosophers-kings, guardians and their auxiliaries). For example, in Socrates's discussion of the material conditions of the lives of the guardians (415d-417b), guardians are not allowed to have any private property. There is not even a private space, such as a house or a storeroom, for the guardians (416d). The reason for abolishing these things is that the private possessions will turn the guardians into “masters and enemies instead of allies of the other

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<sup>10</sup> In this chapter, by ‘Socrates’, I mean the character in the *Republic*, a ‘play’ created by Plato. Whether this Socrates is based on an accurate portrait of the historical Socrates is not relevant here.

<sup>11</sup> Bloom (1991) 445–446, note 41.

citizens” (417a-b). This transformation will lead to factional conflicts, and eventually the destruction of the city. Instead, the city has to provide the guardians with sufficient sustenance and other necessities of living (but with no surplus). The guardians live and eat together, and this communal life is clearly intended to nourish the camaraderie among them.

Nevertheless, although their self-interest (‘self-interest’ in the narrow sense of this word, i.e., as separate from the family interest) is largely suppressed, the guardians may still form factions based on their family ties because, as we see in the discussion of the concepts of private and public in the first section, family interest is the other primary source of private interest. This is a reason why Socrates later proposes to abolish families altogether (457c-471b). Through some complicated, almost impossible, arrangements, only the best men – “the young who are good in war or elsewhere” (460b) – and the best women are allowed to reproduce. The newborns are immediately taken away from their mothers, any possible identification of them with their birth mothers being thereby eliminated. These babies are to be raised by the city. As a result, the male and female guardians have to treat all citizens of the city as blood relations, and cannot favor some over the others on the basis of family ties. As Bloom put it, “To become either a member of a city – or a philosopher – one must break with one’s primary loyalty”.<sup>12</sup>

These arrangements also help to solve another crucial problem in politics: how to make rulers care for the city and the citizens. At two separate places, Socrates offers two good reasons for good men or philosophers to rule: to avoid the penalty of being ruled by a bad ruler (347a-d), and to pay back what is owed to the city (520a-b). One problem that is relevant to our discussion is that neither reason sufficiently motivates the good people to rule. In contrast, in the Confucian model, the rulers should be those who succeed at Confucian moral cultivation. That is, they should be the ones who are motivated to care for the well-being of the people.

Perhaps aware of this, Socrates introduces means to strengthen the motivations of potential rulers. Socrates argues that the guardians have to be selected on the basis that, not only do they have the knowledge of how to guard the city, but they have the firm conviction that what is advantageous to the city (public) is also advantageous to themselves (private). Only those who can hold onto this belief against all sorts of tests will be chosen as guardians (412b-414b). It seems, however, that Socrates does not think that mere education is sufficient to instill public-spiritedness in the guardians; rather, a noble lie has to be told to all citi-

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<sup>12</sup> Bloom (1991) 385.

zens (414b-415d). They are told that they were born from the land of their city and made of different metals. As a result, the land is their mother, and they are all brothers to each other. With this belief, the rulers will love the land of the city – in a literal sense – as their mother and the citizens as their brothers. The aforementioned proposal of the abolishment of family can be taken as a further reinforcement of the noble lie. That is, through abolishing family altogether and adopting a community of women and children, any citizen the guardian meets is “a brother, or a sister, or a father, or a mother, or a son, or a daughter or their descendents or ancestors” (463c).<sup>13</sup>

To be clear, not all private interests are suppressed.<sup>14</sup> As pointed out, the city offers sustenance to the ruling class, thus satisfying some of its private interests. But this satisfaction is so basic that these guardians and their auxiliaries are not happy, like poorly-paid mercenaries (419a-420a). Of course, a particular private interest, their sense of honor, is indeed adequately satisfied (413e-414a and 468b-469b). Moreover, it can be argued that the producer class (the masses that are ruled) also has some private interests satisfied. It is possible that they can have private property and families, and their way of life is protected by the ruling class. But the *Republic* never makes this explicit, and we can imply from some passages that even this limited satisfaction of their private interests can be violated. For, after all, as Socrates argues (in his answer to the complaint that guardians are not happy), the happiness of the city as a whole should be our only concern, and this suggests that, if the private interests of the masses have to be suppressed for the greater good, or for the Good (which, in the *Republic*, is not defined as the sum of the private interests of all citizens, as both Confucians and we moderns often understand it), we can suppress them. Thus, as pointed out earlier, the private interests that are not harmful to the common good or are too difficult to exterminate (unless, for example, we can take away the body – which is actually considered in the *Phaedo* 61b-65b; see also 172c-177c of the *Theaetetus*) are not suppressed and are (often meagerly) satisfied, but the *Republic* pays little attention to them. In contrast, the focus is on how private interests that are in conflict with the public good can be suppressed. With these interests completely suppressed, the public interest is not threatened anymore. Unity, the

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**13** It is debatable how effective Socrates actually thinks all these arrangements are in making the good men devoted to the public interest. For example, in Book VII, the philosophers (the best men), after seeing the good, have to be *compelled* to serve the common people (514a-521b).

**14** I wish to thank Liu Wei (刘玮) for encouraging me to make this clarification, and I have benefited from the discussions with him in some of the points that will be made in the following.

‘allegedly’<sup>15</sup> greatest good of the city, is achieved, with the help of maintaining a proper size of city (423b-c and 461e-466c). All its citizens, especially those of the ruling class, will have a shared sense of pain and pleasure among themselves, “like a single man” (462c). There are no factions among the citizens, and the conflict between the private and the public is solved by the total annihilation of the private interests that are in conflict with the public interest. However, it should be pointed out that Socrates thinks that the aforementioned arrangements – especially the abolishment of the family – are unlikely to be carried out in real life, unless philosophers become kings or kings happen to be philosophers, a very rare event, if it is possible at all (471c-474c).

As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, by almost completely suppressing private interest, and by focusing on laws, the model in the *Republic* seems to be able to get around the challenges to the early Confucian model. But a defender of the early Confucian model would argue that, if family is completely abolished, where do citizens get a sense of family bond? A key problem here is that, on the surface, in the *Republic*, much of the private is abolished for the sake of the public, but by making the city a big family, Socrates secretly wishes to take advantage of the beneficial aspects of the private sphere. Unfortunately, one cannot have one’s cake and eat it too. The guardian is deprived of any connection with the family, and nowhere in the *Republic* is the education of filial love and compassion seriously promoted. This invalidates the demand that the guardian love his or her country as motherland and its citizens as brothers and sisters (i. e., family). Without family, ‘father and mother’ and ‘brothers and sisters’ carry no significance, and they only gain significance when filial affection for family members is cultivated in a family environment. Or, using the metaphor in 1.2 of the *Analects*, the big family in the *Republic* is like a rootless tree. One may argue that guardians can gain a sense of camaraderie through community.<sup>16</sup> But a Confucian can argue that the close ties that are necessary for camaraderie would secretly reintroduce *de facto* family relations back into society and thus lead to conflict between the private and public spheres about which Socrates is worried; or the ties would not be so close, making the alleged camaraderie too diluted to be meaningful.

In contrast, according to the *Analects*, the natural love among family members, present in a family environment can achieve what the artificial noble lie and the practically impossible arrangements of community of women and chil-

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<sup>15</sup> The reason to claim that unity is *allegedly* the greatest good is that Socrates later claims that the Good is the highest good (504d-505b), and it is questionable whether unity is always part of the Good. A reasonable guess is that unity, like justice, is only good by its relation to *the* Good.

<sup>16</sup> I wish to thank Tao Lin (陶林) for making this point to me.

dren in the *Republic* try to achieve. Anecdotal support for the viability of the Confucian model is that, although Socrates dreams of a world in which people call strangers with names usually reserved for family members, this practice of, for example, calling a stranger of a similar age ‘brother...’ or ‘sister...’ is an actual practice in China, probably thanks to the Confucian heritage.<sup>17</sup>

Interestingly, Aristotle actually offered Confucianism-style criticisms of the *Republic*.<sup>18</sup> In his *Politics*, the relationship between husband and wife in a family is described in political terms, which resonate more with the Confucian family-state analogy than the soul-state analogy in the *Republic*, although he also emphasizes the fact that there are differences between “a large household and a small city” (1252a1–1252b35). In his criticism of the *Republic*, he implies that the private and the familial spheres are important loci for the education of public virtues. For example, Aristotle argued that, without private property, one would not be able to learn generosity and affection for “friends, guests, or club mates” by overcoming one’s self-love and using one’s own possessions to help out (1262b1–6). This resonates partly with Mencius’s claim that property is crucial for people to have virtues. Aristotle also argues that, without the family setting, one cannot learn proper respect for family members and, eventually, appropriate attitude toward strangers (1262a25–33). Generally, Aristotle is known for emphasizing education toward virtue through habituation, and family and the ‘private sphere’ are a natural setting for this (1263b40). Like the Confucians, he also believed that, by treating all citizens as family members and distributing affection to all of them, “affection necessarily becomes diluted through this sort of partnership,” and without what is one’s own and what is dear, human beings would not be able to cherish and feel affection (1256b6–35).

One might argue that the political proposal on the surface of the *Republic* is too ‘crazy’ to be taken literally, realistically, and seriously. My reason for focusing on this model is that it poses an interesting contrast to the one offered by early Confucians, and to take what is apparently proposed in the *Republic* seriously does not deny the possibility of hidden teachings residing in the *Republic*. To understand the hidden, however, we need to understand the surface first. Moreover, it cannot be denied that the surface proposal offered in the *Republic* has been taken literally and seriously throughout history, and it is a paradigm that nicely represents many political ideas in history. The conflict model discussed in this

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<sup>17</sup> Another interesting contrast is that, when we call a stranger “sister” in English, it often means that this stranger is a nun. In other words, the idea that all human beings belong to an extended family in the West may come from Christianity (or, looking at this from the opposite perspective, we can say that family, not God, is the Confucian path to transcendence).

<sup>18</sup> I wish to thank the late Robert Rethy for some very helpful discussion on this point.

chapter was a (significantly) revised version of the real-world Spartan regime, and has inspired various forms of totalitarianism and utopianism in history (or at least it represents their underlying ideas). It is criticized by philosophers such as Popper (1971) due to its connection with totalitarianism and utopianism. Of course, Popper's understanding of the *Republic* may have been rather limited, but as we just saw, even Aristotle – the great, but perhaps not so faithful pupil of Plato's – also took the surface proposal seriously (and critically). All of this justifies a literal reading of the conflict model in the *Republic*.

## 4 Further remarks

After presenting these two contrasting models and letting them 'criticize' each other, let me make a few more comments. The comparisons between these two models are clearly not fundamental comparisons between East/China and West. As we have seen, it was Han Fei Zi, a Chinese political thinker, who challenged the Confucian view of harmony, and it was Aristotle, a Western thinker, who criticized the *Republic* for its neglect of the constructive aspect of the private. Rather, the sharp contrasts between these two models help us to see the merits and demerits of each model in light of the other, and these two models are useful paradigms for us to use in thinking about the issue of the private and the public in both the history of political thought and in real-world politics, past and present.

For example, due to the break between the private and the public, it becomes possible, in the picture offered in the *Republic*, that a city as a whole may be happy without any of its members being happy (419a-421c), or that the Good be detached from the good of any individual. This understanding resonates with the understanding of the public good in certain versions of totalitarian regimes.

Paradoxically, however, the belief in this sharp break between the private and the public is shared by a version of modern liberalism, the one with the motto that what happens in one's bedroom is not the business of the state. What differentiates them is whether one wishes to protect the public against the private (the *Republic*) or the private against the public (liberalism).

Against this background, the early Confucian model possesses a curious place. It stands with the *Republic* in its concern with the threat posed to the public by the private. But it stands with more liberal democratic ideas in that the public interest is the sum of the interest of the people. For example, Jeremy Bentham claimed that the utility of a whole community is nothing but the sum of the utility of all its members (Bentham 1948–1789, 1–3). Indeed, Confucians may



have been those who first introduced this ‘modern’ idea,<sup>19</sup> but they might not have agreed with the contemporary understanding of it. First, for the Confucians, the sum of interest is not the same as the sum of mere material interest. Second, the sum of interest is not a simple accumulation of individuals’ interests. There can be interests that only emerge in a group, such as those based on family or communal relations.

Moreover, as we saw, early Confucians rejected the sharp divide between the private and the public. If this is the case, what happens in one’s bedroom *can* affect and even harm public interests. This could be a challenge to the typical liberal lack of concern for virtues (with the assumption that many of the virtues belong to the private sphere). Indeed, in spite of the separation between the private and the public, the *Republic* also suggests that what happens in private can be harmful to the public, which is why it calls on an almost total suppression of the private.

Let me end my reflections with a few words on the key issue in this chapter: which model can better deal with the conflict between the private and the public? To address the problems of the conflicts between the private and the public, a key challenge to the Confucian model, the model in the *Republic* suppresses the private completely. Using the root metaphor, the Confucian ‘tree’ is well-rooted, but it cannot resist extremely strong winds. The ‘tree’ in the *Republic* is designed to resist the strongest wind, but it turns out to be an illusion because the strong-looking tree has no root. One can argue that some mixed model may be superior, but how to mix these contrasting models poses a significant challenge. Perhaps this suggests that some fundamental conflicts in human life cannot be solved adequately in politics. Or, to put it in a colloquial or even vulgar manner, ‘life sucks’.

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<sup>19</sup> Fleischacker (2004) 2 and 53–79 argues that the idea of government having a duty to satisfy everyone’s basic needs was only introduced to the West in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whereas it was introduced by Confucians much earlier: Perry (2008) 39.

Graham Parkes

## Confucian and Daoist, Stoic and Epicurean. Some Parallels in Ways of Living\*

The context for this essay is global warming, and the increasing harms humanity will suffer as a result of persisting with business as usual instead of dealing with the problem. Blocking progress are three obstructions: the financial clout of the fossil fuel industries in current politics, the political power of the religious right in the US Congress, and the attention-diverting abilities of the Internet Titans with their Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Most of this is well-funded by a small group of libertarian billionaires.

Even if we can remove these obstructions, we still have to cooperate effectively with China (and then India, Brazil, etc) if we're to mitigate the damage from climate change. And the best way to achieve that is to acknowledge that the ancient Chinese ideas now advocated by the current Chinese government are helpfully applicable to our current predicament.

What's interesting here is that there are comparable ideas in the Western tradition, but they have traditionally been overlooked or marginalised. For example, there are significant parallels between ideas in Confucian and Daoist philosophies on the one hand, and Stoic and Epicurean thought on the other. An appreciation of these would provide common ground for more productive dialogue with the Chinese and collaboration on slowing global warming.

But even with full cooperation from China and other nations, we in the developed countries will have to reduce our consumption of energy and goods. The planet's resources are finite, and already overexploited, and we in the developed world have consumed far more than our fair share. The global injustice is glaring, insofar as the countries hardest hit by the effects of global warming are those who have contributed to it least. It shouldn't surprise us, as the hits gets harder, to find millions of climate refugees at our borders, and more than a few foreign eco-terrorists among them. Not that the developed world is immune to the dire effects of climate change, as various extreme weather events have shown.

When people hear talk of lower levels of consumption they tend to be dismayed – students especially, who haven't yet enjoyed the fullness of consumer bliss. But the ancient wisdom of both the Western and Chinese traditions sug-

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\* I have sometimes modified the translations slightly on the basis of the original texts and other translations.

gests such dismay is misguided, insofar as these thinkers argue that high levels of consumption actually get in the way of a fulfilled human life. At more modest levels we can take more joy in things without feeling in any way deprived. It's a matter of finding out how much is enough.

By an interesting coincidence, the Stoic and Epicurean schools of philosophy were founded around the time when the two great Daoist classics, the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, were taking final shape in response to the prevalence of the Confucian classics over the preceding century or two. In ancient Athens two remarkable thinkers initiated the Western conversation about “living in accord with nature”: Epicurus (341–269 BCE), whose teachings became the basis for the Epicurean tradition, and Zeno of Citium (334–263 BCE, not to be confused with the earlier Zeno of Elea and his paradoxes), who was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy.

## 1 A Physics Requirement

For all these thinkers – Confucian and Daoist, Stoic and Epicurean – the human being is best understood in context, insofar as human flourishing depends on both society and the natural environment. (The emphasis in what follows will be on the latter, in view of our current environmental predicament.) If you're going to adjust your life to the prevailing circumstances, you'd better have an understanding of what they are. The ancient Greek thinkers called the world in this sense *physis*, which originally had connotations of being born and growing, of unfolding and developing. At first applied to particular things, and so meaning the ‘nature’ of each and the ways in which it naturally grows and unfolds, *physis* came to mean also the whole process whereby these particular natures develop together in dynamic equilibrium.<sup>1</sup>

Epicurus taught that we attain a serene and fulfilled life first by investigating and understanding the natural world, and then by “living in conformity with nature”. Natural science (*physiologia*) serves to dispel primitive dread of phenomena in the heavens above us and torment from gruesome events recounted in ancient myths. It's a matter, Epicurus says, of “determining the end ordained by nature”, which means understanding how the world works in the broadest

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1 Hadot (2006) 17.

sense and how we best fit in, in the sense of optimising our fulfillment and contribution to the whole.<sup>2</sup>

Epicurus is concerned that we not violate nature but rather ‘obey’, and that we ‘follow nature’ rather than ‘vain opinions’. If we assess our actions only on the basis of what’s closest to us, we lack perspective and a sense of the scale and space that we get from keeping in touch with nature as we act.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese thinkers would find this attitude congenial—except for the talk of the ‘end’ or ‘purpose’ (*telos*) of nature, because they see the whole thing unfolding as *play*, which has no purpose outside itself.

Zeno was apparently the author of a book with the title *Of Life in Accord with Nature* (like all his other works, lost). He is said to have said that happiness consists in ‘a good flow of life’ – just what the Daoists and traditional Chinese medical practitioners say about well-being and *qi* energies. (For the Daoists the whole world is a field of *qi* energies of varying density and speed: rarefied and fast, as with breath; condensed and slow as with granite). Zeno’s successors in the Stoic school understood living in accord with nature as two-fold: ‘according to our human nature as well as the nature of the universe’. The idea is that “our own natures are parts of the nature of the whole”, (M. Aur. *Med.* 12.26), and so the task – as with their Chinese counterparts – is to harmonise microcosm with macrocosm.<sup>4</sup>

This is why the Stoics and Epicureans make *physics*, understood as the ‘study of nature’, central to their philosophies – not as a purely theoretical exercise but rather as a practice of thinking and imagining in a deeply existential mode. Here is Lucretius, expressing gratitude to Epicurus for having taught him how to pursue an experiential science of nature:

The walls of the world open out, I see action going on throughout the whole void ... Thereupon from all these things a sort of divine delight gets hold of me and a shuddering, because nature thus by your power has been so manifestly laid open and unveiled in every part.<sup>5</sup>

When the doors of perception are cleansed by the discipline of Epicurean physics, there’s a divine pleasure – *divina voluptas!* – and ‘shuddering’ (the Latin is

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2 Epicurus (1926) 135, 97, 91 (‘Fragments’ B, 57; ‘Principal Doctrines’ XI, XII; ‘Letter to Menoeceus’ 133).

3 Epicurus (1926) 101, 109, 133 (‘Principal Doctrines’, XXV; ‘Fragments’ A (Vatican) XXI, ‘Fragments’ B, 45).

4 Diogenes (1959) 2:113; Long/Sedley (1987) 1.394–95.

5 Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 3.17–30, translation in Hadot (1995) 88.

*horror*), a shaking in the face of such an awe-inspiring vision of the cosmos and one's tiny part in it.

Marcus Aurelius, the last great Stoic thinker, had the same idea: right at the beginning of his *Meditations* he expresses gratitude to his teacher for advocating “life in accord with nature”, and encourages himself to practise such a way of living. When he writes that “all things come to pass in accord with the Nature of the Whole”, he means that since we humans exist among all things, we do well to try to get a sense of the totality and where it's tending. We can accord with nature because our own nature is subject to the ‘ruling’ or ‘guiding principle’ within us, which is one with the rational, divine power that governs the cosmos. Thanks to this internal guide, we are able to “follow Nature and be well disposed toward her” (M. Aur. *Med.* 1.9, 10.14).

The ancient Chinese have a similar physics requirement for becoming fully human, though the affects in the course aren't as ecstatic as with Lucretius (the composed joy of Confucius, cool spontaneity on the part of the Daoist sage). They recommend developing a sense for the interactions of Heaven and Earth, the polarities of yin and yang, and so forth, so that one can make one's way in life as a particular dynamic focus (*dé*) in the overall Way (*dào*), or patterning, of the *qì* energies that constitute the world.

Confucius said: “Great indeed was Yao as a ruler! How lofty! It is Heaven that is great and it was Yao who modeled himself upon it” (*Analects* 8.19). In this early praise of Heaven (*tiān*) as Nature, the Master presents the exemplary instance of the Confucian emulation of role models: just as Yao ruled well because he modeled himself on the operations of Heaven and Earth, so we lesser mortals can learn from exemplars like Yao, and Confucius, as well as from *their* models in the world of nature.

In the *Mencius*, a classic text by the second great Confucian thinker, the notion of Heaven sometimes retains vestiges of the divine from ancient times when it was the realm of a personal sky-God. “A man who understands his own nature will know Heaven”, and by “nurturing his nature” such a man “serves Heaven”. And at the peak of self-cultivation of the ‘gentleman’ (*jūnzǐ*), Mencius writes: “A gentleman transforms where he is passing through, and works wonders where he abides. He is in the same stream as Heaven above and Earth below”. At the most basic level it's a matter of gauging the operations of *dào* (does natural order prevail? or have people lost the way?) and not contravening them. And on this point Mencius is straightforward: “Those who are obedient to Heaven are preserved; those who go against Heaven are annihilated” (Lau 2003, 7 A.1, 7 A.13, 4 A.7).

The third great Confucian philosopher, Xunzi, regards Heaven as impersonal and impartial, and identifies the heart-mind as ‘a natural ruler’ within the human body as a commonwealth of ‘natural faculties’. By keeping this inner

ruler clear, the sage orders his faculties naturally and thereby even “completes Nature’s [Heaven’s] achievement”:

If you respond to the constancy of Nature’s course with good government, there will be good fortune; if you respond to it with disorder, there will be misfortune. ... If you conform to the Way and are not of two minds, then Nature cannot bring about calamity.

In developing the Confucian maxims concerning “the harmony of Heaven and Man”, or “the three realms are one” (Heaven-Man-Earth, with the human in the middle), Xunzi specifies their functions by showing how they “form a Triad”: “Heaven has its seasons, Earth its resources, and Man his government” (*Xunzi* 17.3a, 17.1, 17.2a.). As long as people respond to the patterning of Heaven, and keep within the bounds of what the Earth can provide, with orderly government all will be well.

Although divinity was a major feature of *tiān* (*Heaven*) in ancient times, when it referred to the realm of the sky-God as well as its ruler, the Chinese philosophers tend not to divinise *dào* or *tiān* as the Stoics thinkers do with the Reason that pervades the entire cosmos. This passage from the *Xunzi* is therefore remarkable:

Each of the myriad things must be in a harmonious relation with Nature in order to grow, and each must obtain from Nature the proper nurture in order to become complete. We do not perceive the process, but we perceive the result—this indeed is why we call it ‘divine’. All realize that Nature has brought completion, but none realize its formlessness – this indeed is why we call it ‘Nature’ (*Xunzi* 17.2b).

Nature/Heaven as formless functions as the divine Reason does in Stoic philosophy (not to mention *natura naturans* in Spinoza).

## 2 Sympathetic Resonance

For Xunzi and his predecessors, the world is a field of *qì* energies in which “sympathetic resonance” (*gǎnyìng*) prevails among “the myriad things”. Here is the classic example (found in several other classic texts) from the *Zhuangzi*.

A man tuned two zithers, placing one in the foyer and one in his room. When he struck the *gong* tone on one, the *gong* on the other sounded; when he struck the *jue* tone on one, the *jue* on the other sounded – for they were tuned the same way.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Zhuangzi* (2009) 103, ch. 24. Also in An (2010) 220, ch. 6.4.

Further examples involve resonances between human activities in the socio-political realm and the powers of Heaven and Earth, as well as between human charioteers and their horses, in an analogy with the best drivers of the chariot of state.

These legendary charioteers “considered reins and bits superfluous, and got rid of whips and cast aside goads”. Their racing performances are almost superhuman because as soon as feelings and desires begin to form, “their quintessential spirits are already communicated to the six horses”. (The subtext suggests that the best ruler won’t need reins in order to reign, nor bits of laws to keep the people on the right way, let alone the whips and goads of punishment.) When a rider is skilled, it’s a matter of communion at the subtlest level of energies, whereby horse and rider respond effortlessly together to the path as it unfolds before them in light of the rider’s understanding.

The conclusion concerning the phenomenon of sympathetic resonance is this: “That things in their categories are mutually responsive is something dark, mysterious, deep, and subtle”.<sup>7</sup> And even more so when things are mutually responsive *across* categories such as the human, the animal, the vegetal and the elemental.

The Stoics, like Plato in his *Timaeus*, regard the cosmos as a living being with all parts organically related to one another. Cicero gives fine expression to this idea of “cosmic sympathy” when, in his book *On the Nature of the Gods*, he invites the reader to consider ‘the sympathetic agreement, interconnection and affinity of things’. It’s not strictly speaking Cicero, but a character in his dialogue, who invokes the processes of heaven and earth, the seasons, tides and the moon, and the revolving starry sky, in order to conclude: “These processes and this musical harmony of all the parts of the world assuredly could not go on were they not maintained in unison by a single divine and all-pervading spirit”.

Later on, a different character agrees with the idea of sympathetic agreement among things – but denies that they must be “held together by a single divine breath”:

On the contrary, the system’s coherence and persistence is due to *nature’s forces* and not to divine power; she does possess that “concord” (the Greeks called it *sympatheia*) of which you spoke, but the greater this is as spontaneous growth, the less possible is it to suppose that it was created by divine reason.<sup>8</sup>

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7 An (2010) 216–17, ch. 6.2; 214, ch. 6.1.

8 Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.7; 3.11 (emphasis added).

This interpretation of Stoic philosophy is perfectly consonant with classical Chinese thought, which credits the forces of Heaven and Earth with ordering the world, without the need for some external power to animate things and make them cohere harmoniously. If sympathetic resonance conditions the whole Heraclitean fire-system of kindling and going out, emerging and withdrawing, there's no need for a director or conductor to "maintain the harmony", since harmony already informs the system from the start.

Marcus Aurelius makes it clear that sympathy is (what we would now call) an emergent property of the system. Reminding himself to bear in mind the wisdom of Heraclitus, he writes:

Think of the world as one living being ... and how all things work together to cause all that comes to pass, and how intertwined the thread and closely woven the web. ... And just as existing things are combined in a harmonious order, so also all that come into being display a wonderful kindred [*oikeiotēs*] interrelationship (M. Aur. *Med.* 4.40–46).

By contrast to something fashioned or made, where the maker is external to the product, in the case of the cosmos, "where things are held together by Nature, the power that made them is within and abides with them". The ancient Chinese would say that *dào* manifests itself in each particular as its own *dé*, or potency.

Echoing Empedocles, Marcus emphasises the role of *love* in bringing things together:

Meditate often upon the intimate union of all things in the cosmos and their mutual interdependence. For all things are in a way woven together, and thus all things have a liking for one another. For these things are consequent upon one another by reason of their contracting and expanding motion, the sympathy that breathes through them, and the unity of being. (M. Aur. *Med.* 6.38–40)

There's a sympathy breathing through them, a breath in common, and the whole thing hangs together and unfolds as one.

This interweaving is reminiscent of a later figure whose ideas are also consonant with ancient Chinese philosophy, Friedrich Nietzsche, whose thoughts on eternal return involve all things being "tightly knotted together". As Zarathustra says, or sings, in the Dionysian outburst of "The Drunken Song":

Just now my world became perfect, midnight is also midday – [...]
 Did you ever say Yes to a single joy? Oh, my friends, then you said Yes to *all* woe as well. All things are chained together, entwined, in love – <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Nietzsche (2005-1885), 4.19,10.



Although the idea that all things breathe and interweave together spontaneously, without the need for some external agent or force to do the breathing or weaving, runs throughout the Chinese philosophical tradition, it's relatively unusual in Western thought.

It is this idea of an external agent that constitutes the major difference between Chinese thought, where it is lacking, and mainstream Western metaphysics. It was Plato who reframed the notion of *physis* in a way that made the difference, especially once it merged with the Christian idea of nature as created by the Creator. As opposed to a Presocratic philosophy of *physis* whereby “nature generates all things without thought from some kind of spontaneous cause that makes them grow”, Plato proposes the view that things come into being thanks to *reason*, and craftsmanship, and “divine science from a god”. This means that “the things said to be by nature are made by a divine art”: in place of natural *physis* we have divine *technē* (Pl. *Soph.* 265b-66b; *Leg.* 889a-92c).

The cosmogony of Plato's *Timaeus* – along with the *Republic*, the most influential of his dialogues – begins with an account of how the cosmos was made by a divine craftsman (the famous ‘Demiurge’), who is also called its “father”. And he crafted the cosmos, wondrously, as “a truly living thing, endowed with soul and intelligence” (Pl. *Ti.* 27d-36e). The Stoic thinkers embrace the result, a living world pervaded by intelligence – but mostly dispense with the idea of an independent producer.

Marcus Aurelius gets at the idea of pervasive intelligence through the analogy of a cosmic breath, when he exhorts himself:

Be no longer content merely to breathe in unison with the all-surrounding air, but from now on also think in unison with the all-surrounding Mind. For the power of mind is diffused throughout and distributed for him who can absorb it, no less than the power of air for him who can breathe it.

The open mind is then able to relay the diffusion by extending like a ray of sunlight. Human understanding illuminates its objects by staying with them: not striking them “forcibly or violently” like a stream of water, but resting on them like a ray of light, which “neither slides off nor sinks down” (M. Aur. *Med.* 8.54, 8.57). This is the Stoic ideal of paying proper attention to things.

The idea of pervasive intelligence is implicit in Chinese *qi* philosophy, but not made explicit until the great Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi in the twelfth-century. Zhu keeps *qi* energy and sympathetic resonance central:

Human beings and things are all endowed with the principle of the universe as their nature, and receive the *qi* of the universe as their physical form. The difference in personality is due to the various degrees of purity and strength of the *qi* energies.<sup>10</sup>

Resonances among all things are possible because *mind* is all-pervasive (as in some schools of Chinese Buddhism):

Heaven and Earth reach all things with their mind. When the human being receives it, it then becomes the human mind. When things receive it, it becomes the mind of things in general. And when grass, trees, birds, animals receive it, it becomes the mind of grass, trees, birds, and animals in particular. All of these are simply the one mind of Heaven and Earth.<sup>11</sup>

In the Chinese tradition, if you resonate through your mind, or heart, you are resonating through the body as well – out through the smaller configuration of *qi* energies to the larger field and back again.

### 3 Living in accord with Nature

If this is what physics tells us about the world, how are we to live in it? What does it mean, more concretely, to ‘live in accord with nature’? And how are we to understand the processes of nature, or the powers of Heaven and Earth, in the first place? Because we certainly want to avoid living in accord with some subjective conception or social construction of nature.

The Daoists recommend a technique they call “fasting the heart” or “emptying the mind”, which involves waiting patiently until all ideas, opinions, and presuppositions about the way the world is fade away. Free of mental clutter, the mind can then respond to the situation as it is, rather than as we would prefer it to be.

The corresponding practice with the Stoics and Epicureans would be subtracting the value judgments that distort our experience. As Epictetus famously wrote: “What upsets people is not events themselves but their judgments about the events” (*Handbook*, sec. 5). While our power to affect events is limited, we can always change our judgments if we care to. On the Chinese side, the *Xunzi* makes a similar point when contrasting noble and common attitudes toward life: “Thus, the gentleman reveres what lies within his power and does not

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<sup>10</sup> Zhu Xi, in Chan (1963) 620.

<sup>11</sup> Zhu Xi, in Chan (1963) 643.

long for what lies with Heaven. The petty man forsakes what lies within his power and longs for what lies with Heaven” (*Xunzi* 17.6).

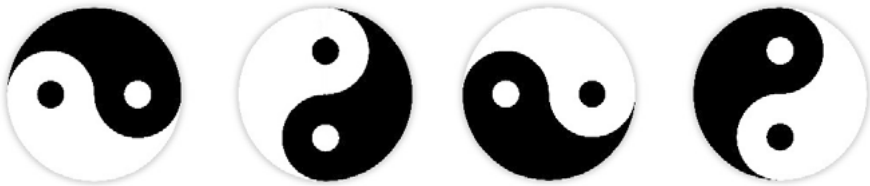
Once you have a better sense of how nature works, one way to accord with it is to acknowledge and respect natural ‘limitations’. A major concern of Epicurus was to show that each thing has ‘a power that’s limited’, ‘finite power’, thanks to ‘a deep-set boundary stone’. And of course we human beings are among those things: “A certain end of life is fixed for men / There is no escape from death and we must die” (Lucretius 1.78, 5.89–90, 3.1077). Lucretius bemoans the failure of most people to understand that there are natural limits to the pleasures of material acquisition precisely because our desires in that realm are *unlimited*:

Therefore always in vain and uselessly  
Men labour, and waste their days in empty cares,  
Because they fail to see what bounds are set  
To getting, and what limits to true pleasure. (Lucretius 5.1430–1433)

Acknowledgment of natural limits, far from making us miserable, makes for a more serene and joyous existence.

Limits imposed by Nature, or Heaven and Earth, are a central theme in philosophical Daoism, and understanding these limits is a key requirement for a fulfilling life. As the *Laozi* says:

A gusty wind cannot last all morning, and a sudden downpour cannot last all day. Who is it that produces these? Heaven and Earth. If even Heaven and Earth cannot go on forever, much less can the human being. That is why one follows the Way.



**Fig. 1** Yang  
Spring

**YANG**  
Summer

**Yin**  
Autumn

**YIN**  
Winter

Working as the polarities of yang and yin, the interactions of Heaven and Earth produce the four seasons. If we imagine the white (yang) and black (yin) components cycling clockwise through the vertical radius in the figure above, this represents the progressions of the forces of sun and shade, light and dark, heat and cold, dry and wet through the four seasons. The yang ener-

gies come into ascendance with the beginning of spring, reaching their maximum in midsummer; then the forces of yin take over, and prevail through autumn so as to predominate in mid-winter.

The changes also describe a simple sine wave: the yang beginning at the baseline in spring, ascending to a maximum in summer – and so forth.

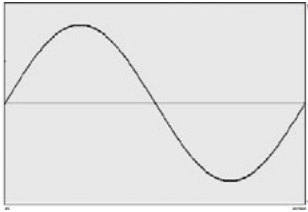


Fig. 2: the wave of Yin and Yang

The forces of yang never keep increasing indefinitely, nor do the forces of yin diminish forever: each side always reasserts itself, predominates, and recedes again, up and down, over and over.

Indeed this is the way Heaven and Earth have been going, according to climate science and paleoclimatology: the geosphere has been in dynamic equilibrium since the beginning, and periods of ‘hothouse earth’ and ‘snowball earth’ have alternated with variable ‘interglacial’ periods in between. But now it appears that we humans have managed to upset the energy balance of the planet.

A well-known line in the *Laozi* goes: “Turning back is how the way moves”. Turning back, reversion, going around again in cycles. But human beings – unlike the rest of the myriad things – tend to lose the way; they go astray by going beyond the limits. By contrast, “Knowing when to stop, one can be free from danger.”<sup>12</sup>

Corresponding limits are germane to the *Zhuangzi*’s understanding of Heaven and its power.

Life and death are fated, and that they come with the regularity of day and night is from Heaven – that which humans can do nothing about, simply the way things are.<sup>13</sup>

The *Zhuangzi* gives an impression of serene celebration of all that can’t be helped – joyful acceptance of “what is not up to us”, as Epictetus puts it. With such an

<sup>12</sup> *Laozi* chapters 23, 40, 32, 44. The *locus classicus* for the operations of yin and yang is the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*, or *Zhouyi*).

<sup>13</sup> *Zhuangzi* (2009) 43, ch. 6.

attitude one will hardly be extravagant, and is more likely to know what is most important to know: i.e., how much is enough.

## 4 A Sense of Sufficiency

Among the ancient Greek thinkers, perhaps the closest to the spirit of *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* is Heraclitus of Ephesus, who was a contemporary of Confucius. One of the more thought-provoking of his extant fragments is this:

It is not better for human beings to get all they want.  
It is disease that makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.<sup>14</sup>

It *isn't* better for human beings to get all they want? Now *that's* something to think about. This idea has to do with the contrast effect: we tend to think that conditions like disease, hunger, and weariness are bad, and need to be made better by replacing them with their opposites. But Heraclitus is pointing out (in the spirit of yin-yang thinking) that we find conditions such as health, satiety, and rest pleasant only by contrast with their opposites. After a hard day's work there is nothing better (some would say) than laying back with a cold beer. But if you spend all your waking hours laying back with a series of cold beers, the pleasant effect soon disappears. Or so I'm told.

In discussing the same idea, Plato suggests that there is something inherently self-defeating about a life dedicated to pursuing pleasure and avoiding pain. When Socrates is released from his fetters in the opening scene of the *Phaedo*, he rubs his ankles and comments on the strange way that pain and pleasure are connected: "If anybody pursues one of them and catches it, he's always pretty well bound to catch the other as well, as if the two of them were attached to a single head" (Pl. *Phd* 60b).

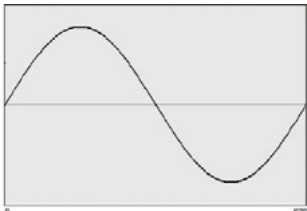


Fig. 3: The wave for Socrates

<sup>14</sup> Heraclitus, fragment LXVII, in Kahn (1979) 59.

It's the sine wave again. Suffering the pain of the fetters around his ankles, Socrates was down in the trough of the wave, and this lowered the baseline in such a way that when the cause of the pain was removed, he experienced the mere absence of pain as pleasure. After all, Socrates didn't have anything else to be pleased about, for he would soon have to drink the hemlock.

Correspondingly, in the case of something like heroin addiction, the huge high *raises* the baseline, so that when you come down the 'normal' condition is experienced as painful. If you dedicate your life to pursuing heightened highs, you had better be prepared for some profound lows as well. The Stoics and the Epicureans (like the Daoists in China) suggest ways of escaping from the pleasure-pain cycle and attaining a joy, or contentment, in life that is on a different level.

The Epicureans regard knowing how much is enough as "the greatest freedom", since one is then not enslaved by cravings for more. Here is Epicurus, making this eloquently clear in a letter to a friend:

We regard self-sufficiency as a great good, not so that we may enjoy only a few things, but so that, if we do not have many, we may be satisfied with the few, being firmly persuaded that they take the greatest pleasure in luxury who regard it as least needed, and that everything that is natural is easily provided, while vain pleasures are hard to obtain.

It is by no means a matter of austerity, or asceticism, for its own sake, but of adjusting one's desires to broader circumstances and to the longer term of a life.

To be accustomed to simple and plain living is conducive to health and makes a man ready for the necessary tasks of life. It also makes us more ready for the enjoyment of luxury if at intervals we chance to meet with it, and it renders us fearless of fortune.<sup>15</sup>

I have to admit that my very few brushes with luxury have been most enjoyable—and better still to be "fearless of fortune".

Again it is a matter of living in accord with nature:

We obey nature if we satisfy the necessary desires and also those natural, physical desires that do not harm us, while sternly rejecting those that are harmful. The necessary desires relieve pain – the desire for drink when you're thirsty, for example, or for food when hungry. And since those desires that might harm us arise, Epicurus says, "from idle imagination", they are "easily dispelled".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Epicurus (1964) 30, *Letter to Menoeceus* 130b.

<sup>16</sup> Epicurus (1926) 117, 109, 101, 103 (*Fragments A* (Vatican) LXVIII, XXI; *Principal Doctrines* XXVI, XXIX).

And now an interesting and often overlooked twist to the teaching of moderation. Another fragment from Epicurus reads: “Frugality too has a limit, and the man who disregards it is in like case with him who errs through excess”.<sup>17</sup> I’m sure my father never read a word of Epicurus, but his maxim was perfectly Epicurean: “Moderation in all things”, he used to say, “— and *especially* in moderation.” It wouldn’t do at all to be excessively moderate.

Confucian philosophy and practice require the observance of ritual propriety as long as the expense is reasonable; otherwise frugality is recommended, and riches and extravagance regarded with suspicion.<sup>18</sup> The Daoists are more vocal in their opposition to greed and their promotion of moderation.

There is no crime more onerous than greed,  
No misfortune more devastating than avarice.  
And no calamity that brings with it more grief than insatiability.  
Thus, knowing when enough is enough is truly satisfying.

The *Laozi* is remarkable for the way it seems to anticipate the drawbacks of consumerism, as in this sage advice offered to the ruler:

Not to value goods that are hard to come by  
will keep the people from theft;  
Not to display what is desirable  
will keep them from being unsettled of mind.<sup>19</sup>

High crime rates in capitalist societies arguably derive from people’s valuing goods that are hard to come by for those without sufficient money. Consumerism depends for its success on advertising that displays as desirable goods that are in fact unnecessary – which renders people so unsettled of mind that they buy them anyway. And once they’ve bought them they remain unsettled of mind, and so throw themselves into further getting and spending.

For those who live in one of the developed countries, when faced with the latest, irresistible product of super-capitalism, you can always consider at least:

*Nine Reasons Not to Buy It.*

1. You save money, in the amount of the purchase price.
2. You don’t have to maintain it, or repair it if it breaks.
3. No need to protect against theft, insure it, or in any way secure it.

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<sup>17</sup> Epicurus (1926) 117 (*Fragments A* (Vatican) LXIII).

<sup>18</sup> Confucius, *Analects* 9.3. On wealth and personal gain, see 4.5, 4.12, 4.16, 7.12, 7.16.

<sup>19</sup> *Laozi* chapters 3,46.

4. You never have to bother with storing it or moving it.
5. If you don't own it, you can't lose it, or waste time looking for it.
6. There's no need to dispose of it, or take the trouble to recycle it.  
*And when the 'Grim Reaper' comes to tell you it's time to go, you realise:*
7. You can't take it with you – so there's no need to pack it.  
*And since you can't even bequeath it if you don't own it,*
8. Your heirs can never squabble over it.  
*Finally, and most important:*
9. If you don't buy it, and enough other people are persuaded they don't need it either, they'll eventually have to stop making it.

This would save natural resources and reduce pollution, and as long as we help the people who were making it find better ways of making a living, everyone will benefit – once they get used to not having or needing so much.

When capitalism goes global it becomes incompatible with the basis on which it depends for its growth: a planet that is finite. When seen from a global perspective, which includes consideration for the other species and natural phenomena with whom we share the biosphere, the capitalist enterprise has been disastrously destructive. The wisdom of the ancients that we have considered, and indeed many great thinkers from Plato to Marx and Nietzsche, would regard the whole system as inimical to human flourishing and based on a false understanding of what makes for a fulfilled human life.

Once our basic needs are satisfied it isn't hard to lead fulfilling lives even – or especially – in the absence of divine beings and meanings beyond this world. We may do this simply by paying close attention to our social and cultural interactions and to the natural world. The problem in the developed countries is that urbanization and industrialization restrict our access to the joys of nature, and so many people screen themselves from contact with what's actual by keeping their attention on their smartphones, and by surrounding themselves with a protective layer of consumer goods. It's no wonder people aren't overly concerned with protecting their natural environment if they never have any direct experience of it.

What high consumers are missing is not just the beauty of the natural world but also its beneficial effects on human health. Japanese researchers have found that it is especially good for the human body, and especially the immune system, to be out in the woods (they call it “forest bathing”).<sup>20</sup> The health benefits should not surprise us, since the human body evolved in and from the world of nature.

The great biologist E. O. Wilson has written of the human urge “to affiliate with other forms of life”, calling it “biophilia”, “love of what is alive”. He goes

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<sup>20</sup> For an account of research on ‘forest bathing’ (Japanese, *shinrin-yoku*) see Kim (2016).



beyond the insights of the Confucians toward those of the Daoists when he writes: “We are human in good part because of the particular way we affiliate with other organisms. They are the matrix in which the human mind originated and is permanently rooted”.<sup>21</sup> But the Daoists want to broaden the field of consideration beyond the living to include the inorganic realm, the world of rocks and water.

Accessible means of enjoying of nature range from appreciating a leaf or flower in a city park to contemplating the wonders revealed to us by the natural sciences, from geology to oceanography, from botany to zoology. In the better cities there are parks and libraries, botanical gardens and university campuses, which afford their citizens access to the wondrous processes that we depend on to survive. And appreciation of those processes comes free of charge.

In well-functioning societies it’s possible to enjoy the fruits of human culture as well at a reasonable cost: the arts can flourish and be enjoyed without excessive demands on the earth and its atmosphere. Most of the great thinkers of nature, on the Chinese and the Western sides, were also people of refined culture: there is no problem with cultivating oneself through the arts and also rooting oneself, through attention and activity, more firmly in the world of nature.

We appear to have failed, collectively, with respect to our thinkers’ physics requirements: in our ignorance of where we are, we are rendering the planet inhospitable to human life. As natural beings, bodies that evolved over millennia of interaction between Heaven and Earth, we fail to flourish if we artificially insulate ourselves from those processes. But we *can* become aware of our sympathetic resonance with things in such a way that we contribute to the whole ongoing interaction. Leaving little time or energy for consumerism, the consequent sense of sufficiency generates genuine ‘joy’ in living.

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<sup>21</sup> Wilson (1984) 85, 139.

Jungsam Yum (염정삼)

# Mind, Heaven, and Ritual in the *Xunzi*

## 1 Introduction

Where could we locate Xunzi (荀子) among later thinkers following Confucius? While Mengzi (孟子) has received an excessive amount of attention as the successor of Confucius regarding *renyi* (仁義), Xunzi has been viewed more in relation with the Legalists (法家) than with Confucius. I would like to suggest that we can find the Confucian idea of *ren* (仁) also in Xunzi. The purpose of this paper is to trace the process of transition from Confucian *ren* to *liyi* (禮義) and *wen* (文) through Xunzi.

Xunzi inherited the Confucian ideology, *ren* (仁), which is translated as ‘Humanity’. On the other hand, he tried to establish a harmonious society which would have accomplished Confucius’s purposes in establishing a social institution by stressing the origins of social evils. While Mengzi believed that we could realize an ideal society through faith in the goodness of human nature, Xunzi was not so optimistic. In the real world, we take numerous risks of being morally or socially misled. Moreover, when Xunzi arrived on the scene, people no longer dreamed of the Utopia that Mengzi had envisioned. Xunzi tried to create a politically ordered world by controlling the inner nature of man. He regarded the innate desire of man as the source of evil. The question was how to build a good world when there was no goodness in human nature. Xunzi looked for a way to turn the source of social evil toward the good by way of the sensible management of human desires rather than by denying them completely. He believed that it was possible to create an orderly world in spite of the evil desire innate in human nature, something that was proven by the emergence of saints. *Tian* (天), ‘Heaven’, the operation and order of nature, has provided us with a model. Although Heaven does not intervene in human affairs, we could have the world well-governed by utilizing the human mind, *xin* (心), which tends to follow ‘*tian*’.

According to Xunzi, the physical foundation that Heaven, *tian*, provides people with is *tianyang* (天養), ‘Heaven’s cultivation’ and the practical management of *tianyang* is *tianzheng*’ (天政), ‘Heaven’s politics’. He stressed that the foundation of practical management lies in ‘courteous ritual’, *liyi* (禮義). It is, Xunzi explained, the function of culture, *wen* (文) that supports the completion of ritual. He also linked the practice of the *liyi* to the operation of nature, which could be

called ‘li (理)’. Thus, it could be said that Xunzi inherited the Confucian idea of ‘culture (文)’ and elaborated it into theories.

## 2 Life of Xunzi

Xunzi (325–238 BCE) was born in Zhao (趙) during China’s Warring States period. His name was Kuang (況), but after his death he was called Sunqing (孫卿). In his youth, he studied in Qi (齊) and once served as the highest official of an academic institute, the Jixia (稷下). He also visited Qin (秦), about which I will come back to later. Xunzi spent his final years in Chu (楚) as an official of Lanling (蘭陵) and passed away a few years after completing the book *Xunzi*. Lisi (李斯), the minister of the First Emperor of Qin, Qinshihuang (秦始皇), and Han Fei Zi (韓非子), who formed the theory of Legalism, studied as his pupils.

It was during his lifetime that the conflict and division of China’s civil era reached its height, prompting many vicious battles between states. The wars in this period were different from those at the time of Confucius and Mengzi. Once Xunzi visited Qin (秦) and was granted a face-to-face discussion with King Zhao of Qin (秦昭王).<sup>1</sup> He asserted the importance and usefulness of *Ru* (儒), Confucianism with historical examples. In B.C. 260, however, King Zhao destroyed the kingdom of Zhao (趙), Xunzi’s native country, and executed its entire army even though they had surrendered. According to records in *Shiji* (史記), written by Sima qian (司馬遷), the number of severed heads was almost 400,000. It was at such a time that Xunzi remained an advocate of Confucius’s philosophy.

Having witnessed this brutal historic scene, Xunzi wanted to resolve the extreme chaos deeply rooted in society. He believed that bringing goodness to the world would be impossible without a proper understanding or control of evil human nature. This is why he fiercely attacked Mengzi, who positioned himself as Confucius’s successor:

Some of these men only roughly model themselves on the former kings and do not understand their overall system. ... Such is the crime of Zisi and Meng Ke.<sup>2</sup>

He ruthlessly criticized the theorists who he thought deluded people with their biased ideas.

<sup>1</sup> King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王(325–251 BCE. Reign 306–251 BCE).

<sup>2</sup> Ch. 6 Against the twelve masters “略法先王而不知其統，猶然而猶材劇志大，... 是則子思孟軻之罪也。” Meng Ke (孟軻) is Mengzi’s name.

Mozi was fixated on the useful and did not understand the value of good form. Song Xing was fixated on having few desires and did not understand the value of achieving their objects. Shen Dao was fixated on laws and did not understand the value of having worthy people. Shen Buhai was fixated on power and did not understand the value of having wise people. Huizi was fixated on wording and did not understand the value of what is substantial. Zhuangzi was fixated on the heavenly and did not understand the value of the human.<sup>3</sup>

Then, what is Xunzi's definition of goodness, and where does good conduct come from? His answer is that it comes from "the conscious and artificial activity (偽)" of controlling human nature. "People's nature is bad. Their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort".<sup>4</sup>

### 3 Human nature

According to Xunzi, we need to acknowledge the fact that human beings are born with desire and strive to fulfill it, which drives society into confusion and poverty.

Humans are born having desires. When they have desires but do not get the objects of their desire, then they cannot but seek some means of satisfaction. If there is no measure of limit to their seeking, then they cannot help but struggle with each other. If they struggle with each other then there will be chaos, and if there is chaos then they will be impoverished.<sup>5</sup>

This is the basic assumption behind Xunzi's criticism of Mengzi, who believes in the good nature of human beings.<sup>6</sup>

However, the denial of the goodness of human nature creates a problem with Xunzi's prior statement on human nature even while asserting the importance of ethics and morals. That makes it hard for Xunzi to answer the question of how sages could emerge. From where does *li* (禮), which trains sages and 'noble men' (君子), come, and who defines such people? According to Xunzi, Heaven never interferes with human affairs. Therefore, 'human activity' (人偽) should

3 Ch. 21 Undoing fixation "墨子蔽於用而不知文。宋子蔽於欲而不知得。慎子蔽於法而不知賢。申子蔽於執而不知知。惠子蔽於辭而不知實。莊子蔽於天而不知人。"

4 Ch. 23 Human nature is bad "人之性惡，其善者偽也。"

5 Ch. 19 Discourse of Ritual "禮起於何也？曰：人生而有欲，欲而不得，則不能無求。求而無度量分界，則不能不爭；爭則亂，亂則窮。"

6 Ch. 23 "孟子曰，人之性善。曰，是不然。" "Mencius says: people's nature is good. I say: this is not so."

be built upon the presumption of recognizing the goodness of human nature. So, there are problems in Xunzi's theories on human nature and education. First, if everybody is endowed with an evil nature, how could it be that sages emerged in this world? Second, if everybody is given a chance to reach a certain level through learning, why is it that only a tiny number of sages and noble men manage to internalize the right order and live up to it? How can we reconcile human nature with 'ritual education' (禮樂) and 'humanistic activities' (人偽)?<sup>7</sup>

There is a conversation regarding this subject in chapter 23 *Xing'e* (性惡: 'Human nature is bad') of his book, in which he faces the question: "If human nature is evil, from where does ritual and justice sprout?"<sup>8</sup> The following is his answer:

In every case, ritual and yi are produced from the deliberate effort of the sage; they are not produced from people's nature. Thus, when the potter mixes up clay and makes vessels, the vessels are produced from the deliberate efforts of the craftsman; they are not produced from people's nature. Thus, when the craftsman carves wood and makes utensils, the utensils are produced from the deliberate efforts of the craftsman; they are not produced from people's nature. The sage accumulates reflections and thoughts and practices deliberate efforts and reasoned activities in order to produce ritual and yi and in order to establish proper models and measures. So, ritual and yi and proper models and measures are produced from the deliberate efforts of the sage; they are not produced from people's nature.<sup>9</sup>

For the following question: "Why is it that only sages reach that level while a majority of people do not?"<sup>10</sup> Xunzi's answer given above may be paraphrased in this way: the desire for profit exists in everyone. But the evil in human nature that Xunzi deals with is not absolute selfishness. The reason he says human nature is evil is that desire has an anarchistic outcome that results from the dissonance between selfish individuals and selfless social relationships. A well-educated person, however, would wish for order within society. It is possible to alter human nature through rigorous reasoning and accumulated efforts, and this is why morality and ethics can be created by the conscious efforts of sages. Therefore, in theory, even the man on the street can be a sage like Yu

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7 Kline/Ivanhoe (2000), 155–175.

8 Ch. 23 "問者曰，人之性惡，則禮義惡生?"

9 Ch. 23 "應之曰，凡禮義者，是生於聖人之偽，非故生於人之性也。... 聖人積思慮，習偽故，以生禮義而起法度，然則禮義法度者，是生於聖人之偽，非故生於人之性也。"

10 Ch. 23 "曰，聖可積而致，然而皆不可積，何也?"

(禹), the legendary wise king in ancient China.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, every human being is born with the talent and tools to recognize the pattern (理) of ethics.

Thus, it is clear that the material for understanding these things and the equipment for practicing them is present in people on the streets. Now if people on the streets were to use their material for understanding these things and the equipment for practicing them to base themselves upon the knowable patterns and practicable aspects of *ren* and *yi*, then is it clear that anyone on the streets could become a Yu.<sup>12</sup>

In other words, every human being can reach that level, but most fail—this is why society exists in chaos.<sup>13</sup>

Seen from this perspective, Xunzi's and Mencius's understandings of human beings are not much different, except for a different view on whether to trust or distrust their nature. For Xunzi, the evil in human desire, which is given by Heaven, is neutral like natural environments that have to be controlled. Thus, when it comes to human nature, Xunzi tries carefully to reconcile nature (性) and artifice (偽). "When human nature and deliberate effort unite, then all under Heaven becomes ordered."<sup>14</sup> In his theory, human nature and artificial culture, therefore, both contribute to create an orderly world.

## 4 Mind and Heaven

For Xunzi, nature and mind are totally different concepts. Nature is prone to be weakened by desire but mind is able of confronting and controlling it. He believed that if humans can rule their desire, they can succeed in making the world a more peaceful and ordered place. However, Xunzi refuses to reduce desire or eliminate it, unlike Songjian (宋鉞) and Laozi (老子), who preached that we should do so. He utilizes Zhuangzi (莊子)'s vocabulary in explaining the human mind,<sup>15</sup> for instance his metaphors comparing mind to pure water or a mirror. "How do people know the Way? I say: with the heart. How does the

11 Ch. 23 "塗之人可以爲禹。曷謂也? 曰, 凡禹之所以爲禹者, 以其爲仁義法正也。然則仁義法正有可知可能之理。然而塗之人也, 皆有可以知仁義法正之質, 皆有可以能仁義法正之具, 然則其可以爲禹明矣。"

12 Ch. 23 "然則其可以知之質, 可以能之具, 其在塗之人明矣。今使塗之人者, 以其可以知之質, 可以能之具, 本夫仁義法正之可知可能之理, 可能之具, 然則其可以爲禹明矣。"

13 Ch. 23 "曰, 可以而不可使也。" "I say, they can do it, but they cannot be made to do it."

14 Ch. 19 "性偽合而天下治。"

15 Kline/Ivanhoe (2000), Ch. 8.

heart know the Way? I say: it is through emptiness, single-mindedness, and stillness.”<sup>16</sup>

So in Xunzi’s text, a man who attempts self-mastery as a means to control desire is analogous to Heaven. Heaven represents looking into the human world while not interfering with it. “There is constancy to the activities of Heaven. They do not persist because of Yao (堯), a respectable sage. They do not perish because of Jie (桀), a vicious tyrant”. But “if you respond to them with order, then you will have good fortune. If you respond to them with chaos, then you will have misfortune”.<sup>17</sup> Human greatness lies in man’s capacity to participate in the works of Heaven, assisting it to shape the world to achieve more order. In other words, it is human greatness that completes the triad (三才) along with Heaven and Earth.

Heaven has its proper seasons, Earth has its proper resources, and humankind has its proper order – this is called being able to form a triad.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore in Xunzi’s theory the distinction between the Heaven that has the will to prosper the human world and the one that has natural order is not clear. While he shows reverence for the holiness of Heaven, Xunzi also criticizes those who unduly worship and interpret heavenly signs, or natural disasters, rather than simply following its guidance and ways. His opinion is that natural disasters are simply unexplainable events and nothing to be feared.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, Xunzi emphasizes the fact that a myriad of things are ruled and governed by Heaven, and that the role of human beings is to learn how this works and to form their society according to it. Such an analogy of the heavens and human beings is demonstrated in Xunzi’s work when he uses terms like *tianjun* (天君), which means ‘Heaven’s leadership’, *tianguan* (天官), ‘Heaven’s management’, *tianyang* (天養), ‘Heaven’s cultivation’, and *tianzheng* (天政), ‘Heaven’s politics’.

The abilities of eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and body each have their respective objects and are not able to assume each other’s abilities – these are called one’s heavenly faculties. The heart dwells in the central cavity so as to control the five faculties – this is called one’s

16 Ch. 21 “人何以知道? 曰, 心。心何以知? 曰, 虛壹而靜。”

17 Ch. 17 Discourse on Heaven “天行有常, 不爲堯存, 不爲桀亡。應之以治則吉, 應之以亂則凶。”

18 Ch. 17 “天有其時, 地有其財, 人有其治, 夫是之謂能參。”

19 Ch. 17 “夫星之隕, 木之鳴, 是天地之變, 陰陽之化, 物之罕至者也。怪之, 可也。而畏之, 非也。” “The falling of stars and the groaning of trees are simply rarely occurring things among the changes in Heaven and Earth and the transformations of yin and yang (陰陽). To marvel at them is permissible, but to fear them is wrong”.

Heavenly lord. Using what is not of one's kind as a resource for nourishing what is of one's kind – this is one's Heavenly nourishment. To be in accordance with what is proper for one's kind is called happiness, and to go against what is proper for one's kind is called disaster – this is called one's Heavenly government.<sup>20</sup>

Such is what he viewed as the correct conduct that humans should observe in life.<sup>21</sup> Heaven and Earth give birth to men, and in turn, men should maintain the way of Heaven and Earth, and participate in it.<sup>22</sup> Then how can human beings maintain the ways of Heaven? The answer is by 'giving the right patterns to things (理物)' and 'trying not to lose them (勿失之)':

To long for things and appraise them – how can this compare to ordering things and never losing them? To desire that from which things arise – how can this compare to taking hold of that by which things are completed? Thus, if one rejects what lies with man and instead longs for what lies with Heaven, then one will have lost grasp of the disposition of the myriad things.<sup>23</sup>

This order, *liwu er wushizhi* (理物而勿失之), signifies the creation and imposition of a pattern for every object. The meaning of *li* (理), "pattern", refers to the creation of the righteous pattern of an appropriate relationship between father and son, king and subjects. Social order is formed by the human creation of patterns out of things. *Xunzi* says that the birth of 'ritual and *yi* (禮儀)' is based on such universal order.<sup>24</sup> This is why 'ritual and *yi* (禮儀)' are regarded as the root of world order.

The Way of the former kings consists in exalting *ren*. One must cling to what is central in carrying it out. What do I mean by 'what is central?' I say: it is ritual and *yi*.<sup>25</sup>

20 Ch. 17 “耳目鼻口形能各有接而不相能也，夫是之謂天官。心居中虛，以治五官，夫是之謂天君。財非其類以養其類，夫是之謂天養。順其類者謂之福，逆其類者謂之禍，夫是之謂天政。”

21 Ch. 8 The achievements of the Ru “道者，非天之道，非地之道，人之所以道也，君子之道也。”

22 Ch. 9 The rule of a true king “故天地生君子，君子理天地；君子者，天地之參也，萬物之摠也，民之父母也”。

23 Ch. 17 “思物而物之，孰與理物而勿失之也！願於物之所以生，孰與有物之所以成！故錯人而思天，則失萬物之情”。

24 Ch. 19 “禮有三本。天地者，生之本也”。

25 Ch. 8 “先王之道，人之隆也，比中而行之。曷謂中？曰，禮義是也”。



## 5 Moral cultivation: Meaning of *Li* (禮), Ritual

Ritual (禮) is not only designed according to Heaven's operations, but also supports human beings by provoking their will to learn.

By ritual, Heaven and Earth harmoniously combine; by ritual, the sun and the moon radiantly shine; by ritual, the four seasons in progression arise; by ritual, the stars move orderly across the skies; by ritual, the great rivers through their courses flow; by ritual, the myriad things all thrive and grow; by ritual, for love and hate proper measure is made; by ritual, on joy and anger fit limits are laid.<sup>26</sup>

Men train themselves through the incorporeal elements of *li* (禮) and complete the world's order through the order of *li*. This, in turn, elevates the entire order of the universe and nature.

“And so, ritual serves Heaven above and Earth below, it honors forefathers and ancestors, and it exalts lords and teachers.” “Music, moreover, is unchanging harmony, and ritual is unalterable order. Music unites that which is the same, and ritual distinguishes that which is different. Together the combination of ritual and music governs the human heart.”<sup>27</sup>

Human beings are destined to be born with desire, but if they learn to control it through *li*, they can control both desire and things.

“The former kings hated such chaos, and so they established rituals and *yi* (禮義) in order to divide things among people, to nurture their desires, and to satisfy their seeking. They caused desires never to exhaust material goods, and material goods never to be depleted by desires, so that the two support each other and prosper. This is how ritual arose.”<sup>28</sup>

As a countermeasure used to control this nature, Xunzi focuses on the powers of rituals. He believes that the will for ‘righteousness’ (義) is a critical characteristic of human beings.

Water and fire have *qi* (氣) but are without life. Grasses and trees have life but are without awareness. Birds and beasts have awareness but are without *yi* (義). Humans have *qi* and life and awareness, and moreover they have *yi*. And so they are the most precious things

<sup>26</sup> Ch. 19 “天地以合，日月以明，四時以序，星辰以行，江河以流，萬物以昌，好惡以節，喜怒以當”。

<sup>27</sup> Ch. 19 “故禮，上事天，下事地，尊先祖，而隆君師”。 Ch. 20 Discourse on music “且樂也者，和之不可變者也。禮也者，理之不可易者也。樂合同，禮別異，禮樂之統，管乎人心矣。”

<sup>28</sup> Ch. 9 “先王惡其亂也，故制禮義以分之，以養人之欲，給人之求。使欲必不窮於物，物必不屈於欲。兩者相持而長，是禮之所起也”。

under Heaven. They are not as strong as oxen or as fast as horses, but oxen and horses are used by them. How is this so? I say it is because humans are able to form communities while the animals cannot. Why are humans able to form communities? I say it is because of social divisions. How can social divisions be put into practice? I say it is because of *yi*. And so if they use *yi* in order to make social divisions, then they will be harmonized. If they are harmonized, then they will be unified. If they are unified, then they will have more force. If they have more force, then they will be strong. If they are strong, then they will be able to overcome the animals. And so they can get to live in homes and palaces. Thus, the reason why humans can order themselves with the four seasons, control the myriad things, and bring benefit to all under Heaven is none other than that they are able to get these social divisions and *yi*.<sup>29</sup>

And human life cannot be without community. If humans form communities but are without social divisions, then they will struggle. If they struggle, then there will be chaos. But the righteousness mentioned here is the kind that supports ‘division’ (分). If there is no division that draws a line between grades and classes, conflict and chaos will naturally rise.

The myriad things share the same cosmos and have different bodies. They have no intrinsic fittingness but are useful for humans. This is simply the arrangement of the world. Various grades of people live together. They share the same pursuits but have different ways. They share the same desires but have different understandings. This is simply the way they are born.<sup>30</sup>

To prevent this, *Xunzi* suggests distinctions and labor division. What he intends to say is that for an ordered society, people’s desires should be divided into different levels of hierarchy, prompting them to satisfy their needs according to their classes.

In ritual, noble and lowly have their proper ranking, elder and youth have their proper distance, poor and rich, humble and eminent, each has their proper weight. Thus the Son of Heaven wears a red dragon-robe and a high ceremonial cap. The feudal lords wear black dragon-robos and high ceremonial caps. The grand officers wear lesser robes and high ceremonial caps. The regular officers wear fur caps and plain robes. One’s virtue must have a matching position, one’s position must have a matching salary, and one’s salary must have

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**29** Ch. 9 “水火有氣而無生，草木有生而無知，禽獸有知而無義，人有氣、有生、有知，亦且有義，故最爲天下貴也。力不若牛，走不若馬，而牛馬爲用，何也？曰，人能群，彼不能群也。人何以能群？曰，分。分何以能行？曰，義。故義以分則和，和則一，一則多力，多力則彊，彊則勝物。故宮室可得而居也。故序四時，裁萬物，兼利天下，無它故焉，得之分義也”。

**30** Ch. 10 “萬物同宇而異體，無宜而有用爲人，數也。人倫並處，同求而異道，同欲而異知，生也。皆有可也，知愚同，所可異也，知愚分”。

matching uses. The officers on up must be regulated by ritual and music. The masses and the commoners must be controlled by legal arrangements.<sup>31</sup>

For Xunzi, however, the division is not a tool to induce discrimination and competition but a way to eradicate them. Although gradation was his solution to realize a better society, Xunzi wanted to purify emotions and make a harmonious world through *li*. The reason people needed *li* was that there had to be a system that helped them regain humanity and purify their emotions rather than excessively pursuing desire or painfully restraining themselves from it.

In every case, ritual begins in that which must be released, reaches full development in giving it proper form, and finishes in providing it satisfaction. And so when ritual is at its most perfect, the requirements of inner dispositions and proper form are both completely fulfilled. At its next best, the dispositions and outer form overcome one another in succession. Its lowest manner is to revert to the dispositions alone so as to subsume everything in this grand unity.<sup>32</sup>

Such belief is clearly shown in Xunzi's explanation of rituals for ancestors, ancestral rites, and death rituals. In his theory, rituals for Heaven and Earth are deeply related to ancestral rites. When explaining the relationship between rituals and controlling human emotions, Xunzi mentions the necessity of rituals especially for those still alive who have to cope with death.<sup>33</sup>

Death is one of the most emotionally difficult experiences humans endure in life. Children of parents that have passed away have to cope with such an event in an appropriate way. Refusing to acknowledge it or turning one's head away because of fear are not wise ways to do this. This is why raising awareness and preparing for it through ritual training are important.<sup>34</sup>

One can ask the question at this point of how symbols used in rituals should be internalized. Xunzi linked the ability to make ritual symbols and interpret them to the *wen* (文), "embellishment." If such symbols are appropriately used, humans can attain ways to live in order and harmony, as done heavenly. Such paths are identified as *wen* (文), embellishments, 'wei (偽)', human artifice, and 'li (禮)', ritual.

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31 Ch. 10 “禮者，貴賤有等，長幼有差，貧富輕重，皆有稱者也。故天子袞褘衣冕，諸侯玄褘衣冕，大夫裨冕，士皮弁服。德必稱位，位必稱祿，祿必稱用，由士以上則必以禮樂節之，衆庶百姓則必以法數制之。”

32 Ch. 19 “故人一之於禮義，則兩得之矣。一之於情性，則兩喪之矣。故儒者將使人兩得之者也，墨者將使人兩喪之者也，是儒墨之分也。”

33 Kline/Tiwald (2014) Ch. 4.

34 Kline/Tiwald (2014) Ch. 5. 107–132.

In every case, ritual begins in that which must be released, reaches full development in giving it proper form, and finishes in providing it satisfaction. And so when ritual is at its most perfect, the requirements of inner dispositions and proper form are both completely fulfilled.<sup>35</sup>

## 6 Conclusion

### 6.1 The assertions of Xunzi (荀子): Overcoming the chaos and disorder of his era

First, in nature, humans are far from good. There are no limits to human desire, and if left uncontrolled, society will fall into chaos and conflict. Those who do not acknowledge this should be harshly criticized because they are wrong.

Second, how can we build a good world when there is no goodness underlying human nature? The answer: through sages, Heaven, and consciousness of mind.

Third, what should we do to make a righteous world? The answer: establish an ordered society through conducting rituals, *li* (禮).

### 6.2 Xunzi's Confucianism: Ritual as morals to control human nature

Mencius's ethical utopia has to depend on human nature, which in Xunzi's opinion has no promise and is an extremely optimistic viewpoint. The real world is brimming with chaos and danger. In Xunzi's era, there was no room for a utopia.

Therefore Xunzi was more interested in how to overcome the prevalent evil of his time. He said that human beings were born with desire, which he believed was the root of all evil. But rather than completely denying it, he wanted to shift society from evil to good by acknowledging and effectively managing it. Although human nature is based on evil desire, it was possible for humans to maintain a state of mind that endows the world with order. This served as the basis for mankind to achieve a stable world, with Heaven looking down on the human world rather than directly interfering with it. Xunzi defined all things given to human beings as 'Heaven's cultivation' (天養) and the men practically managing them as 'Heaven's politics' (天政). This practical management was fulfilled through 'ritual', *li* (禮). Therefore the roots of ritual are part of Heaven's cul-

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35 Ch. 19 “凡禮，始乎稅，成乎文，終乎悅校。故至備，情文俱盡。”

tivation and the practical conduct of ritual stems from Heaven's politics. Xunzi explains the roots of ritual with reference to the functions of 'culture, embellishment' (文), links conduct to patterns that follow the ways of nature, and asserts the importance of ruling the real world through 'ritual and yi' (禮儀).

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## **C Key texts; translating Confucius into Latin**



Michele Ferrero

# The Latin translations of Confucius' *Dialogues* (Lun Yu). A comparison of key concepts

## Introduction

The teaching of Confucius<sup>1</sup> is contained in the so-called *Chinese Classics* and then expanded through innumerable commentaries. The *Chinese Classics* are divided as *The Five Canonical Works*, or *Five Qing*<sup>2</sup> (五经): *Book of Songs* (诗经); *Book of History* (书经); *Book of Changes* (易经); *Book of Rites* (礼经); *Spring and Autumn Annals* (春秋); and the *Four Books* (四书): *Analects* (= *Dialogues*, 论语); *The Book of Mencius* (孟子); *The Great Learning* (大学); *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸之道). The *Four Books* are traditionally attributed to four different philosophers: the *Analects* (= *Conversations*, *Dialogues*, 论语) are sayings of Confucius; the *Book of Mencius* (孟子) is attributed to Mencius; the *Great Learning* (大学) to Ceng Can (曾参), a disciple of Confucius; *The Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸之道) to Kong Ji (孔伋), the grandson of Confucius.

As far as the *Dialogues* (论语) are concerned, there exist six main complete Latin translations. The first translation was done by the Jesuits Michele Ruggieri (罗明坚) and Matteo Ricci (利玛窦) around the year 1592.<sup>3</sup> The second is *Confucius, Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis Latina exposito studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdtrich, Francisci Rougemont, Philippi Couplet*,

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1 One clear and brief presentation of Confucianism is in Yao (2000). See also Fung (1952) 48–49; Filippini (1964) 39 and Ferrero (2004).

2 Cf. Legge (2006–1861–1872) 1: “The term *Qing* is of textile origin, and signifies the warp threads of a web, and their adjustment. An easy application of it is to denote what is regular and insures regularity. As used with reference to books, it indicates their authority on the subjects of which they treat”.

3 See FR I, 43 n. 2. In the National Library ‘Vittorio Emanuele II’ in Rome there is a manuscript (Fondo Gesuitico n.1185/3314) with the head-title *A P. Michaele Rogerio collecta* (material collected by Father Michele Ruggieri). Professor D’Arelli has already studied the historical background of this manuscript: see D’Arelli (1994), (1996) and (1998). His articles describe the manuscript and its origin, analyse the writer’s *ductus* and the material used, provide precise original page numbers, and discuss early findings and scholars’ opinions. An edition in Italian language has been published by LAS, Rome, in July 2019. The critical edition with transcription and translation will be published by Beijing Foreign Studies University soon: see also Ferrero (2016).



*PP. Soc. Jesu*, Paris 1687.<sup>4</sup> Intorcetta, Herdtrich, Rougemont, and Couplet were all Jesuit missionaries. Couplet's *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* has a much longer and complex translation compared with others. The four translators also add explanations and comments to the original text. Couplet says, in the title that his work is *versio literalis una cum explanatione* (translation and explanation together). It was indeed the style of that age. We could call Couplet's rich and abundant translation almost 'baroque'. We can see clearly the complexity of Couplet's translation compared with Zottoli's short and concise style. For example, the sentence 則勿憚改", for Legge is "When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them", for Zottoli *et si erras, tunc ne formides emendari* (if you make mistake, do not be afraid of correcting), while for Couplet is "remember the human condition, that is frail and leaning towards faults and easily commit sins, and if you fall into sin do not fear or hesitate to correct what is wrong and stand up with effort and free yourself from the chains and difficulties that you feel are an obstacle keeping you down". Baroque, indeed!

Another translation is contained in Francisci Noel *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex : nimirum Adulorum Schola, Immutabile Medium, Liber Sententiarum, Memcius, Filialis Observantia, Parvulorum Schola*, Prague 1711. Francois Noel (卫方济) (1651–1729), too, was a Jesuit missionary.

Then there is *Les quatre livres*, by Seraphin Couvreur, also a Jesuit (顾赛芬), 1895, in Latin and French.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a new translation was published: *Cursus litteraturae Sinicae neo-missionariis accommodatus* (1879–1892), by another Jesuit, Angelo Zottoli (晁德莅) (1826–1902).

Finally, there is William Cheung's multilingual Confucius online project. It is a text available only online: <http://www.confucius.org/>. The Latin translation is based on the English one.

The Jesuit missionaries to China introduced Confucius into the Western world using Latin. This was the first meeting between the teaching of Confucius and Europe. It occurred in the language of Cicero and the Vulgate Bible. This is historically significant. Latin is the language of ancient Western wisdom. The first meeting between Chinese wisdom and European history was mediated by Latin, the language of wisdom *par excellence*.

Confucius' sentences are a treasure for all mankind. In their Latin translation they became also a bridge between cultures, ages, traditions. The first trans-

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<sup>4</sup> See Meynard (2011) and Luo (2012).

lators of Confucius into Latin had studied Latin with Cicero as a model.<sup>5</sup> By using words that belong to a different history and tradition, did they also offer new interpretations to the Confucian texts? Those Confucian texts have been interpreted and commented upon for centuries. Did those Latin translations and 'Western' interpretations offer any new approaches to Confucius? Did the first Western translations expand on the original wisdom of the Chinese master?

Without doubt, those first translations had a particular flavor. Most of those translators were Christian missionaries. They wanted to present Confucius as compatible with the Christian faith.<sup>6</sup> Did they alter the original meaning in order to achieve their objective? Or were they trying to do with Confucius what Thomas Aquinas had done before, using Aristotle as the background for his theology? As it is written in Ricci's *Storia dell'introduzione del Cristianesimo in Cina (History of the Introduction of Christianity in China)*, "Il Padre procurò di tirare alla nostra opinione il principale della setta de' letterati, che è il Confutio, interpretando in nostro favore alcune cose che aveva lasciato dubbiose".<sup>7</sup> ("The Father [Ricci] strove to show that Confucius is near our side, by interpreting to our advantage some things he left uncertain").

By comparing various Latin translations of passages of Confucian Classics, I would like to show first of all that those translators were faithful to the original. They liked Confucius because of what he taught and wanted to introduce him to the West. It was unavoidable that they sometimes read him according to their own personal and historical background. Moreover, in some cases, they enriched the original text by using particular Latin words that have a different historical background. If we look at their conduct as a whole, they had the same respect for Confucius that in the past translators showed towards Plato and Aristotle, or Virgil.

Various languages inevitably add different nuances to a text. A translation indeed always misses and loses something of the original but can also augment and expand meaning. According to Michail Bachtin, the meaning found in any dialogue is unique to the sender and recipient and based upon their personal

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5 The grammar school of the Jesuits was organized along five sections, or 'classes', whose objective was to help students to achieve, through a constant practice of memory and exercise, a "perfect eloquence". The first three classes were for *grammar*, the fourth for *humanity*, the fifth as preparation for further studies of *rhetoric*. As mentioned above, the time of each "class" depended on the speed of the student. In Macerata Ricci studied *grammar* and *humanity*, but not *rhetoric*. During the *grammar* class the students were taught Italian and Latin, their model being Cicero. See Fois (1984) and also Villoslada (1954).

6 On attempts to make Confucius almost a Christian, see Rule (1986).

7 FR, n. 709.

understanding of the world as influenced by their socio-cultural backgrounds. “Bachtin’s dialogism opens up space for communication scholars to conceive of difference in new ways” and this “dialogic perspective argues that difference (of all kinds) is basic to the human experience”.<sup>8</sup> A different language is not only an obstacle in communication, but also a source of new meaning. Culture and communication are closely related. The understanding, according to Bachtin, of a given utterance, text, or message, is contingent upon one’s cultural background and experience. This means that a reader can see in the text even more than the authors put into it, making not only writing but also reading a creative process. As Wolfgang Kubin says: “translation is a matter of choice and decision, of selection and possibility, of history and knowledge”.<sup>9</sup>

For this reason, the meeting between this Chinese Confucian text and Latin is particularly enriching for the text itself. We can consider Latin as one of the main representatives of Western culture. The cultural heritage of the West, with its roots in Greek, Roman, and Judeo-Christian traditions, has been transmitted in Latin for 2000 years. Latin words have a unique echo in the ears of the readers. Thus, a Latin translation of the basic text of Chinese culture is an extraordinary meeting between two civilizations. The *Dialogues*, as any other classic, grows in time, through different interpretations and different translations.

In this article, I offer some examples of this dialogue between Western and Eastern cultures as they occurred through these translations. I select certain lines of Confucius as they appear in Chinese, English, and Latin. The comparison between these three languages, which had and still have a widespread influence on the entire world, shows the depth of Confucius and his universal appeal.

## 1 ‘Wisdom’ and ‘study’ (学 – *xue*)

‘To study’ (*xue* 学) in the Confucian tradition is the way to redemption and human fulfillment. For Christianity, salvation comes from God’s grace. For Confucius, it comes from education and study. To study gives meaning to life. The basic standard for the Confucian educational and moral program is contained in the book called 大学 (*Da Xue*, *The Great Learning*). *Xue* (学) is different and deeper than learning data or memorizing information. It indicates the process of becoming more human, similar to the Greek idea of *paideia*. For Confucius,

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<sup>8</sup> Baxter (2006) 102.

<sup>9</sup> Kubin (2012) 334.

“to study” includes principally learning that the most important element of reality is proper human relationship within a hierarchically-ordained society.

Confucius considers education the main tool in the process of the cultivation of virtue (修道) and the achievement of full humanity. Education does not merely aim at conveying knowledge, but also at shaping correct behavior patterns and internalizing them as part of one's character. *Xue* (学) is the way to become a gentleman (君子), a good man, a person who has achieved a fulfilled life in moral perfection and social propriety.

The target of education is not ‘knowledge’ but ‘a good life’, or the art of knowing how to live life well. For historical reasons, in the Western world ‘education’ and ‘ethics’ are today considered two different disciplines. No teacher today would see himself or herself as a ‘sage’. They teach a ‘subject’, not ‘how to live’. Yet in the Confucian tradition ethics and education coincide.

Given the importance of this concept in the Confucian tradition, we can appreciate the beauty, richness, and depth of its Latin translation. At the same time, we see the challenges of a suitable translation. The Latin words employed in the translations attempt to explain that *Xue* (学) is something distinct from ‘studying’.

For example, Zottoli translates *Xue* (学) ‘to learn wisdom’, *studere sapientiae*. *Studere sapientiae* echoes in Latin the *Book of Proverbs* of the Bible: *disce sapientiam!* (Prov. 6.6). In Couplet's Latin translation of 1687, it is translated: *operam dare imitationi sapientum* (“to imitate the wise men”). So, the words *Xue* (学) and *Xi* (习) are interpreted not just as any learning, but as a specific study of ‘wisdom’, in Latin *sapientia*.

Let us see an example by comparing the six Latin translations of the first sentence of the *Dialogues*, giving the reading of the manuscripts and correcting only the evident mistakes. I also add the English translation by James Legge<sup>10</sup>.

1.1 zì yuē 子曰 xué ér shí xí zhī 学而时习之、bù yì shuō hū 不亦说乎、yǒu péng zì yuǎn fāng lái 有朋自远方来、bù yì lè hū 不亦乐乎、rén bù zhī ér bù yǎn 人不知而不愠、  
bù yì jūn zǐ hū 不亦君子乎’

**Legge:** 1. The Master said, “Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?”

2. “Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?”

3. “Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?”

**Ruggieri:** *Addiscenti virtutis iter recte agendi rationem tradit. Qui numquam per incuriam abiens qua didicit, meditationem ac pertractationem desistit, ubi ad perfectionis culmen per-*

<sup>10</sup> Legge (2013–1893).

*maneret quanta tandem laetitia perfundetur! Societate aliqua coniuncti, si ad discendum videlicet virtutis iter e longinquis remotisque locis in unum confluant nonne gaudendum sibi vehementer existimabunt? Si quis virtutis itinere iam confecto, nullam se apud alios virtutis suae opinionem excitasse moderate ferat, quod est quod ad summam probitatem perfectionemque desideret.*

**Couplet:** *Operam dare imitationi sapientum et assidue exercitare sese in huiusmodi studio imitandi, nonne olim delectabile erit? [...here Couplet adds a comment]. Postquam autem te excolueris tam feliciter huiusmodi cum labore et constantia, si dentur tunc sectatores et amici e longinqua regione adventantes, consulturi te atque in disciplinam tuam tradituri sese, fama scilicet virtutis ac sapientiae tuae excitati, nonne tum multo etiam vehementius laetaberis et prodes omnino sensum hunc exultantis animi tui? Verum si plane contrarium acciderit at cum talis ac tantus sis, ab hominibus tamen si ignoreris, nemo te consulat, suspiciat nemo; tu interim hanc ob causam non affligaris nec indigneris; quippe contentus iis quae tibi ipse peperisti et possides securus; nihil autem de his quae extra te, alienique sunt arbitrii, laborans; nonne perfecti viri consummataeque virtutis hoc erit?*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: qui priscorum sapientum facta non tantum imitatur, sed etiam cum illis assidue se ad ulteriorem profectum exercet, numquid is gaudio impletur? Deinde, cum a remotis plagis adveniunt socii, ut eius praecepta excipiant; numquid etiam gaudio diffluit? Si tamen ab hominibus nesciatur, nec ob hoc irascatur; numquid tunc potest vere dici vir sapiens et consummatus.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister Confucius ait: qui colit et omni tempore recolit illud (qui sapientum praecepta discit et exsequitur, indesinenter recolens discit et exsequitur) nonne quidem gaudet? Si sint pares (ut eum audiant), nonne quidem laetatur? Si homines non noverint eum, et non aegre ferat, nonne quidem est vir sapiens?*

**Zottoli:** *Confucius ait: studere sapientiae et jugiter exercere hoc, nonne quidem iucundum? Et si erunt sodales ex longinquo loco venientes, nonne quidem laetaberis? Si non, ab aliis nesciri et non indignari, nonne etiam sapientis est?*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: nonne discere et identidem tractare quae didicisti voluptas est? Nonne amicos habere qui ex longinquo ut doctrinam communicet veniunt felicitas est? Nonne aequo animo ferre quod ab aliis non recte aestimaris ingenui est?*

We notice this variety of Latin words: *didicit (disco); meditationem ac pertractationem; imitationi sapientum; exercitare sese; studio; excolueris; cum labore et Constantia; priscorum sapientum facta; exercet; colit et recoli; sapientum praecepta; discit et exsequitur; studere sapientiae; iugiter exercere; discere; tractare quae didicisti*

Human flourishing does not come from conformity to God's will or divine commandments or plan, as in the Christian-Western tradition, but from a personal effort to 'study' and 'learn' the traditions of the ancestors. Thus the meaning and purpose of life is found in this 'studying'. Since studying requires teachers and books, in China, from ancient times until today, teachers, books, libraries,

reading, learning, and similar activities are esteemed and appreciated above everything else.

Let us see another example:

1.8 子<sup>zǐ</sup>曰<sup>yue</sup> ‘君<sup>jūn</sup>子<sup>zǐ</sup>不<sup>bù</sup>重<sup>zhòng</sup>、则<sup>zé</sup>不<sup>bù</sup>威<sup>wēi</sup>、学<sup>xué</sup>则<sup>zé</sup>不<sup>bù</sup>固<sup>gù</sup>。主<sup>zhǔ</sup>忠<sup>zhōng</sup>信<sup>xìn</sup>。无<sup>wú</sup>友<sup>yǒu</sup>不<sup>bù</sup>如<sup>rú</sup>己<sup>jǐ</sup>者<sup>zhě</sup>。过<sup>guò</sup>、则<sup>zé</sup>勿<sup>wù</sup>惮<sup>dàn</sup>改<sup>gǎi</sup>’

**Legge:** The Master said, “If the scholar be not grave, he will not call forth any veneration, and his learning will not be solid.

2. “Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles.

3. “Have no friends not equal to yourself.

4. “When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them.”

**Ruggieri:** *Nulla potest eius esse auctoritas, qui graviter matureque non agit ac proinde inane quandam sapientiam sequetur. Studeat igitur solidae virtuti, mendaxque ne sit neve ad amicum se deteriore adiungat. Si quod peccaverit, poenitentia corrigere ne erubescat.*

**Couplet:** *Probus vir si idem non sit vir admodum serius, habeat quoque cordi exteriorem gestum motuumque omnium moderationem et gravitatem [...] scientias ac disciplinas quas tanto studio et labore acquisivit, sane non diu conservabit. [...]*

*Memor interim conditionis humanae, quae imbecillis [sic] est pronaque in lapsum et peccare facilis, si te peccare contigerit, tum quidem ne timeas dubitesve corrigere quod peccatum est et cum nisu quoque ac labore surgere, perruptis generose vinculis ac difficultatibus, quibus impediri te sentis ac deprimi.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: sapientiae alumnus, si morum gravitatem non amarit, mox modestia carebit, qua destitutus, licet sapientiae disciplinis vacet, non tamen diu persistet. Deinde animi candorem et veritatem inprimis colat. Quod ad socios attinet, non frequentet nisi eos, aut qui sibi praecellunt aut qui sibi sunt pares. Denique cum quis sine culpa vivere non possit; sua vitia assidue corrigere, non illum taedeat.*

**Couvreur:** *qui colit virtutem, nisi sit gravis (animo et habitu) tunc non obtinet reverentiam, discit tunc non firmiter. Pro re praecipua habeat non similes sibi (non virtutis amantes); si erret, tunc ne refugiat sui corrigendi laborem.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: probus vir, non gravis, jam carebit auctoritate, et studia jam erunt sine soliditate: caput sit fidelitas et veracitas, nullumque habeas amicum haud similem tibi ipsi, et si erras, tunc ne formides emendari.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: sine constantia vir ingenuus non coleretur, nec foret eius doctrina integra. Dum amicos hortatur ut fideles et fidi sint, nullum habet amicum quin sibi par sit. Non dubitet eius vitia corrigere.*

学则不固 (*Xue ze bu gu*) expresses the solidity and quality of your learning. It is explicitly linked with proper human social relations: your learning must be recognized by others. Therefore your external behavior should almost irradiate your inner knowledge. The Latin words *auctoritas*, *gravitas*, *reverentia*, *constantia*, so dear to Cicero in his *De officiis*, convey also the meaning of learning as achieving a higher status in society.

In the following examples the Latin translations beautifully express this concept: for Confucius 学 (*xue*, ‘to study’) is not just about books. It is about a generous life, a good behavior, a proper relationship with others.

1.7 子夏曰 贤贤易色、事父母、能竭其力、事君、能致其身、与朋友交、言而有信。  
 zǐ xià yuē xiánxián yì sè shì fùmǔ néng jié qí lì shì jūn néng zhì qí shēn yǔ péngyou jiāo yán ér yǒu xìn  
 suī yuē wèi xué wú bì wèi zhī xué yì  
 虽曰未学、吾必谓之学矣’

**Legge:** “Tse-hsiâ said: If a man withdraws his mind from the love of beauty, and applies it as sincerely to the love of the virtuous; if, in serving his parents, he can exert his utmost strength; if, in serving his prince, he can devote his life; if, in his intercourse with his friends, his words are sincere:— although men say that he has not learned, I will certainly say that he has”.

**Ruggieri:** *Qui probitatis, quasi formosissimae cuiusdam mulieris amore captus, omni [sic] animi provisionem cavet, ne quod erga parentis officii praetermittat, qui se totus penitusque fingit ad regis imperium, qui cum altero contrahens, fideliter contrahit; hunc ego disciplinae expertem tametsi nihilusque didicerit, non censeo.*

**Couplet:** *Si delectetur quis viris probis ac sapientibus sic ut commutat et quasi transferat in hos amorem quo ferri solet in res visu pulchras ac delectabiles: id est, si cum eo impetu atque ardore amoris appetat adolescens virtutem ac sapientiam, quo aetas ista plerumque rapi solet ad oblectamenta sensuum. Item in praestando probi filii officio tam erga patrem quam matrem, si valeat, seu velit et conetur exhaurire suas vires: ad haec, si debita subditi officia sic praeter adversus suum regnum aut principem, ut valeat, sive non dubitet exponere propriam quoque personam ac vitam quotiescunque res ita postulaverit. Denique cum sodalibus et amicis suis vivens familiariter si tales instituat sermones, ut ubique locum habeat, seu eluceat fides ipsius ac veracitas; quisquis huiusmodi fuerit, tametsi forte sint qui dicant eum necdum studuisse, ego certe semper et sentiam et dicam studuisse et praeclare quidem esse doctum.*

**Noel:** *Si quis tanto sapientium virorum sapientiam, quanto rerum pulchrarum pulchritudinem amore prosequatur; si in deferenda parentibus observantia omnes vires intendat, si in praestando regis obsequio mortem ipsam non reformidet; si in tenenda amicorum societate illibata verborum veritatem servet; quamvis forte mihi dicatur hic vir litteris non vacasse; ego tamen eum verum esse litterarum alumnum assevero.*

**Couvreur:** *Tzeu hia ait: qui in observantiam et amorem sapientium commutat amorem voluptatum, qui operam praebens parentibus potest totas adhibere suas vires, qui operam praebens principi potest totum impendere seipsum, qui cum amicis conversans loquitur et habet veracitatem, etsi dicatur non studuisse sapientiae, ego certe dico eum studuisse.*

**Zottoli:** *Tse hia ait: prosequendo sapientes mutans voluptatum amorem (贤贤易色), serviendo parentibus sciens exhaurire suas vires, serviendo principi valens devovere suam personam, cum amicis versatus loquens cum sinceritate, licet dicatur nondum studuisse sapientiae, ego certe dicam illum studuisse.*

**Cheung:** *Virtutem pulchritudinis loco magnopere observare, omnes vires conferre ut parentibus servias, velle dum domino servis mori, fideliter in negotiis cum amicis susceptis loqui, hoc assero didicisse, etsi alii aiunt hoc esse nihil didicisse.*

For Confucius 'learning' in itself is the higher value. To study is a necessary element of human growth because study is necessarily connected with moral improvement.

*Sapientia* is the object of study – it is a higher level of knowledge. Somehow in these Latin translations Confucius appears similar to Socrates, who searched for wisdom but never wrote a book. Western history recorded the clash between Socrates and the Sophists about the danger of using learning and rhetoric for making money rather than for personal improvement and the search of truth<sup>11</sup>. However, there is a visible difference between Confucius and Socrates. The first considers the traditions of the ancients the main source of wisdom, the latter considers traditions as the main source of debate.

Confucius himself does not hesitate to boast proudly of his own love of study:

5.28子曰 ‘十室之邑、必有忠信如丘者焉、不如丘之好学也’

**Legge:** “The Master said: In a hamlet of ten families, there may be found one honorable and sincere as I am, but not so fond of learning”.

For Confucius, a man can be good even without learning from books. However, unlike in the Greco-Roman tradition, a man who studies, learns things, reads books, memorizes notions, and collects information is always also expected to be morally good. Recently in the newspapers there was a story of a female passenger slapping a check-in staff member on the face, because she arrived late to the check-in and was informed that her flight had stopped at 9: 35 am (see <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1050696.shtml>). Where was the news? The culprit is described as ‘a PhD candidate’ and as such should be morally above others.

## 2 Gentleman (君子 – *junzi*)

One of the main objectives of Confucius' teachings is to form a 'gentleman', *Junzi* (君子), a man who strictly follows the *Rites* (*Li*, 礼), a man who finds his right place in the society and lives it out through his virtues. By participating in social life in the right way a person becomes a gentleman.<sup>12</sup> 君子 is for Legge “the superior man”, an expression that perhaps Friedrich Nietzsche would have liked<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> For example in Plato's *Gorgias*.

<sup>12</sup> See also Peerenboom (1993) 129.



Where does his superiority come from? Couplet uses *probus* (good man). Zottoli translates *Junzi* (君子) with *sapiens*, the wise man. In Latin *sapiens* signifies the man who has achieved full rationality, who is really and fully a man because he understands reality and has found the meaning of life. In anthropology the highest level of human evolution has come to be called *homo sapiens*.

Yet, for Confucius, not all those who belong to the race of *homo sapiens* are really *sapientes*. *Sapientia* in the Latin tradition has a very deep and specific meaning. It can be used to translate the Greek *sophia*, the love of which is called *philo-sophia*, the highest target of human life for both Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, *Sapientia* in the Jewish-Christian tradition is a gift of God, a sharing in God's own almighty omniscience: "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom" (*Prov.* 9.10). Thus, the word *sapiens* for *junzi* (君子) really stresses the rational dimension of the word, the achievement of perfection through knowledge or enlightenment. Perhaps the simple word used in the unpublished manuscript translation of Michele Ruggieri is the best translation: *bonus*, 'the good man'. Here the emphasis is more on moral behavior than on knowledge.

2.14 子曰 君子周而不比、小人比而不周。 [周 zhou = widespread 比 bi = compare, copy]

**Legge:** "The Master said: The superior man is catholic and not partisan. The mean man is partisan and not catholic".

**Ruggieri:** *Idem. Bonus perfectus vir non unius alicuius rei cupiditate ducitur sed ad omnia se potius refert atque accomodat. Improbis vero aliquid tantum spectat; de reliquis non laborat.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: Probus atque perfectus vir amplitudine quadam charitatis ac beneficentiae, qua de omnibus mereri desiderat et communem generis hominum conciliationem et consociationem colere ac tueri, universalis est et non particularis. Contra vero improbus ac vilis abiectique animi homo particularis est, privatis affectibus ducitur, amicitiam foeneratur et beneficia sua meritaque privatis emolumentis et commodis seu pretio quodam sordido divendit; adeoque non est universalis.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: sapientis erga homines amor est universalis, non particularis; insipientis, particularis, non universalis.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: vir sapiens animo complectitur homines universos, non paucos solum unice amat; vulgaris homo paucos unice amat, et non complectitur universos.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: Sapiens est universalis et non factiosus; vulgaris homo est privati affectus, non universalis benevolentiae homo.*

**Cheung :** *Confucius dixit: vir ingenuus omnia amplectitur nec uni parti favet. Vir minutus favet nec omnia amplectitur.*

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13 Nietzsche (2005–1885) talks about a "super-man" (*Übermensch*) as the goal of human progress.

4.10 子曰 ‘君子之于天下也、无适也、无莫也、义之于比、’

**Legge:** “The Master said: The superior man, in the world, does not set his mind either for anything, or against anything; what is right he will follow”.

**Ruggieri:** *Boni viri quod dux quidam et auriga est ratio; ut nec velle nec nolle habeat, sed totus ex ratione sit aptus.*

**Couplet:** *Perfectus vir, seu, verus philosophus in hoc orbe non habet obfirmatum animum ad agendum, neque habet ad non agendum: convenientia cuiusque rei est id quod sequitur.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: in quibusvis mundi rebus nec ad agendum, nec ad non agendum omnino se praedefinit sapiens; sed unam ubique aequitatem sectari statuit.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: vir sapiens, in imperio regendo, nihil vult pertinaciter, nihil respuit pertinaciter. Aequitas est cui adhaeret.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: sapiens vir quoad totum imperium, nihil obstinate velle nihil nolle, aequitas est quacum adhaeret.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: ubi vis gentium est nihil ingenuo perfecte affirmandum, nec quicquam perfecte abnuendum. Hic se secundum iustitiam metitur.*

4.16 子曰 ‘君子喻于义、小人喻于利’

**Legge:** “The Master said: The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the mean man is conversant with gain”.

**Ruggieri:** *Bonus ea quaerit quae recta ratione non discrepant; improbus ea potius quae propriae cupiditati collibita fuerint.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: vir probus ac vere philosophus valde perspicax est in iis quae sunt rationi consentanea, improbi vero ac homines oculatissimi suis in lucris et commodis, quid e re sua sit, quid contra, acutissime discernunt.*

**Noel:** *Sapiens in aequitate, insipiens in utilitate peritus est.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: vir studiosus virtutis multum intelligit in iis quae recta sunt; vulgaris homo multum intelligit in iis quae ad utilitatem spectant.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: sapiens vir est prudens in justitia, vulgaris homo intelligens in lucro.*

**Cheung:** *Ingenuus iustitiam intellegit, minutus vero lucrum.*

Connected with the definition of 君子, *sapiens*, we can see some elements describing the character of the superior man. What are for Confucius the characteristics of a ‘good man’?

14.27 子曰 ‘君子耻其言而过其行’

**Legge:** “The Master said: The superior man is modest in his speech, but exceeds in his actions”.

**Ruggieri:** *Confusius ait: Pudet perfectum virum sua verba factis esse maiora.*<sup>14</sup>

**Couplet:** *Sapiens erubescit sua ipsius verba, si quando vincant seu excedant sua ipsius facta.*

**Noel:** *Sapiens plus loqui quam agere erubescit.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: sapiens vir pudorem servat in suis dictis, et excedit in suis factis, id est, cavet ne jactet dicta quae ipse non faciat, et amplius facit quam dicit aut docet.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: sapiens modestus suis verbis, at excedens suis actibus.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: ingenio pudori est si verba gestis praestant.*

Humility is considered also in today's China one of the most important virtues, and you might meet people in China who boast of their own humility.

7.37 子温而厉、威而不猛、恭而安。

**Legge:** “The Master was mild, and yet dignified; majestic, and yet not fierce; respectful, and yet easy”.

**Ruggieri:** *Confusius ait homo affabilis esse debet sed cum gravitate ac gravis sine crudelitate, urbanitatibusque utens, gaudebit, securusque erit.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius (ut testantur eiusdem discipuli) blandus erat, comis, affabilis; et tamen idem venerandus et compositus: gravis erat ac severus ubi res postulabat; idem tamen haudquaquam morosus, asper, truculentus. Officiosus, observans aliorum et reverens; sic tamen ut perquam temperate, suaviter, ac citra molestiam et fastidium.*

**Noel:** *Confucius, ut referunt eius discipuli, comitatem cum gravitate, severitatem cum benignitate, magnanimitatem cum modestia singulariter noverat coniungere.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister erat comis, sed gravis; severus, sed non asper; ritum perficiens, erat habitu reverenter composito, sed facili.*

**Zottoli:** *Confucius comis (elegant) cum gravitate (severity), severus sine asperitate, officiosus (attentive) cum maturitate (maturity).*

**Cheung:** *Confucius erat tum mitis tum severus, tum venerandus tum non timendus, tum comis tum tranquillus.*

*Gravitas* is one of the main characteristics of the perfect Roman gentleman, according to Cicero (for example *De Senectute* 4.10). *Comis* is the opposite of a ‘barbarian’. It indicates a man who is educated, elegant, with good taste, but at the same time gentle and affable. *Officiosus* for 恭 is another word with a particular background, coming from *officium*, meaning ‘duty’. *Severitas* is the ideal of a

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<sup>14</sup> Confucius says: “the perfect man is ashamed that his words might be greater than his actions”. 14.27子曰‘君子恥其言而過其行’

Roman leader: decisive, strong, seldom smiling – and never to subjects – fair but stern.

### 3 Love, virtue (仁 – *ren*)

*Ren* (仁) is one of the most important terms in Chinese moral reflection. It is composed of the character meaning ‘man’ combined with the character for ‘two’. There is no term in English that corresponds exactly to this word. The word itself has different meaning in Confucianism, Buddhism, or Taoism. Therefore, often some English translations keep the transliteration *Ren*. Hsieh Yiu-wei<sup>15</sup> tried to combine all the different interpretations given to *Jen* in Chinese philosophy under six main characteristics: Universality, Permanence, Creativity, Susceptibility, Flexibility, Protectiveness.<sup>16</sup>

It is a word embracing all those moral qualities that should govern one man in his relation with another. “It has sometimes been said that the great merit of Confucianism is its discovery of the ultimate in the relative – in the moral character of human relationship”.<sup>17</sup> The philosopher Cheng Hsuan of the Han period interpreted *Ren* to mean “the correct relationship between two persons”.<sup>18</sup> This word has received various English translations as ‘magnanimity’, ‘benevolence’, ‘perfect virtue’, ‘moral life’, ‘moral character’, ‘true manhood’, ‘compassion’, ‘human heartedness’, ‘man-to-manness’.<sup>19</sup> The variety of the English translations of this term can give some idea of the range of concepts linked to this character trait. Sometimes *Ren* can be taken also to mean virtue in its entirety, including all kinds of virtues. Derk Bodde, translating the second volume of Fung Yun-lan, decided to use “love”.<sup>20</sup> Let us see an example. In 14.28 Confucius says:

子曰 ‘君子道者三、我无能焉、仁者不忧、知者不惑、勇者不惧’ 子贡曰 ‘夫子自道也’

**Legge:** “The Master said: the way of the superior man is threefold, but I am not equal to it. Virtuous, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; bold, he is free from fear”. (The main word *ren* is in the sentence: 仁者不忧 (*renzhebuyou*) = man of virtue but without anxiety.)

<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Chang (1980) 76–77.

<sup>16</sup> Chang (1980) 77.

<sup>17</sup> Küng/Ching (1989) 68.

<sup>18</sup> Chang (1980) 75.

<sup>19</sup> See Yi (1967) 152.

<sup>20</sup> Fung (1952) II, xvii.

**Ruggieri:** *Perfecti viri ratio in tribus quam ego perficere non possum potest inesse. Pius est sine tristitia; sapiens est sine dubitatione et fortis est sine metu. Ziconus respiciens sic loquitur: Confucius de se loquitur – i. e. – humiliter.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: laus veri sapientis et via seu norma triplex est. At ego pro dolor! Nullam adhuc teneo. Innocentia vitae praeditus rationi ac coelo constanter obtemperat; adeoque non turbatur, quamcumque tandem subeat fortunae vicissitudinem. Prudentia instructus sincerum a pravo, falsum a vero solerter discernit; adeoque non haesitat, nec anceps distrahitur. Denique fortis ac sine metu at singulari quodam praeditus excelsi invictique animi non pertimescit aut pavet.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: sapientis perfectio tres virtutes complectitur ast ego ne unam earum huc usque potui consequi: vir sapiens, est pius sine moerore, doctus sine errore, fortis sine timore.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: quae sapiens vir exsequitur, tria sunt: e quibus ego ne unum quidem possum: perfectus, non tristatur; prudens, non errat; fortis, non metuit.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: sapientis ratio triplex; et ego nullam attingo corde, perfectus, non tristatur; prudens, non hallucinatur; fortis, non pavet.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: via ingenue tria habet quae ego consequi nequeo: benevolens non sollicitatur, prudens non fallitur, fortis non metuit.*

Couplet uses a very complex sentence: *innocentia vitae praeditus rationi ac coelo constanter obtemperat*, (“the one who is gifted with integrity of life obeys constantly to reason and to Heaven”). This long phrase translates only the words 仁者: we see how difficult is to express *ren* (仁) in other languages!

Ruggieri chooses *pious*, which in Latin has probably as many meaning as *ren* (仁): dutiful, devout, conscientious, affectionate, tender, kind, patriotic, good, grateful, respectful, loyal. *Pius* is also one who does his duty to the gods or to the parents or to the teachers or to the country. In this case it also expresses that ‘proper relationship’ that is the main meaning of 仁 (*ren*).<sup>21</sup>

*Sapiens, perfectus, benevolens* are other choices. The general impression is that the Latin translators do not seem to perceive anything in the Chinese word *ren* different from the classical idea of virtue and goodness. Actually, our modern approach tries always to emphasize differences- you cannot really translate *that!*- rather than finding common grounds.

Another example:

4.4 子曰 ‘苟志于仁矣、无恶也’

**Legge:** “The Master said: If the will be set on virtue, there will be no practice of wickedness”.

<sup>21</sup> Chinese language has no clear distinctions among nouns, adjectives, and verbs.

**Ruggieri:** *Veritas ita perpetua pietatis est comes ut ubi haec est, abesse illa non possit. Ubi autem et pietas et veritas habitat; peccatum inde exulet necesse est.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: si quis serio firmiterque applicet animum ad virtutem, is nihil quod turpe sit aut contrarium rationi committet.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: qui pietatem cordisque rectitudinem sequi firmiter statuit, hic potest ab omni crimine se tutari.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: vir vere intentus ad virtutem, abstinet malo,*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: vere intentus in probitatem, nihil mali aget.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: diligenter benevolentiam affectare est sine vitiis esse.*

4.3子曰 ‘唯<sup>wéi</sup>仁<sup>rén</sup>者<sup>zhě</sup>、能<sup>néng</sup>好<sup>hào</sup>人<sup>rén</sup>、能<sup>néng</sup>恶<sup>è</sup>人<sup>rén</sup>’

**Legge:** “The Master said: It is only the (truly) virtuous man, who can love, or who can hate, others”.

**Ruggieri:** *Ille tantum et amare novit probos et perditos ac sceleratos odisse, qui hac videlicet pietate pectus ornari.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: solus ille qui probus est, tuto potest diligere homines, tuto potest odisse homines.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: soli pii ac recti viri possunt alios recte et amare et odisse.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: solus vir virtute praeditus potest recte amare homines, recte odisse homines.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: solum virtute praeditus potest amare alios, potest odisse alios.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: soli benevolentes homines amare aut odisse possunt.*

Here we see also *virtute praeditus*, *probus* and *rectus*. *Probitas* is honesty, the moral rectitude of the Roman gentleman. The *probus vir* is excellent, upright, honorable, honest, virtuous. Once again, the translation uses the classical idea of virtue and goodness in general.

## 4 *Decorum* and shame (文, 耻 – *wen, chi*)

文(*wen*) is another multifaceted character. Its meaning ranges from ‘document’ or ‘written language’ to ‘civilization’, ‘culture’, ‘civilian activity’ (not military), but includes also ‘refined’, ‘elegant’, ‘cultured’. These meanings are connected: in the Chinese tradition the highest level of civilization is associated with the idea of ‘writing’. The meaning of life comes from a life filled with culture, as we said above about ‘study’.

In Latin, 文 (*wen*) is translated mostly with *decorum* or *decor,-oris*. *Decorum*, too, in Latin has a particular meaning and history. Cicero casts it as one of the main characteristics of a gentleman, basically identifying it with ‘honesty’.<sup>22</sup> It expresses a mixture of moral goodness and proper external behavior, a sense of dignity united with the respect of tradition. In the English translation of Classical Latin texts often the original term *decorum* is used, since no English word really conveys the same depth. However, in translation from Chinese to English sometimes the word *decorum* is also used to translate 礼.<sup>23</sup>

Couplet, as usual, is much longer and baroque: *cumque viros haberet et literis et armis claros; horum opera tam feliciter attemperavit...* (“he had people famous for studies and arms, and followed the deeds of these people”):

Let us see the following examples:

3.14 子曰 ‘周監于二代、郁郁乎文哉、吾從周’

**Legge:** “The Master said: Châu had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations! I follow Châu”.

The passage is missing in Ruggieri’s manuscript.

**Couplet:** *Ego itaque lubens sequor familiae Chou mores et instituta: maxime quando mihi contigit illa imperante nasci atque aetatem gerere.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: cum nostrae imperialis familiae Cheu primi principes Ven Vam, Vu Vam, Cheu Kum perspexissent, quid in duorum priorum imperiorum Hia et Xam legibus et ritibus vel defuisset vel redundasset, ipsi adeo praeclaram regiminis artem instituerunt, ut nihil praestantius, nihil ornatius inveniri posit. Ideo has Imperii Cheu leges tanto studio veneror ac sequor.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: Tcheou (regia familia) inspexit (et imitata est) duas regias familias (Hia et Chang, quae praecesserunt). Quantus est decor (rituum Tcheou familiae)! Ego sequor Tcheou (ritus)*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: Tcheou inspexit in duas dynastias: proh quam abundans ejus decorum! ego sequor Tcheou.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: Hereditas Chou est duarum domuum imperialium. Quam litterae florent! Chou faveo.*

5.13 子貢曰‘夫子之文章、可得而聞也、夫子之言性与天道、不可得而聞也’

**Legge:** “Tsze-kung said: the Master’s personal displays of his principles and ordinary descriptions of them may be heard. His discourses about man’s nature, and the way of Heaven, cannot be heard”.

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Off.* 1.93.

<sup>23</sup> For instance in Lancashire *et alii* (1985), the translation of Ricci’s 天主實意. See also Ferrero (2004a).

**Ruggieri:** *Possunt quidem summam illam elegantiam qua Confusii nitet oratio, praeclare omnes cognoscere; at compendiariam illam ac brevem de natura coelestibusque rebus tractionem non item.*

**Couplet:** *Aliquando Cucum dixerat: Confucii magistri nostri exteriorem illam compositionem et ornatum seu styli, seu morum et actionum potest quis etiam mediocris ingenii et percipere. At vero haec a Confucio nostro assidue praedicata natura eiusque dictamen caelitus homini inditum, non possunt tamen capi penitusque perspicere ne a perspicacibus quoque ingeniis.*

**Noel:** *Discipulus Tzu kum, cum forte Confucium de natura et caelo disserentem audivisset, sic coepit loqui: singularem magistri nostri modestiam, gravitatem, facundiam quilibet discipulus potest passim percipere; sed eum de natura, de recta rationis substantia, de caeli via seu agendo ne differentem non licet, nisi rarissime, audire.*

**Couvreur:** *Tzeu kOUNG ait: Magistri de cultu et decore (i.e. de corporis habitu et motibus, de urbanitate...) documenta, discipuli omnes possunt assequi ut audiant. Magistri documenta de hominis natura et caeli actione non omnes assequuntur ut audiant: sapientissimi viri scholae institutio non transiiebat gradus, i.e. gradatim procedebat.*

**Zottoli:** *Tse kong ait: Magistri concinnum decorum, possunt obtinere ut percipiam: at magistri doctrinam de natura coelique lege, non datur percipere.*

**Cheung:** *Tzu Kung dixit: magistri studia litterarum nota sunt, sed non eius verba de natura et via caeli.*

A very special element in Confucius' tradition is the concept of the sense of shame, which in popular culture is often associated with 'saving face'.

2.3 子曰 dào zhī yǐ zhèng qí zhī yǐ xíng mǐn miǎn ér wú chǐ dào zhī yǐ dé qí zhī yǐ lǐ yǒu chǐ qiè gé  
道之以政、齐之以刑、民免而无耻、道之以德、齐之以礼、有耻且格

**Legge:** "The Master said: if the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. 2. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good".

**Ruggieri:** *Qui populos legum imperio moderantur, contumaces parant. Propositione coercant ex hoc enim fiet, ne admissis iam sceleribus, magno cum probro ac dedecore merita de nocentibus poena sumenda sit. Qui virtute ac benignitate cives gubernat, eos ita dirigit nihil ut committant quod pudeat; sed in virtutem studio totis viribus elaborant.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: a rege aut gubernatore si dirigantur subditi, atque in officio contineantur per solas leges; qui has tamen non observarint, nihilominus in officio contineantur per terrores atque supplicia: populus tunc quidem servili metu compulsus abstinebit sese a delictis gravioribus; sed profecto more improbi cuiusdam servi, sine pudore scilicet ac vero criminum odio, atque adeo non diu in officio persistet: persistet enim violenter et timore magistro, qui utique malus officii magister est.*

*Contra vero si regas ac dirigas illos per unam fere virtutem, virtutis ipsemet omnibus exemplum, ad hoc procul dubio se component omnes: et quoniam non est eadem conditio omnium, neque esse par virtus potest; tu siquidem prudentia atque humanitate tuos contineas si mo-*



*dereris subditos per sua quemque officia atque ita socios omnes vinciasque, plane fiet ut teneantur ipsi in modo ingenuo quodam pudore metuque filiali ne peccent sed ultro quoque et alacriter ad omnem virtutis laudem contendent atque pervenient.*

**Noel:** *Si princeps populos solis et imperiis et poenis coerceat; illi quidem scient poenas evadere, sed nescient vitia erubescere. Contra si princeps populos tum virtutum exemplo dirigat, tum honestatis viribus coerceat; illi et scient vitia erubescere, et virtutes acquirere.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: si princeps ducat eum (populum) per leges, et unum faciat eum per poenas, populus abstinebit a culpis, sed carebit pudore. Si ducat eum virtutis suae exemplo, et unum faciat eum moralibus praeceptis, (populus) habebit pudorem, et attinget (rectum).*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: si ducas illum per civiles leges, et componas illum per poenales leges, populus sibi cavebit, at carebit pudore: si ducas illum per virtutem, et contineas illum per ritus, habebit pudorem atque adeo fiet rectus.*

In this case also Couplet chooses the same Latin word *sine pudore*.

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: duc per consilia, coerce per poenas, et fieri potest ut populus cohibeatur, sed sine rubore. Duc per virtutem, coerce per ritus, et rubor orietur et diligentes profectus.*

In Chinese the word for shame is 耻 (*chǐ*). The sense of this shame regulates the behavior of an individual in society. Couvreur and Zottoli translate with this term with *pudor*, which, in the Roman tradition, expresses the sense of honor, of shame, and of decency. Ruggieri uses *dedecor*, while others prefer a reference to the blush: *erubescere* and *rubor*.

In the Classical world *honor* was one of the most important values. People were ready to go to war and die for their honor (let's think of Homer's characters or the ideal of Roman heroes in Virgil or Livy). *Pudor* refers also to proper sexual behavior. The virtue of *pudicitia* was an ideal presented by Livy, Cicero, Tacitus and others against an excessive relaxation of moral behavior. For the ancient Romans, the loss of *pudor* led to chaos, anarchy, and loss of social control. It is very interesting to see in Roman history the relation between the sense of shame (*pudor*) and the precision of the legal system (*lex Romana*). The more corrupt society became, the more laws were needed (*corruptissima re publica plurimae leges*, "when the republic is most corrupt, the laws are most numerous," according to Tacitus).

With the advent of Christianity and the influence of the (already Jewish and then Christian) legal tradition of God's Ten Commandments as a main motivation of moral life, 'law' replaced 'honor' as the main tool of social cohesion. The outcome was that in the Western world the 'rule of law' became more important than the 'sense of shame', which was largely relegated to the sphere of private life. Obedience to law(s) also became a sign of moral goodness, while for

Confucius – and some of earliest Christian texts – the good man does not need external laws to be good.

## 5 Heaven and God (天,神 – *tian, shen*)

One of the most heated discussions among early sinologists was over how to translate into Chinese the Christian word “God”. The main question was: is there in Chinese a word that means God and can be used by Christianity without misunderstanding and confusion?

Translators across the centuries used four Chinese words. At the beginning, simple transliterations from Latin were used: *pa-ti-shih-mo* for Baptism (Lat. *Baptismus*); *ma-ti-li-mo-ni-yo* for marriage (Lat. *Matrimonium*); *pei-ni-teng-chi-ya* for Confession (Lat. *Paenitentia*); *ya-ni-ma* for soul (Lat. *Anima*), and so on. Thus *Deus* became 陡斯 (*dousi*).

Later Jesuits and sinologists employed other three words: 天, 天主, 上帝.<sup>24</sup> 天 (*Tian*) means ‘Heaven’ in general. 天主 (*Tianzhu*) means ‘the Lord of Heaven’, 上帝 (*Shangdi*) was the word used in Chinese antiquity to refer to a higher spirit.

Which word to choose was quite controversial in the first decades of Western sinology, with the debate ranging among the uses of 天, 天主 and 上帝. Pope Clement XI issued the 19 March 1715 Papal bull *Ex illa die*, which officially condemned the Chinese rites and forbade the use of *Tian* to signify God.<sup>25</sup> Finally, 天主 (*Tianzhu*) was chosen, while the Protestants, to stress their difference from Catholics, used 上帝 (*Shangdi*).

The Latin *Coelum* had a similar fate. In the ancient Roman world it has a meaning very similar to Chinese 天, but with the advent of Christianity became synonymous with God himself. In the Gospel Jesus talks about *regnum coelorum*, translated in English as ‘the Kingdom of God’ (see for example Matt. 13 of the Vulgate). For all Christian translators, *Coelum* was the safest translation of the Chinese 天, because it does not necessarily mean ‘God’ in the sense of the personal Creator revealed by Jesus.

16.8 kǒngzǐ yuē 孔子曰 jūnzǐ yǒu sān wèi ‘君子有三畏、wèi tiānmìng 畏天命、wèi dàrén 畏大人、wèi shèng rén zhī yán 畏圣人之言。’ xiǎo rén bù zhī tiānmìng ér bù wèi yě 小人不知天命而不畏也、  
xiá dàrén 狎大人、wūshèng rén zhī yán 侮圣人之言’

<sup>24</sup> Lancashire *et alii* (1985) 27. The bibliography on this topic is very riche: see, for instance, Kim (2004).

<sup>25</sup> *Confirmatio et innovatio constitutionis incipientis: ex illa die*, Ex typographia Reverendae Camerae Apostolicae, Romae 1742.

**Legge:** “Confucius said: there are three things of which the superior man stands in awe. He stands in awe of the ordinances of Heaven. He stands in awe of great men. He stands in awe of the words of sages. 2. The mean man does not know the ordinances of Heaven, and consequently does not stand in awe of them. He is disrespectful to great men. He makes sport of the words of sages”.

**Ruggieri:** *Confusius ait: Perfectus vir tres reverentias praestat; reveretur lumen nobis a caelo inditum. Reveretur magnos homines; reveretur verba sanctorum hominum. Humiles vilesque homines lumen naturale extinxerunt, ideo non illud reverentur; parvum faciunt magnos homines; male tractant sanctorum virorum verba.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: sapiens ac probus habet tres timores: timet Coeli mandatum, timet magnos viros, timet sanctorum verba.*

**Noel:** *Tria sunt, quae sapiens veretur: veretur Caeli legem, veretur illustres viros, veretur sapientum dicta. Contra insipiens, caelestis legis ignarus, illam non veretur, aspernatur illustres viros, ludificatur sapientum dicta.*

**Couvreur:** *Confucius ait: sapiens vir habet tria quae veretur. Veretur Coeli mandatum, i. e. legem naturalem quam Coelum indit in cuiusque hominis animo; veretur virtute et dignitate conspicuos viros; veretur sapientissimorum virorum dicta.*

**Zottoli:** *Confucius ait: sapiens tria sunt quae veretur; veretur coeli numen, veretur magnos viros, veretur Sanctorum verba. Vulgaris homo non cognoscit coeli numen, adeoque nec veretur: parvifacit magnos viros, ludificatur Sanctorum verba.*

**Cheung:** *Ingenuus de tribus metuit: de fato metuit, de magnis hominibus metuit, de sapientium verbis metuit. Minutus, qui nec fatum cognovit nec metuit, magnos homines contemnit et sapientium verba ludibrio habet.*

Here we have a variety of terms associated with *Caelum: lumen nobis a caelo inditum; Caeli legem; Coeli mandatum* and an unusual *de fato* (Cheung). Zottoli translates 天命 with *coeli numen*, ‘the will of God’. The Latin expression was used in Roman times with the same meaning as the Chinese, as the order of Heaven that the emperor has the power to interpret. Thus in 2.4 (see below) Zottoli translates 天命 (*tianming*) with *Coeli providentia*, an example of how translation can “widen the original text” (Bachtin). 命 means ‘order, command’, while *providentia* is ‘foresight, providence. For Cicero, *providentia* was one of the main attributes of actual prudence. For Seneca, in his *De providentia*, it is the Stoic concept of the order of the universe very similar to the Confucian tradition. With Christianity the meaning changed and became synonymous with God’s intervention in the world, the act of an almighty God who knows everything and organizes everything for the good of those he loves (Rom. 8:28).

3.13 子曰 <sup>bù rán</sup> ‘不然、<sup>huò zuì yú tiān</sup> 获罪于天、<sup>wú suǒ dǎo yě</sup> 吾所祷也’

**Legge:** “The Master said: not so. He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray”.

**Ruggieri:** [*Guansum Chiao quaerenti, in templo ne Nga an Tau idolo sacrificium facere praestaret*]; *Confucius respondit idolis sacrificandum non est. Si in coelum peccasti: simulacra haec noxiam tibi condonare non poterunt.*

**Couplet:** *Sed Confucius haud ignarus quo tenderet superbi hominis iocosa percunctatio, iudicans alienum esse a recta ratione, viroque sapiente et probo indignissimum adulando gratiam alterius aucupari, sic ait: nequaquam sic ut tacite mihi suades, agendum est; nequaquam sequor vulgi morem: quisquis enim peccaverit in coelum, non habet aliud Numen superius a quo peccati veniam deprecetur.*

**Noel:** *Cui Confucius, facetiam intelligens: non ita, inquit: unum est Caelum, quod omnes honore et majestate superat; si autem in Caelum peccaveris, nullus est, quem roges, ut te a poena eximat; nimirum nec foci, nec anguli spiritum rogando quidquam proficies.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: non probo (blanditias sive in penetralibus sive ad focum adhibitae). Qui (non recte agendo) admittit culpam in Coelum, non habet quem precetur (ut veniam obtineat).*

**Zottoli:** *Confucius ait: non ita; committens peccatum in coelum, non habet quem deprecetur.*

**Cheung:** *Wang-Sun Chia Confucium rogavit: quid significat verba: blandire deo culinae potius quam deo atrii? Confucius dixit: non ita esse oportet. Caelo enim offenso non esset ubi oraremus.*

All the Jesuit interpreters translate this sentence as if Confucius was saying that there is no point making sacrifices to the gods if your behavior is not righteous. In this he sounds more like an Old Testament prophet or even a prefiguration of *Matt. 5*: “if you present gift to the altar, go first to reconcile with your brothers...”<sup>26</sup>

7.21 子不语怪、力、乱、神。  
zǐ bù yǔ guài lì luàn shén

**Legge:** “The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings”.

**Ruggieri:** *Confucius misteriosa ac incredibilia non loquitur; de viribus ac inter principes et reges pugnis bellisque non tractat; nec de spiritibus, qui non videntur.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius (uti memorant discipuli) de quattuor rebus non nisi rarissime et quidem brevibus loquebatur. De rebus scilicet exoticis, inusitatis, peregrinis, de monstris, atque prodigiis. De factionibus atque dissidiis et perturbationibus publicis. Denique de spiritibus, quod eorum virtus, efficacitas, natura usque adeo subtilis ac sublimis sit et ab humano sensu remota, ut de illa debite loqui sit periculum.*

**Noel:** *Quattuor erant, quae vix loquebatur Confucius: novitatum portenta, virium ostentationes, seditionum tumultus, spirituum naturam.*

<sup>26</sup> About the attempts to present Confucius as a suitable preparation for Christianity, see Rule (1986).

**Couvreur:** Magister non loquebatur de insolitis rebus, de violentis facinoribus, de turbationibus, de spiritibus.

**Zottoli:** Philosophus non loquebatur de monstris, violentiis, turbationibus et spiritibus.

**Cheung:** Confucius non de prodigiis, vi, tumultibus et deis locutus est.

Here we find the word 神 (*shen*), that mean ‘spirit’ or ‘god’. There is a difference in Confucius’ mind between ‘Heaven’ (天) and ‘spirit’ (神), so all translations keep it by using *spiritus*.

## 6 Wisdom and virtue 道 (*dao*)

The Latin translation of the word *Dao* (道) is again a significant witness to the richness and challenges of the meeting between these two languages.

“The word *Dao* (道) is one of the most important terms in Chinese philosophy”<sup>27</sup>. The original meaning of *Dao* is ‘road’ or ‘way’. Beginning with this primary meaning, it assumed, already in ancient times, a metaphorical significance, as the ‘way of man’, that is, human morality, conduct, or truth. Its original meaning was restricted to human affairs, social morality, but already in pre-Confucian China the word *Dao* had become implicitly a symbol of the standard life of the perfect man.<sup>28</sup>

4.8 子曰 <sup>chāowén dào</sup> ‘朝闻道、<sup>xī sǐ kě yǐ</sup>夕死可矣’

**Legge:** “The Master said: if a man in the morning hears the right way, he may die in the evening without regret”.

**Ruggieri:** *Mane quae rationi sint consentanea accipies quod si paucis post horis forte una cum die ipso tibi contingat occumbere; praestare tecum agetur.*

**Couplet:** *Mane qui audiverit legem, vesperi mori potest. Nec erit quod vixisse poeniteat aut taedeat mori.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: qui rectam vivendi disciplinam mane didicit, vespere potest tranquille mori.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: qui mane intellexit rectam agendi rationem, vespere mori decet (potest mori contentus).*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: si mane acceperis sapientiam, vespere mori licebit.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: audire mane viam praevalere est posse sine desiderio nocte mori.*

<sup>27</sup> Fung (1952) I, 177.

<sup>28</sup> Chang (1963) 25.

Because of the complexity of the term, the translators employ a variety of Latin expressions: *ratio*, *lex*, *recta vivendi disciplina*, *recta agendi ratio*, *sapientia*, and also *via*. *Ratio* in Latin refers to right reason, the order of the mind, or also the order of the universe. *Lex* (Couplet) hearkens the Jewish legal background of Christian thought, because a ‘law’ implies a lawgiver. *Disciplina* belongs to the semantic group associated in general with study and the search for wisdom. *Via* (Cheung) is more similar in meaning to the Chinese word, but in the Western tradition the expression *ego sum Via* was used by Jesus, and thus the Jesuits would not employ it for the Chinese ‘Dao’.

In the following examples we can see an even richer variety. 邦有道 (*bang you dao*) means ‘when the country had Dao’. It is translated as *sedato regno, probitas, bono regimine florebat*”, *regno recte composito, ordo*, and again *via*.

5.21 子曰 ‘宁武子、邦有道、则知、邦无道、则愚。其知可及也、其愚不可及也’

**Legge:** “The Master said: when good order prevailed in his country, Ning Wú acted the part of a wise man. When his country was in disorder, he acted the part of a stupid man. Others may equal his wisdom, but they cannot equal his stupidity”.

**Ruggieri:** *Nicuentius sedato regno sapientissime se magistratu non abdicat; eo vero ardente bellis quasi rerum imperitus publici muneris administrationem non deserit. Eius quidem sapientia cum aliis potest esse communis sed ad ignorantiam illam non omnium est adspirare.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: Nim Vu cu praefectus regni Guei, quando in regno seu domo regia viget probitas, prudens audit apud omnes. Si quando autem regnum est sine lege ac probitate sic ut perturbari incipiat ac periclitari; ipse tempestati subducens sese, sic latitat, ut a vulgi oculis remotus.*

**Noel:** *Confucii effatum: primarius olim Regni Gui praefectus Nin cognomen Vu, dum regnum bono regimine florebat, singularem suam sapientiam doctissime prodebat; dum malo squalebat, quamvis omnis regni negotia clam sollicitaret, se tamen rudem et ignarum palam simulabat. Illa quidem eius docta sapientia potest adhuc imitatione aequari; sed haec eius sapiens inscitia omnino non potest.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: Gning Ou tzeu regno recte composito, prudens fuit; regno non recte composito, imprudens (visus est). Eius prudentia potest attingi (i.e. aequari ab aliis; eius imprudentia non potest attingi (nemo potest eius laudabilem imprudentiam perfecte imitari).*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: toparcha Ning ou tse, regno habente ordinem tunc sapivit; regno amittente ordinem, tunc insanivit: ejus sapientia potest attingi, ejus insipientia non potest attingi.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: Ning Wu Tzu erat sapiens cum via in civitate floreret, sed hebes cum via in civitate non floreret. Sapientia eius pares habebat, sed eius animi hebetatio pares non habebat.*

1.14 子曰 ‘君子食无求饱、居无求安、敏于事而慎于言、就有道而正焉、可谓好学也已’

**Legge:** “The Master said: he who aims to be a man of complete virtue, in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite, nor in his dwelling place does he seek the appliances of ease; he is earnest in what he is doing, and careful in his speech; he frequents the company of men of principle that he may be rectified:— such a person may be said indeed to love to learn”.

**Ruggieri:** *Qui virtutis iter addiscit; caducas fluxasque res nihil facit; torporem vitat, rebus non indormit suis; cogitata loquitur, erit facilis ac sine errore profectus; dicique poterit salutaris doctrinae studiosus.*

“就有道而正” means the person who has *Dao*, Ruggieri uses a complex: *Qui virtutis iter addiscit.*

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: in quolibet quamvis ignobili et parvo, exempli gratia, decem nec amplius, domorum pago, utique dantur aliqui synceri homines ac veraces (qualis et ipse sum) proprio quodam natura beneficio tales. At non dantur aequae ut ego amantes discere et proficere.*

**Noel:** *Qui nec in cibo saturitatem, nec in habitatione commoditatem quaerit, solers in negotiis, cautus in verbis, frequentandi sapientes avidus, hic potest vere dici sapientiae alumnus.*

**Couvreur:** *Vir studiosus virtutis qui comedens non quaerit saturitatem, qui habitans non quaerit commoda, qui est diligens in negotiis et circumspectus in verbis, qui adit praeditos virtute (viros) et dirigatur ab eis, dicendus est amans discendi.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: sapiens qui vescendo non quaerit saturitatem, in mansione non quaerit commoda, est impiger in negotiis et circumspectus in verbis, adit praeditos virtute ut dirigatur, poterit dici amare sapientiae studium.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: vir ingenuus non gulae deditus est, non vitam delicatam appetit, sed in negotiis alacer et in sermone prudens est, dum optimorum moribus rectis studet. Licet eum iudices studiis deditum esse.*

Here again we see how the Latin words grasp the heart of the Confucian tradition. Beginning from the time of Matteo Ricci, all sinologists agreed on the priority of ethics over metaphysics in Chinese tradition. Moreover, in the sentence above there is evident similarity between Confucianism and Stoicism, since both claim that there is an order of Heaven to which a morally righteous man must strive to conform.

## 7 Heart (心 - *xin*)

First of all let us examine Confucius' famous passage about the various ages of a man. It offers us a synthesis of the beauty of words between Chinese and Latin. Here the important word *xue* (学) is translated as *scientia*, from the root *scio*, which means ‘to know’. *Scientia* in the classical world consisted in much

more than experiments and laboratory research. According to the classical tradition, *scientia* represented the summit of intellectual achievement. Different from the meaning of 'science' in our day, with its emphasis on experiments and measurement, Aristotelian science aimed at a loftier ideal: to find *universal truths*, which are necessary and cannot be otherwise".<sup>29</sup> Metaphysics was the highest science in antiquity.

天命 (*tianming*) becomes *coeli providentia*, the plan of Heaven, that in some way easily fits into the Christian tradition of an Almighty God who takes care of human events. 心 (*xin*) is *cor* (heart), a word that in any language implies much more than a muscular organ. In this case it is the source and origin of the will (*desidero*). Also Couplet translates: *sequebar quod cor meum appetebat* ("I was following the desires of my heart").

2.4 子曰 吾十有五而志于学、三十而立、四十而不惑、五十而知天命、六十而耳顺、七十而从心所欲、不逾矩。

**Legge:** "The Master said: At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. 2. "At thirty, I stood firm. 3. "At forty, I had no doubts. 4. "At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. 5. "At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. 6. "At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right".

**Ruggieri:** *Ego quindecim natus annos ad virtutis iter addiscendum mentem animumque converti. Trigesimum agens annum callebam. Decennio maiori nihil omnino erat quod mihi dubium videretur aut obscurum. Decem post annis caeli rationem penitus cognoveram. Decennio item post quidquid esset propositum nullo sumpto ad cogitandum spatio intelligebam. Aetate denique iam devexa septuagesimo vitae anno sine ulla difficultate cuncta ego praescripto rationis suaviter agebam.*

**Couplet:** *Annos triginta natus iam constitui: eas inquam radices egeram ut consisterem firmus in suscepto virtutum sapientiaeque studio, neque res ulla extra me posita avocare me ab illo posset. Quadragenarius iam non haesitabam amplius: evanuerant dubiorum nubila, connaturales enim rerum convenientias habebam perspectas et quid singulis inesset perfectionis vel imperfectionis, intelligebam. Quinquagenarius protinus cognovit coeli providentiam atque mandatum et suam rerum singulis a coelo inditam esse naturam, vim, rationem; cuius adeo naturae perscrutabar ipse perfectionem ac subtilitatem; indagabam quoque originem et quae tandem illius esset causa, intelligebam. Sexagenario mihi iam aures erant faciles et secundae, expeditus scilicet et exercitationibus excultus animus, optimisque praeceptis et disciplinis imbutus, sic ut facile clareque perciperem quidquid alii vel disputarent, vel ipse legerem.*

*Ad extremum septuagenarius longae meditationis victoriaeque mei ipsius beneficio sequebar quod cor meum appetebat; nec tamen excedebam regulam, seu terminus transiliebam honestatis rectaeque rationis, cui iam sine lucta molestiae appetitus meus obtemperabat.*

29 Wallace (1999) 17.



**Noel:** *Confucius senex sic de se ipso aiebat: vix ego quindecim aetatis annos attigeram, cum mox statui sapientiae disciplinis vacare. Annos natus 30 iam totus in illis eram stabilitus, nec ulla mundi res animum a proposito dimovere poterat. Annos natus 40 totam honestatis scientiam naturalesque rerum causas sine haesitatione penetrabam. Quinquagenarius comprehendere Caeli legem, admirabilemque eius cursum. Sexagenarius longo iam usu assuetus sapientiae disciplinis, ita nunc facilis eram in illis penetrandis, ut quidquid aures exciperent, mox mens sine labore caperet. Septuagenarius denique, sequendo vel unum cordis mei impulsus, nulla in re honestatis leges pene transgrediebar.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: ego quindecimo (aetatis anno) intendi animum ad sapientiae studium; trigesimo, firmus constabam (constanter, servabam sapientiae leges); quadragesimo, iam nihil dubitabam (mihi nihil obscurum erat in via virtutis); quinquagesimo, noveram Coeli decreta; sexagesimo, auris obsecundabat (audita, etsi non cogitarem, intelligebam); septuagesimo, prosequerbar quod animus cupiebat, quin transgrederer normam.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: ego decem et quinque natus, tunc animum applicavi ad magnam scientiam: trigesimo anno, tunc firmus constitui; quadragesimo, jam non haesitabam; quinquagesimo, tunc novi coeli providentiam; sexagesimo, auris facilis erat ad intelligendum: septuagesimo, tunc sequebar quod cor desiderabat quin transgrederer regulam.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit quindecim annos natus eruditionem affectavi. Triginta annos natus nullis fallaciis iam obnoxius eram. Quinquaginta annos natus sciebam quid de me fieret. Sexaginta annos natus veritatem agnovi in omnibus quae audivi. Septuaginta annos natus animi desideria sine peccato sequi poteram.*

## 8 To transmit (述 – *shu*)

This is a Confucian teaching that marks a visible difference between East Asia and the West. The Greek philosopher Socrates was proud to challenge the old traditions. The Judeo-Christian teaching reveals the creative power of God and consequently the goodness of creativity. Socrates and the Bible influenced and changed Western culture by spreading a positive attitude towards ‘creativity’ and creation.

Confucius, on the opposite, was proud of ‘transmitting’ rather than ‘creating’: 述而不作 (*shu er bu zuo*, ‘I transmit, I do not create’). Basically, this sentence means that Confucius wants to present the teachings of the ancients without adding anything different or changing them. 述 (*shu*) can be ‘to report’, but also ‘to comment’.

Ruggieri chooses *colligere*, Couplet uses *praeco* and *relator*. *Ego refero*, employed by Noel, calls to mind the common expression: *relata refero* (‘I report what has been reported’). Couver, Zottoli, Cheung, all use the Latin *refero*, which means ‘to carry something back’, and is really the opposite of a creative movement forward.

The second part of the sentence is about respecting the ancients. Most of the translators who use Latin translate 信 (*xin*) with *Credo*. This is a particular strong word in the Western tradition, because of the deep influence of Christianity. *Credo* with the accusative case (宾格) means 'to believe something'; *credo* followed by the preposition *in* and the accusative expresses a movement of the will towards believing. In the Christian tradition this second form is used for believing in God as a personal relationship, an act that requires an assent of the will: *Credo in unum Deum*, 'I believe in one God'.

7.1 子曰：述而不作、信而好古、窃比于我老彭。

**Legge:** "The Master said: a transmitter and not a maker, believing in and loving the ancients, I venture to compare myself with our old P'ang".

There are various hypotheses on who this P'ang is. Perhaps Lao Tze?

**Ruggieri:** *Confucius ait: colligere aut non ipsemet facere, credere et antiquitate gaudere comparor ego Laupono* [in Chinese is Lau Peng].

**Couplet:** *Confucius ait: praeco sum, seu relator et non auctor doctrinae, quam palam facio. Credo et amo antiquitatem, ex qua studiose suffuror et excerpo quae ad rem meam sunt; imitatus in me ipso famosum illum senem Pum; quippe qui prior veterum monimenta simili conatu, tradidit posteritati.*

**Noel:** *Confucius agens de variis suis elucubrationibus sic aiebat: ego refero prisorum doctrinam, non hanc ego inveni; prisorum enim doctrinae et multum fidei do, et multum ea delector. Atque in hoc dilectissimum nostrum Lao Pum, olim imperante familia Lao, primum praefectum, ego imitor.*

**Couvreur:** *Magister ait: refero (antiqua), et non nova excogito. Credo et amanter adhaereo antiquis, immerito (i. e. licet indignus) me assimilans nostro veteri Peng.*

**Zottoli:** *Philosophus ait: refero et non creo; credo et amo antiquitatem, mihi sumens assimilari cum meo Lao p'ong.*

**Cheung:** *Confucius dixit: referre nec fingere, credere et deditum esse temporibus antiquis. Permite ut me cum Lao Peng conferam.*

## 9 The rectification of the names (正名 – *zhengming*)

The 'rectification of the names' is another characteristic of Confucian teaching. For Confucius the social disorder of his times was the consequence of the lack of a clear teaching on the value and meaning of *Ren* (仁), proper relationship between human beings, and in general lack of clarity on proper social order. He believed that the only way to restore that order would be to arrange social life

according to Propriety, or *Rites*, so that the Emperor would clearly know what a good Emperor should do, the nobles what nobles should do, the ministers what ministers should do, the common people what common people should do. This theory is called by Confucius “the Rectification of the Names” (正名) and is of the “utmost importance”.<sup>30</sup>

So in *Dialogues* 13.3 the first rule to govern well is described as 正名 (*zhengming*).

13.3 子路曰 ‘卫君待子而为政、子将奚先’

子曰 ‘必也正名乎’

子路曰 ‘有是哉、子之迂也、奚其正’

子曰 ‘野哉、由也、君子于其所不知、盖阙如也。名不正、则言不顺、言不顺、则事不成、事不成、则礼乐不兴、礼乐不兴、则刑罚不中、刑罚不中、则民无所措手足。故君子名之必可言也、言之必可行也。君子于其言、无所苟而已矣’

**Legge:** “Tsze-lû said: the ruler of Wei has been waiting for you, in order for you to administer the government. What will you consider the first thing to be done? 2. The Master replied: what is necessary is to rectify names. 3. So! indeed! said Tsze-lû. You are wide off the mark! Why must there be such rectification? 4. The Master said: how uncultivated you are, Yû! A superior man, in regard to what he does not know, shows a cautious reserve. 5. If names are not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language is not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success. 6. When affairs cannot be carried on to success, proprieties and music will not flourish. When proprieties and music do not flourish, punishments will not be properly awarded. When punishments are not properly awarded, the people do not know how to move hand or foot. 7. Therefore a superior man considers it necessary that the names he uses may be spoken appropriately, and also that what he speaks may be carried out appropriately. What the superior man requires is just that in his words there may be nothing incorrect”.

Lest us see the various Latin translations.

**Ruggieri:** *Zilus ait: “Guei regni rex te expectat ut gubernationem exerceas, tu quod primum facias”. Confusius ait: “[...] nomen rectum faciam, non nomen proprium, sed status et muneris”. Zilus ait: “Ita in animo habes! Hoc non est ad propositum, quod tu illud rectificas?” Confusius ait: “Silvestris homo est Zilus, perfectus vir ea quae nescit, quasi dubius deponit, nescias enim quod nomine non recte imposito verbis tuis non obsequuntur, si verbis non exequuntur, res negotiaque ad exitum produci nequeunt, si res negotiaque non proficiunt, ordines et concordia non erigentur; humanitatibus, ordines et amicitia non erecti, castigationes et poenae non recte infligentur. Castigationibus et poenis non recte inflictis, populus quidem locum non habebit, ubi tuto manus pedesque ponat. Quare perfecti viri nomen oportet dicere,*

<sup>30</sup> *Fung* (1952) I, 59.

dicto oportet hinc conformia agere perfectus vir, non exterius solum habere id quod vocatur".<sup>31</sup>

**Couplet:** *Cu Lu verba magistri non satis mature expendens quasi illa hic et nunc minus ad rem facerent, parum considerate, estne, inquit, hoc ita, ut ais? Tu magister, ut mihi quidem videris, abes hic longe a vero. Quorsum ista, quaeso, tam supervacanea nominis reformatio, quando sunt alia longe maioris momenti quae hoc statu rerum ac temporum potius videntur tractanda? Confucius tam praecipiti responso suboffensus, vah! Inquit, quam rudis et agrestis es, mi yeu! Vir sapiens in iis quae necdum probe percepit, certe haesitans instar est ac subdubitans; nec temere quod in mentem venit, effutit illico. Audi nunc igitur quid paucis verbis significare vulerim: si nomen ipsum principis non sit rectum, nec eiusmodi, quod ei iure competat; adeoque si in ipsa quasi fronte hominis resplendeat mendacium tum profecto sermones ac mandata haudquaquam secundis auribus et animis; tum procul dubio publicae res et negotia nequaquam perficientur.*

**Noel:** *Cui Confucius: numquid, id primum sollicitandum est, ut vera nominis appellatio, quae nunc perturbatur, statim reparatur? Mox reponit Tsu lu: enimvero id magni interest? Pace tua, magister; dicere liceat: haec mens longe a rei cardine abest. Ad quid iuvat illa veri nominis reparatio? Tum acriter eum arguens Confucius: incultus, inquit, et rudis es vir, mi Chum Yeu, insulsa semper effutis. Sapiens in iis, quae non intelligit, dubitare saltem novit. Nunc ergo rem accipe. Si vera nominis appellatio non reparatur, verba in tabulis publicis ac iustis non erunt recta; si verba non sint recta, negotia non erunt perfecta; si negotia non sint perfecta, seu non rite perficiantur, rituum ac musicae leges non vigeant; si rituum ac musicae leges, utpote ad disponenda negotia et ad coniungendos animos accomodatae, non vigeant; poenae in plectendis delictis non erunt aequae; si poena in plectendis delictis non sint aequae, populi non habebunt, in quo tuti pedem figant, nec ad quid secure manum extendant. Quocirca sapiens, ut aliquid nominet, debet videre, an vere isto nomine appellari possit? Ut loquatur, debet videre, an verba sua vere possint opere compleri? Hinc sapiens, ne quid temere loquatur, diligentissime vigilat.*

**Couvreur:** *Si nomina non sunt recta (cum rebus non conveniant), sermo non sibi constat (secum pugnat). Sermone non sibi constante, res non perficiuntur. Rebus non perfectis, officia et harmonia non videntur. Officiis et harmonia non videntibus, supplicia et poenae non quadrant culpae. Supplicia et poenis non quadrantibus, populus non habet ubi tuto ponat manus et pedes (ubique timet ne immeritus plectatur).*

**Zottoli:** *Tse Lou ait: Wei princeps expectat magistrum, ut fungaris magistratu: magister quid prius praestiturus? Confucius respondit: quod potissimum, nonne reformare appellationem? Tse Ion exclamavit: estne ita? magister digreditur; quorsum haec reformatio? Confucius respondit quam rusticus iste Yeou! Sapiens in iis, quae ipse necdum percepit, quippe omittentis instar. Si titulus non sit rectus, tunc appellatio non probatur; si appellatio non probetur, tunc res non perficientur; si res non perficiantur, tunc officia et harmonia non florebunt; si officia et harmonia non florent, tunc supplicia et poenae non quadrant; si supplicia et po-*

31 13.3 子路曰‘衛君待子而為政、子將奚先’ 子曰‘必也正名乎’ 子路曰‘有是哉、子之迂也、奚其正’ 子曰‘野哉、由也、君子於其所不知、蓋闕如也。名不正、則言不順、言不順、則事不成、事不成、則禮樂不興、禮樂不興、則刑罰不中、刑罰不中、則民無所措手足。故君子名之必可言也、言之必可行也。君子於其言、無所苟而已矣’。

*enae non quadrent, tunc populus non habet ubi ponat manus et pedes. Ideo sapiens princeps quod nominat, certe decebit denominari; et quod denominat, certe licebit peragi: sapiens princeps in suis appellationibus nihil habet quod temere sit, idque totum est.*

**Cheung:** *Tzu Lu dixit: si dominus Wei magistro meo dignitatem offerat, unde incipiat magister meus? Confucius dixit ab institutis praescriptis. Tzu Lu dixit si hoc ita se habet, magister circumagitur! Cur instituta praescripta? Confucius dixit Yu quam rudis es. Ingenuus vitat quae ignorant. Institutis non decenter praescriptis, ea quae dicuntur non accipiuntur; dictis non acceptis, nil perficitur, nulla re perfecta, ritus et musica non florent, poenae et supplicia non servantur, poenis et suppliciis non servatis, cives haerent. Itaque institutis praescriptis ingenuo licet eloqui et quod eloquitur ad exitum perducipotest. quae ingenuus loquitur seria sunt.*

Ruggieri explains first of all the meaning of ‘name’: *nomen rectum faciam, non nomen proprium, sed status et muneris*. To name rightly means to clarify *status et munus*, social condition and official duties.

Couplet uses *nominis reformatio* and Zottoli chooses *reformare appellationem*. *Reformare* is a powerful word in Western tradition. It means ‘to remold new’, ‘to transform’, ‘to reform’. We can think, for example, of the ancient Christian motto *Ecclesia semper reformanda* (‘the Church must always reform’) or the movement of Martin Luther that was called ‘the Reformation’. Noel chooses *appellatio [...] statim reparetur*. Couvreur prefers *nomina recta*.

The Confucian theory of the ‘Rectification of the names’ is particularly significant in this time and age, when truth and fake news clash daily, competing for attention.

## 10 Filial piety (孝 – *xiao*)

孝 (*xiao*) means ‘to respect’ (as a verb or a noun, in Chinese grammar there is no difference between the two). It is mostly used for parents and authorities. It is one of the main Chinese virtues. For Confucius it is one of the foundations of the proper order of society. It corresponds to the *pietas* of the Classical Roman tradition. *Pietas* was one of the chief virtues with the double meaning of ‘sense of religious duty’ (*pietas erga deos*) and ‘filial piety’ (*pietas erga parentes*). In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *pietas* is the main virtue of the hero Aeneas. It goes beyond obedience to natural parents and includes in general a sense of respect for authorities and ancestors. The emperor Augustus and then his successor Tiberius made *pietas* one of main elements of their political and religious shaping of the Roman Empire. The English language accepted the Latin word *pietas*, making it into ‘piety’, carrying a more religious meaning.

1.2 有子曰 ‘其为人也孝弟、而好犯上者、鲜矣、不好犯上、而好作乱者、未之有也。  
 君子务本、本立而道生。孝弟也者、其为人之本与’

**Legge:** “The philosopher Yü said: they are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There have been none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion. 2. The superior man bends his attention to what is radical. That being established, all practical courses naturally grow up. Filial piety and fraternal submission! – are they not the root of all benevolent actions?”

**Ruggieri:** *Qui parentes, maioresque colunt, ab eis praeceptis ne transversum quidem unquam audent discedere quod si eorum qui praesunt (praecepta non migrent). Praecepta non migrent: incredibile est eos seditionibus dedecorisque rebus delectari. Perfectionem in omni virtutis genere cupienti in fundamentum ac principia incumbendum est; ea si teneat nihil est quod eum ab instituta virtutis via removeat (?). Propter ea quoque obtemperare parentibus ac maiores vereri, duae res sunt e quibus tamquam e fontibus caritas in proximum proficisci scitur.*

**Couplet:** *Discipulus Yeu cu ait: quempiam esse sive dari hominem qui domi quidem obtineret parentibus et debitis obsequiis officisque prosequatur maiores natu et tamen foris gauderet adversari legitimis magistratibus profecto rarum hoc est atque inusitatum. Rursum non gaudere quempiam adversari, magistratibus et eundem tamen gaudere seditiones ac turbas excitare et perturbare rempublicam adhuc quidem non accidit seu visum est et auditum quidpiam huiusmodi.*

**Noel:** *Yeu iu confucii discipuli effatum: parentum et fratrum natu maiorum cultores, qui ament superiores offendere, vix uspiam reperias; non amantes autem superiores offendere qui ament turbam excitare, hos nuspiam sane reperies. Vir sapiens quod in omnibus spectat, est recte vivendi principium, ex hoc posito principio mox omnis vitae honestas ultro exurgit. Debita vero erga parentes et fratres natu maiores observantia, numquid vere est omnis pietatis principium?*

**Couvreur:** *Iou philosophus ait: qui, licet sint ii homines qui colant parentes et observent maiores (aetate aut gradu), tamen ament resistere superioribus, pauci sunt. Qui etsi non amet resistere superioribus, tamen amet excitare turbationem, nondum fuit. Vir sapiens operam dat radici (seu basi virtutis); radice stante, iam virtus oritur. Pietas in parentes et observantia in maiores sunt perfectae virtutis radix.*

**Zottoli:** *Yeou tse ait: sic facti homines, qui parentes colant fratresque majores, et tamen ament se opponere superioribus, rari sunt: at qui non ament repugnare superioribus, et tamen ament facere seditionem, nondum ii extiterunt. Sapiens intendit rei fundamentum; fundamento constituto, rei ratio enascitur: illa observantia in parentes et fratres, annon ipsa est exercendae pietatis fundamentum?*

**Cheung:** *Yu tzu dixit: raro velint pietate filiorum et amore fraterno praeditis sibi praepositos offendere. Nec exstitit quisquam turbulentus quin sibi praepositos offendere vellet. Vir ingenius quasi radices nutrit. Quibus stabilitis via crescit. Nonne filiorum pietas et amor fraternus radices benevolentiae sunt?*

2.8 子夏问孝。子曰 ‘色难。有事、有酒食、先生馔、曾是以为孝乎’

**Legge:** “Tsze-hsiâ asked what filial piety was. The Master said, “The difficulty is with the countenance. If, when their elders have any troublesome affairs, the young take the toil of them, and if, when the young have wine and food, they set them before their elders, is this to be considered filial piety?”

**Ruggieri:** *Tisbiano de eadem in parentes observantia et cultu interroganti Confusius respondit: in frontis serenitate vultusque hilaritate negotii satis est. Etenim parentibus aerumnosis adversaque afflictis fortuna rebus sustentanda vita necessariis spem ferre (?); idne parentes est colere ac vereri?*

**Couplet:** *Discipulus Cu Hia similiter quaestionem instituit de obedientia filiali. Confucius respondet: oris alacritas, sive constans alacritas illa filialis oboedientiae quae adeo in ipsa fronte totoque ore amantis ac reverentis filii reluceat, difficilis est illa quidem, sed profecto nota prope certa vere germanaeque virtutis. Obsequia quippe domestica praestare filii vel invitati atque inoboedientes possunt: uti cum domi quidpiam est faciendum fratres natu minores ac filii familias utique subeunt maiorum loco id quod laboriosum est: rursus cum suppetunt vina et dapes, tunc procul dubio tam parentibus quam fratribus natu maioribus natu minores officiose ministrant epulas; sed hi an idcirco statim censeantur obedientes esse? Enimvero si non haec prompte, constanter et cum alacritate quadam animi corporisque praestiterint, oboedientiae verae nomen ac numeros haudquaquam impleverint.*

**Noel:** *Discipulus Tsu Hia quaesit ex Confucio, quomodo filius Parentes colere deberet? Cui Confucius: quod ego, inquit, in colendis parentibus maxime difficile censeo, est frontis serenitas. Cum parentes aut fratres natu maiores habent aliquid gerendum; si filius, aut frater natu minor pro illis laborem istum subeat: sive cum filius aut frater natu minor cibo et potu affluit, si parentes aut fratres natu maiores laute tractet: credisne hoc suppetere, ut ille dicatur parentes colere? Haec enim – addit interpres – ficto animo fieri possunt; sola frontis serenitas fingi non potest; ideoque difficillima.*

**Couvreur:** *Tzeu Hia interrogavit de pietate filiali. Magister ait: species (pietatis filialis) difficile induitur (id est, pietas filialis specie decipere difficillimum est). Occurrentibus negotiis, si fratres natu minores et filii subeant illorum (fratrum natu maiorum et parentum) laborem; habitis vino et cibo, si maiores natu (fratres et parentes) alantur; iam haec est ne censenda pietas? (non sufficit ut quis adiuvet et alat natu maiores, sed insuper necesse est ut eos ex animo diligat).*

**Zottoli:** *Tse hia quesivit de pietate filiali. Philosophus ait: oris alacritas, difficilis; quod si habeant negotia, et juniores puerique subeant illorum laborem, iisque habentibus potum et cibum majores natu alimententur, an vero hoc reputabitur pietas filialis?*

**Cheung:** *Tzu Hsia dixit: vultus argutus est. Juvenes onus in laborando sustinent, et seniores ius habent cibum et vinum ante alios eligendi. Sed hocne potest filiorum pietas esse credi?*

## 11 Rite (禮 – *Li*)

To convey properly and express the original meaning of 禮 (*Li*) is a difficult task. For Herbert Fingarette the communitarian perspective of the Confucian morality

embodied in the concept of *Li* (礼, 'propriety') is an interesting alternative to a certain Western liberalist conception of a fully autonomous individual making free choices in complete isolation.<sup>32</sup> According to Fingarette, Confucianism has developed an original way of investigating how a person thinks, moves and lives reflectively, deliberately, and freely, in the sense of 'not forcedly' and 'spontaneously'. A person is born as 'raw material' into an historical context. The process of learning the code of propriety is "the process of getting acclimated to the sort of conceptual framework which enables him/her to live, move and think as a fully human being".<sup>33</sup>

"The image of the Holy Rite as a metaphor of human existence brings foremost to our attention the dimension of the holy in human existence. [...] Human life in its entirety finally appears as one vast, spontaneous and holy rite: the community of man."<sup>34</sup> This means that the virtuous person, in order to reach his/her highest excellence (仁, *Ren*), should not follow every spontaneous expression of man's nature but should blend them with the proper social form, the rites (礼, *Li*). These come from Heaven through the mediation of Tao and social life and are not simply innate, or natural.<sup>35</sup>

1.12 yǒu zǐ yuē lǐ zhī yòng hé wéi guì xiānwáng zhī dào sī wéi měi xiǎo dà yóu zhī yǒu suǒ bù xíng zhī hé ér hé  
 有子曰：礼之用，和为贵。先王之道，斯为美，小大由之。有所不行，知和而和，  
 不以礼节之，亦不可行也。

**Legge:** "The philosopher Yü said: in practicing the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized. In the ways prescribed by the ancient kings, this is the excellent quality, and in things small and great we follow them. 2. Yet it is not to be observed in all cases. If one, knowing how such ease should be prized, manifests it, without regulating it by the rules of propriety, this likewise is not to be done".

**Ruggieri:** *Yeusius: noli ab ingenuitate amorem concordiamque dishabere. Talis enim erat priscorum regum benignitas, quae tum in maximis tum in minimis rebus ex animorum coniunctione manabat. Qui id quod praestat debet, ingenui hominis officium deserit; humanitatem tantummodo retinet. Atque humanitas ab ingenuitate seiungenda non est.*

**Couplet:** *Discipulus Yeu Cu ait: sicut toleranda non est iuris officique violatio, sic in officiorum usu et dum ius aliquod exigitur, placabilitas, moderatio et longanimitas obtinent primum locum. Ex priscorum quidem regum sententia atque instituto in huiusmodi moderatione atque humanitate constitutebatur omnis decor atque venustas officiorum et quascunque tractabant illi res minores maioresve, omnes inde procedebant: omnia omnino tam prudenti atque amabili suavitate condiebant ac temperabant, adeoque ad optatum quoque finem feliciter perducebant.*

<sup>32</sup> See Fingarette (1998) and Lee (1994).

<sup>33</sup> Lee (1994) 50.

<sup>34</sup> Fingarette (1998) 17.

<sup>35</sup> See Fung (1952) I, 72–73.



**Noel:** *Yeu tsu Confucii discipuli effatum: in urbanitatum et rituum usu quod maxime spectatur est naturalis hos et illas servandi modus. Et ideo eorum regulae, a priscis imperatoribus sancitae, censentur praeclarae; quia quidquid dirigunt sive parvum sive magnum, naturali semper modo illud dirigunt. In hoc tamen est etiam aliquid, quod non licet; si quis nempe sciens urbanitatum et rituum pulchritudinem sitam esse in naturali agendi modo, continuo totus sui profusus omnia naturali quodam agat, neque se ullis honestatis et rituum legibus astringat; nec id sane est licitum agere.*

**Couvreur:** *Iou philosophus ait: in mutuorum officiorum observantia, concordia magno pretio habenda est. Antiquorum regum praecepta ideo optima sunt. Tum minora tum maiora, orta sunt ex hac (concordiae componendae voluntate). Est quod non (licet) agere; (nempe), scire concordiam (magno pretio habendam), et colere concordiam, (at) non iuxta officiorum leges temperare eam, (illud) quidem non licet facere.*

**Zottoli:** *Yeou tse ait: rituum praxis facilitatem habet potissimam; antiquorum regum instituta inde sunt celebria, et parva et magna emanarunt inde. At est aliquid non agendum: unice videre facilitatem statimque prosequi, quin juxta ritum illam modereris, equidem non est agendum.*

**Cheung:** *Yu Tzu dixit: rerum concordia est merces rituum praestandorum. Tanta fuit imperatorum praeteritorum morum pulchritudo in rebus tum magnis tum parvis. Sed aliquando hoc minus acceptum est. Cum rerum Concordia tantum sua causa existit, nec ritibus coeretur, id non acceptum est.*

Ruggieri, as usual, is a man of the late Renaissance, who employs words Cicero would have loved: *ingenuitate amorem concordiamque dishabere, humanitas, benignitas*.

In particular, he seems to translate *Li* as *ingenuitas*, which in Latin means also ‘nobility of character’. Couplet correctly identifies the ‘rites’ with social duties: *in officiorum usu*. Noel seems to focus more on rites as ‘politeness’: *in urbanitatum et rituum usu*. Couvreur again prefers the idea of duties: *in mutuorum officiorum observantia*.

Zottoli and Cheung use *ritus*, a word that in Latin means simply ‘ceremony’. Today the word *ritus* (rite) in the Western tradition is commonly associated with religion.<sup>36</sup> However, as explained above, for Confucius 礼 includes all the tradition of proper social intercourse that makes society orderly and situates a person in a correct relationship with society. Legge uses, in fact, ‘propriety’ and not ‘rite’.

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<sup>36</sup> See Ferrero (2010).

## 12 Conclusion

The teaching of Confucius<sup>37</sup> has an influence in all East-Asia culture, similar to Socrates and Aristotle in the West.<sup>38</sup> “The Confucian pattern of humanistic culture has probably influenced the lives of more people over the ages than any of the other ways of life the world has known”.<sup>39</sup> China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan are all strongly influenced by Confucianism. Although it is debatable whether Confucius should be considered the first Chinese philosopher, certainly he is indeed the most important. In particular, Confucianism inspires and permeates all Chinese culture, life, and thought, even today, even after the Cultural Revolution of the '60's and '70's that tried unsuccessfully to wipe it off Chinese society:

Even the concept of being Chinese is not at all unconnected with the whole development of Confucian culture. Fung Yu-lan asked whether it was possible for us to understand the question of being Chinese, without getting into the whole issue of the development of the Confucian tradition. From this point of view, the Confucian tradition, in fact, helped the Chinese to acquire a certain kind of cultural identity. The notion is that being Chinese is not just ethnically or regionally defined but is also culturally defined, and this partly stems from the Confucian tradition. This is a highly controversial topic.<sup>40</sup>

The influence of Confucianism is so predominant that if anyone should be asked to characterize in one word traditional Chinese way of life and culture, that word would be ‘Confucian’.<sup>41</sup>

Some scholars rightly claim that if you really want to understand an author you need to read him in the original. Yet, since most of the people cannot study six or seven languages, the works of the great authors of the past and the present come to us through translations. If an author has something important to say, a translation will help to extend his reach. The Bible is the best example. The message of the Bible has converted people who have never read the original, but only translations.

A translation is a gift to humanity. A translation breaks barriers and borders. A translation also carries with it the depth and beauty of its own language. This is why the Latin translations of Confucius can enrich his meaning.

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<sup>37</sup> Confucius was born in Shandong (China) in the year 551 BCE and died about 479 BCE.

<sup>38</sup> See Fung (1952) I, 48–49; Filippini (1964) 39; Liu (1955) 13–14.

<sup>39</sup> Yi (1978) 1091.

<sup>40</sup> Tu *et alii* (1992) 110.

<sup>41</sup> Yi (1978) 1091.

Latin was used regularly in Europe from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the most significant works in human history were written in Latin. Because of its extension in time and space, Latin is a language that has been used, at least partially, in more countries and in more varied cultures over a longer period of time than any other language in human history. (English is used today in more countries, but has a shorter history so far).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the time of a rising China. It is now an economic and political superpower that affects the entire world. It is necessary in the West to understand Chinese culture and the Confucian writings are the starting point. The Latin translations of Confucius are a bridge between past and present, and between East and West.

The world of digital communication and our future daily interaction with Artificial Intelligence needs, more than ever, a serious study of languages, words, meanings<sup>21</sup> and the tools of communication. Studies on those early Latin translations of Confucius are not only historical research but also a valuable contribution toward increasing the overall wisdom of mankind.

Jaewon Ahn (안재원)

# Is Confucius a Sinicus Cicero?

## 1 Introduction

*Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia Sinensis* (hereafter, *Confucius Sinarum*) was published by order of Louis XIV in Paris in 1687.<sup>1</sup> The *praefatio* presents a general overview of Chinese scholarship and the views of Jesuits on Chinese thought and philosophy and *Confucii vita*. In the main text were included Latin translations of *Magna Scientia* (*Ta-Hio*, 大學), *Medium Sempiternum* (*Chum-Yum*, 中庸) and *Ratiocinantium Sermones* (*Lun-Yu*, 論語). In the appendix was added *Tabula Chronologica Monarchiae Sinicae*. *Mencius* (孟子) was not translated.<sup>2</sup> Translations were made in the way of *verbum pro verbo*: to each Latin term translators gave a number to indicate from which Chinese character it was translated. Translations were made on the basis of cooperative discussions and co-scholarship between Jesuit missionaries and prominent Chinese scholars of the time. The pioneer of this was Michele Ruggieri (羅明堅, 1543–1607), who attempted to publish a Chinese translation in Rome in 1590. However, it failed due to technical problems in printing. His manuscript is preserved now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale ‘Vittorio Emanuele II’ (‘Fondo Gesuitico 1195’). Following him, Matteo Ricci (利瑪竇, 1552–1610) undertook to translate Chinese classical texts into Latin, but his translation did not appear. In 1662, Ignatius da Costa (郭納爵, 1599–1666) and Prospero Intorcetta (殷鐸澤, 1626–1696) succeeded in publishing *Magna Scientia* (*Ta-Hio*, 大學) together with *Vita Confucii* under the title of *Sapientia Sinica* in Jiangxi (江西) in China. In 1672, Intorcetta published *Medium Sempiternum* (*Chum-Yum*, 中庸) as *Sinarum Scientia Politico-moralis*.<sup>3</sup> The *Vorlage* for this was Zhu hi’s edition. Intorcetta also used Zhang Colaui (張居正, 1525–1582) *Sa-Seo-Zik-Hae* (四書直解) for his interpretation. In 1687, Couplet (1623–1693) finally published *Confucius Sinarum*, which was a cumulative product of Jesuit missionaries from Ruggieri to Couplet himself compiled over a period of nearly 100 years. More recently, the text was published

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1 The full title of it: *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus sive Scientia Sinensis Latina exposita, Studio et opera Prosperi Intorcetta, Christiani Herdrich, Franciscici Rougemont, Philippi Couplet, Patrum Societatis* (1687), *Jussu Ludovici Magni Eximio Missionum Orientalium et Litterae Reipublicae bono e bibilotheca regia in lucem prodit. adjecta est tabula chronologica sinicae monarchiae ab huius exordio ad haec usque tempora.*

2 *Mencius* was translated by Franciscus Noël in 1711 in Prague.

3 On this point, see Lee (1991) 37.

by Th. Meynard S.J. in Rome in 2011. The *praefatio* (104 pages), together with *Ta-Hio*, was translated from the original Latin text and included as an appendix. Unfortunately, this edition and translation is full of mistakes and misinterpretations: the Latin edition also includes serious flaws, including misprints and misreadings of abbreviations. This is certified by manuscript Par. Lat. 6277 (= Par. 6277), which is now preserved at the BNF. Par. 6277 is the original manuscript written by Intorcetta, and was made for the grand purpose of publishing Chinese classics in Europe.

There are three reasons why Intorcetta translated *Chum-Yum* into Latin: first, to support missions to China, under the motto of ‘accommodation policy’; second, he was trying to introduce Chinese ideas of God and religion to European readers; third, and primarily, *Chum-Yum* was translated to defend Ricci’s accommodation policy, which had been strongly criticized by Longobardi and Naverette. Some textual evidence for this comes in Intorcetta’s dedication letter and eight commentaries which were totally deleted by Couplet in the Paris publication of *Confucius Sinarum* in 1687. The real author of the *praefatio* of Par. 1687 was not Couplet but Intorcetta, although the dedication letter to Louis XIV was written by Couplet. This is what I have to point out before continuing this paper, and with this brief observation, I will start to answer the question of whether Confucius can be regarded as a *Sinicus Cicero*. My answer to this question is ambivalent, and to clarify the issue, I need to look into the similarities and differences between Confucius and Cicero, making comparisons between the two, as well as between Confucius and Lactantius and between Confucius and Christian Wolff.

## 2 Confucius and Cicero

It is clear that Intorcetta read and understood *Chum-Yum* through the eyes of Cicero:

This book belongs to Confucius, but was edited by his grandson, named Cu-Su. It deals especially with the middle way or so-called golden rule, that is to be kept constantly, as Cicero would have it, between excess and parsimony in everything. For this reason, it is titled *Chum-Yum*. *Chum* signifies the middle, and *Yum* (meaning ordinary or everyday) refers here to a principle that should be kept constantly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Par. 6277 65. This and the following English translations of the manuscripts and Neolatin texts are of Jaewon Ahn.

It is useful look further at how to understand ‘as Cicero (*ut Cicero*)’ in detail. In this regard, I would point out first of all that Intorcetta’s understanding of the *Chum-Yum* concept is quite similar to Cicero’s idea of duty (*officium*). Intorcetta considered *Chum-Yum* not to be a mechanical or physical middle term; it is not a middle point between high and low, long and short, or strong and weak. Rather, it is considered to be a universal principle that is recognized in concrete situations and contexts:

p.2. §.1. This true and solid perfection is the very perfection of its own. This means, it is complete in itself. It is accomplished through itself. It cannot be distinguished from itself through other things. The rule is the rule of itself. According to this rule, other things are carried out and directed so that the rule itself should not be driven by other things. §.2. This true and solid principle or perfection is the end and beginning of all things. If this true and solid principle or perfection is absent, nothing will exist. In the same way an act without truth in morals is regarded not as a virtue but as a shade of virtue and a certain surface. For example, if a son obeys but without a true and sincere mind, he is to be regarded as not an obedient one. If a subject serves a king not with fidelity and truth, he cannot be considered to be faithful. On this account, a wise and good man estimates this true and solid perfection as the greatest.<sup>5</sup>

A key concept of *Chum-Yum* is *Xim* (誠), which is translated as *perfectio*. The *perfectio* here refers to the whole process from the beginning to the end of an action. *Chum-Yum* is never to be regarded as a middle concept in common understanding. It is interesting to see the similarity between how to distinguish *Chum* from *Yum* and how to differentiate Cicero’s *perfectum officium* from *medium officium*.

*Off. I.8*: And yet there is still another classification of duties: we distinguish between ‘mean’ duty, so-called, and ‘absolute’ duty. Absolute duty we may, I presume, call ‘right’, for the Greeks call it *kathorthôma*, while the ordinary duty they call *kathêkon*. And the meaning of those terms they fix thus: whatever is right they define as ‘absolute’ duty, but ‘mean’ duty, they say, is duty for the performance of which an adequate reason may be rendered.<sup>6</sup>

Undoubtedly, Intorcetta borrowed *perfectum* from Cicero’s *De officiis*. *Perfectum officium* corresponds to the *sive perfectio sive ratio* that is *rerum omnium finis et principium*. The *medium officium* is parallel to Confucius’ *regula*. Intorcetta interpreted this as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> Par. 6277 175–176.

<sup>6</sup> English translation here and in other quoted passages comes from Miller (1913).

The rule or way mentioned neither can nor should be absent or separated from human beings at any moment, for it is intrinsic to rational nature. But if at some time it can be absent or separated, it should no longer be a rule or an innate reason of nature from heaven.<sup>7</sup>

We should pay close attention to “an innate reason of nature from heaven” (*ratio a coelo naturae insita*). This is Intorcetta’s translation of 天命之謂性, which means that what is endowed to man from heaven is called a rational nature.<sup>8</sup> Cicero describes *ratio* like this:

First of all, nature has endowed every species of living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, of avoiding what seems likely to cause injury to life or limb, and of procuring and providing everything needful for life – food, shelter, and the like. (...) But the most marked difference between man and beast is this: the beast, just as far as it is moved by the senses and with very little perception of past or future, adapts itself to that alone which is present at that moment, while man, because he is endowed with reason, by which he comprehends the chain of consequences, perceives the cause of things, understands the relation of cause to effect and of effect to cause, draws analogies, and connects and associates the present and the future – easily surveys the course of his whole life and makes the necessary preparations for its conduct.<sup>9</sup>

More differences than similarities between Confucius and Cicero are to be discovered, if they are compared closely. On this matter, I would rather focus on Intorcetta’s remark ‘as Cicero’ in more detail. His description of the *vir perfectus* (君子) can be compared to Cicero’s *vir honestus*, who has not only possesses a *animus magnitudinis* but also a *animus moderationis* or a *animus temperantiae* to rule the appetites in his mind. Confucius observed:

Furthermore, this is why a perfect man is always carefully aware of himself and wary even of those who are not seen by his eyes, but just as subtle movements of the mind, and likewise why he fears and trembles at those who are heard by his ears in order not to turn aside from the rule of right reason stamped in himself at any moment, [whenever he has to take action.]<sup>10</sup>

Cicero describes what the *vir honestus* should be equipped with:

The appetites, moreover, must be made to obey the reins of reason and neither allowed to run ahead of it nor from listlessness or indolence to lag behind; but people should obey calm of soul and be free from every sort of passion. As a result, strength of character

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<sup>7</sup> Par. 6277 65.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>9</sup> *Off.* 1.11.

<sup>10</sup> Par. 6277 65.

and self-control will shine forth in all their lustre. For when appetites overstep their bounds and, galloping away, so to speak, whether in desire or aversion, are not well held in hand by reason, they clearly exceed overleap all bound and measure, for they throw obedience off and leave it behind and refuse to obey the reins of reason, to which they are subject by Nature's laws. And not only minds but bodies as well are disordered by such appetites. We need only to look at the faces of men in a rage or under the influence of some passion or fear or beside themselves with extravagant joy: in every instance their features, voices, motions, attitudes undergo a change.<sup>11</sup>

Confucius' provision "in order not to turn aside from the rule of right reason stamped in himself at any moment" (*ne momento quidem deflectat a norma rectae rationis sibi impressa*) corresponds to Cicero's "that the appetites should obey the reins of reason" (*ut appetitus rationi oboediant*). Thus far, it is not strange that Intorcetta compared Confucius with Cicero. The issue of affection will be discussed later, in which a greater difference can be seen between Confucius and Cicero. All in all, the claim of 'as Cicero' may be corroborated by looking at the following remark:

§.3. Confucius declares that the act of five universal rules depends on three cardinal virtues. Their efficacy rests, however, only on solidity and righteousness of mind. There are five universal and obvious rules (or ways) in the world. Those which are put into action are three. The five rules are (1) justice between king and subject, (2) love between parent and children, (3) distinction that should be laid between husband and wife, or faith in marriage, (4) order between brothers, and finally, (5) friendship and social duties that must be observed mutually between friends. These are five general ways and rules of the world. A distinction is made between good and bad, and love is universal to all; fortitude lies in doing good and avoiding and hating the bad; These are three general rules of the world, or cardinal virtues, through which the five rules are to be practiced. These three virtues are practiced through a single one, namely an earnest and true solidity of mind, or righteousness, since it will not be estimated as virtue but rather as vice, if any of the virtues mentioned should go forth from a feigned and deceptive mind.<sup>12</sup>

Intorcetta explained the four cardinal virtues, *gin, li, y, chi* (仁義禮智) in *Confucius Sinarum* in terms of Roman virtues: *Id est pietas, convenientia, iustitia et prudentia*.<sup>13</sup> This could lead us even to the illusion that we are reading some passages from Cicero's *De officiis*:

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<sup>11</sup> *Off.* 1.102.

<sup>12</sup> Par. 6277 150 – 151.

<sup>13</sup> In this regard, it is remarkable that Cicero's *humanitas* concept is systematically comparable with Mencius' human nature which consists of four sub-principles (四端): *probabilitas* (是非之心), *miser cordia* (惻隱之心), *liberalitas* (辭讓之心) and *urbanitas* (羞惡之心). To be sure, one should not overlook the fact that there are certain differences between them.



But all that is morally right rises from some one of four sources; it is concerned either with the full perception and intelligent development of the true; or with the conservation of organized society, with rendering to every man his due, and with the faithful discharge of obligations assumed; or with the greatness and strength of a noble and invincible spirit or with the orderliness and moderation of everything that is said and done, wherein consist temperance and self-control. Although these four are connected and interwoven, still it is in each one considered singly that certain definite kinds of moral duties have their origin; in that category, for instance, which was designated first in our division and in which we place wisdom and prudence, belong the search after truth and its discovery; and this is the peculiar province of that virtue.<sup>14</sup>

This citation makes it clear that Intorcetta's *Confucius Sinarum* may be compared systematically to e.g. *De officiis* of Cicero. The Latin version of *Kien* (謙) can be observed here:

Self-control in everyday life is moderating to the mind so it does not become swollen. It is achieved firstly by regulating oneself, and then then by checking in others whatever exceeds and goes beyond measure owing to arrogance and pride in power and dignity. On the contrary, it supplements and fulfills what is deficient and incomplete not only to oneself but also to others. Just like the needle of a scale it weighs with equity everything of one's own and others. In this manner it assigns each thing to its own with equity. It accommodates and moderates itself to each thing. It wisely raises high someone humble and places someone exalted in safety according to the dignity of each. It levels everything in order. It administrates everything constantly in felicity.<sup>15</sup>

### 3 Confucius and Lactantius

Hegel said: "Cicero gives us *De officiis*, a book of moral teaching more comprehensive and better than all the books of Confucius."<sup>16</sup> I agree with Hegel; however, one should be careful in that, e.g., *humanitas* in the translated *Confucius Sinarum* is not identical with Cicero's idea of *humanitas*,<sup>17</sup> and that Intorcetta attached the idea of *divinitas* to Cicero's *humanitas*; this is supported by Intorcetta's view on the *humanitas* of *Confucius Sinarum*, which is characterized by the fact that it comprises not only human nature itself but also the *divinitas* in human nature.

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<sup>14</sup> *Off.* 1.15–16.

<sup>15</sup> *Confucius Sinarum, praefatio*. LI.

<sup>16</sup> This is quoted from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/>. On this see, Kim (1978).

<sup>17</sup> On this see Ahn (2010).

For the philosopher, the sagest, realized only with the light of reason and nature that nothing was so obligatory to ancient people as religion. He applied his doctrine and discipline only to this purpose – that men could regulate their whole life according to the laws and precepts of the holy deity.<sup>18</sup>

It should be pointed out that Intorcetta supplemented eight essays to his translation of *Chum-Yum*, but these were completely deleted by Couplet during the publication of *Par. 1687*. The titles of the essays are:

*Dig. 1) An Sinae cognoverint et adorarint (coluerint corr. Couplet) spiritus.* ('Did the Chinese know and worship spirits?')

*Dig. 2) An nomine Xám (上), Tí (帝), prisci intellexerint coelum hoc materiale, an potius supremum coeli imperatorem?* ('Did the ancient Chinese understand by the name of *Xamti* (上) (帝) the material heaven or rather the highest ruler of heaven?').

*Dig. 3) Tum ratione, tum veterum autoritate plurimisque testimoniis probatur Priscos Sinas non fuisse penitus (om. Couplet) ignaros Supremi Numinis: creberrime item voce coelum ad Numen hoc significandum fuisse usos.* ('It can be proved either by rational account or by the authority of ancient people and widespread evidence that the ancient Chinese were not among those who were ignorant of the highest divine will. They frequently used this word for heaven, in order to signify this divine will'.)

*Dig. 4) De Sinensium sortibus, auguriis atque prognosticis.* ('On fortune telling, auguries and prognostics')

*Dig. 5) De Sinarum litteris* ('On Chinese letters').

*Dig. 6) De Sinensium musica* ('On Chinese music').

*Dig. 7) Quid senserint prisci Sinae de animorum immortalitate?* ('What did the ancient Chinese think about the immortality of souls?')

*Dig. 8) An in Sinarum libris mentio quoque fiat praemii poenaeve quae post hanc vitam proborum vel improborum meritis respondeant?* ('Is there in Chinese books any mention of reward or penalty to repay the deeds of the good and the bad after death?')

Here is not the place to address the question of why Couplet omitted these precious essays of Intorcetta. However, I point out here that a significant difference between Couplet and Intorcetta is apparent on the *divinitas* issue. Couplet introduced Confucius to European readers as a mundane philosopher, while Intorcetta considered him to be a religious sage. This is made clear by Couplet's deletion of Intorcetta's opinion of Confucius:

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<sup>18</sup> *Par. 1687, epist. 3.*

Indeed in Europe, where already Socrates and followers of Plato have fallen, and where followers of Seneca and Plutarch have become unrecognized, is it a vain wish that our Chinese Epictetus will restore praise for them? **(It would be better that I call him Trismegistus, because he appears to have described his secret thoughts with laconic brevity rather than having expressed them in hieroglyphic notes.)**<sup>19</sup>

The sentence highlighted in bold is deleted by Couplet. In this regard, among others I would concentrate on comparing the *amor universalis erga omnes* that refers to *ren* (仁) using the *natura* concept of Cicero.

There is therefore an element that holds the whole world together and preserves it, and this an element possessed of sensation and reason; since every natural object that is not a homogeneous and simple substance but a complex and composite one must contain within it some ruling principle, for example in man the intelligence, in the lower animals something resembling intelligence that is the source of appetite. With trees and plants the ruling principle is believed to be located in the roots. I use the term ‘ruling principle’ as the equivalent of the Greek *hêgemonikon*, meaning that part of anything which must and ought to have supremacy in a thing of that sort. Thus it follows that the element which contains the ruling principle of the whole of nature must also be the most excellent of all things and the most deserving of authority and sovereignty over all things. Now we observe that the parts of the world (and nothing exists in all the world which is not a part of the whole world) possess sensation and reason. Therefore it follows that that part which contains the ruling principle of the world must necessarily possess sensation and reason, and there is a more intense and higher form. Hence it follows that the world possess wisdom, and that the element which holds all things in its embrace is pre-eminently and perfectly rational, and therefore that the world is god, and all forces of the world are held together by the divine nature.<sup>20</sup>

*Hêgemonikon* may be compared with the *amor universalis* of Confucius, who declares:

§.3. That virtue and universal love, named *Gin* (仁), is not something external but human itself, or a proper and innate facet of human nature. It orders us to love everyone. To love is human nature.<sup>21</sup>

As cited, however, *hêgemonikon* is closer to the *Li* (理) or *Taizi* (太極) of the Neo-Confucians than to the *Ren* (仁) of Confucius. On this matter, Couplet argued:

<sup>19</sup> Par. 6277 IX.

<sup>20</sup> *Nat. D.* 2.29–30. English translation is of Rackham/Warmington (1967).

<sup>21</sup> Par. 6277 114.

The fact that they consider the pure material as the prime matter just like our philosophers is confirmed by the argument that they add another name to *Taiji*, namely *Li*. The word *li* in Chinese means just the same as the word *ratio* in Latin – this is very widely known. They explain *Taiji* again with this word *li* for confirming that the essential differences between things come from this single *ratio (=li)*, even arguing philosophically that they are building a certain universal entity as a part of a thing. In the same way this universal entity penetrates through particular and individual things. On this basis it is more reasonable to suppose that they truly understand by *li* a certain reason or a constitutive and distinctive form, just as they understand primary matter through the word *Taiji*.<sup>22</sup>

Here we can see clearly just how different from one another Intorcetta and Couplet are, as Intorcetta is opposed to the approach of reading *Chum-Yum* from the perspective of materialism. Intorcetta read *Chum-Yum* in this way:

The title and argument of this small book is *Chum-Yum*, meaning medium or the constancy of the golden mean. Confucius' grandson Cu-Su published the book and added some of his own ideas, but much of the book is lost; it seems to be more a collection of fragments than a fully formed book. Because of this, and because the sublimity of doctrine handed down seems to go beyond human nature, Chinese teachers regard the book as obscure and difficult to understand. Even though it comes second in order, they teach it last in school. Meanwhile (as I said above) it is undoubtedly useful for missionaries. It is excellent, in so far as it shows the light of truth to the natural light cast down by dark vices. It will open the way and offer a leading light for missionaries.<sup>23</sup>

The term “obscure” (*subobscurum*), is well-known as a description referring to topics in astronomy, metaphysics, and theology. Also, it is a translation of 夫微之顯 (*Chum-Yum* ch. 16) meaning ‘the uncovering of sacred mystery’. In connection with this, Intorcetta interpreted chapter 16 of *Chum-Yum* in this way:

Even this subtlety of spirits is concealed, but it is also manifested through the spirits' accomplishments. Even though spirits are concealed in themselves, it is evident that it cannot be hidden actually. It is so manifest.<sup>24</sup>

In a word, Intorcetta summarized *Chum-Yum* as a text of ‘true and supreme divinity’ (*Veri Summiquae Numinis*, sp. 1215). This leads us to the conviction that he read *Chum-Yum* not only as Cicero but also as a Christian. The question is how he really did read and understand *Chum-Yum*. Interestingly, he makes one mention of Lactantius:

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<sup>22</sup> Par. 1687 LVI-LVII.

<sup>23</sup> *Analecta Monumentorum* (1668). sp. 1215–1216.

<sup>24</sup> Par. 6277 84.

Even though other authorities are at hand for young beginners of these missions and they can attack atheists with these, or else kill them with their swords, (since Chinese people can be strongly refuted only by the Chinese themselves, just as one has to refute Cicero with Cicero, as Lactantius said). It is sufficient here to indicate some passages and to suggest some texts among many where the concept of spirits, and reverence for them, are mentioned clearly and plainly.<sup>25</sup>

It is remarkable that Intorcetta tried to read *Chum-Yum* with the eyes of Lactantius. For instance, he observed:

As they named *Xam-Ti* using two words, indeed they taught it as something incorporeal, eternal, immense, infinite, most perfect, clearly the creator and master of heaven and earth. Perhaps just as it could be safely called *theos* among Athenians and *deus* among the Romans and by Paul, it can safely be called *Xam-Ti* among the Chinese, because this name means literally and from its own primary establishment, the highest ruler and master of heaven. If this is so, you may ask, is there any reason for you not to use *Tien-Chu*, already used far and wide, or *Xam-Ti*?<sup>26</sup>

We may compare with this the remarks of Lactantius on God:

There is then one God, perfect, eternal, incorruptible, passionless, subject to no circumstance or power; possessing all things, ruling all things, one whom the mind of man cannot assess nor mortal tongue describe. He is too lofty, too great, to be comprehended in thought or word of man. Finally (not to speak of prophets, preachers of the one God), both poets and philosophers testify to one God. Orpheus speaks of a principal God, creator of heaven and earth, of sun and stars, of land and sea. Moreover, our poet Vergil calls the supreme God now spirit, now mind, declaring that mind, as though poured into limbs, sets in motion the body of the whole world; that God passes over seas and lands and through the depths of heaven, and that from Him all creatures derive their life. Even Ovid knew that the world was made by God, whom he calls now the framer, now the architect, of all things.<sup>27</sup>

The comparison makes it clear that Intorcetta's way of interpreting *Chum-Yum* is very similar to the thought of Lactantius. The concepts of *Tien-Chu* (天主) and *Xam-Ti* (上帝) are to be understood as similar to Lactantius' idea of God, and thus Confucius, in Intorcetta's understanding, is to be regarded not only as a Cicero but also as a Christian. Finally, I add *philosophus modernus* as the third attribute of Confucius. The name of Christian Wolff deserves to be introduced here.

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25 Par. 6277 85.

26 Par. 6277 106.

27 *Epit. Div. inst. divinarum* 1.3. English translation comes from Blakeney (1950).

## 4 Confucius and Wolff

Christian Wolff was a very significant Sinophile. It is noteworthy to see how he read *Confucius Sinarum*. Wolff mentions Confucius explicitly:

(39) Confucius himself considers harmony with the rational nature of actions to be the norm. He declares at f. 40 in the book *Chum-Yum*, the second book of Chinese science, that which is modified reason is the law, from which every action is to be derived, and it is also proper to rationality; the discipline of virtue consists of this, such that we and our actions should be conducted according to it.<sup>28</sup>

In this regard, it should be pointed out that Wolff's statement is essentially identical to that of *Confucius Sinarum*. This is made evident in the following comparison:

| <i>Confucius Sinarum</i>   | Wolff  |
|--|--|
| <i>Id quod a caelo est homini inditum dicitur natura rationalis: quod huic conformatur natura et eam consequitur, dicitur regula, seu consentaneum rationi, restaurare quoad exercitium hanc regulam se suaque per eam moderando, dicitur institutio, seu disciplina virtutum.</i> <sup>29</sup> | <i>quod naturae rationali conformatur, illud esse regulam, juxta quam actiones dirigendae, idem esse rationi consentaneum, et virtutis disciplinam in eo consistere, ut nos et nostra per eam moderemur.</i> <sup>30</sup> |

As we see here, Wolff used almost the same words as Confucius. Wolff's words *rationi consentaneum* recall Confucius' *regula, seu consentaneum rationi*. Wolff appropriated the remark *consentaneum passionum*, or *cum ipsa ratione contentus* in *Confucius Sinarum* to *harmonia animae ac corporis* in *Psychologia Rationalis*. He defines *natura rationalis* in *Confucius Sinarum* as objective moral discipline.<sup>31</sup> The reason why he tried to introduce *Confucius* was to make it clear that moral principles and political discipline are grounded in *natura humana*, not in *gratia divina*. On this basis, Wolff began to establish *Psychologia rationalis*. What is emphasized is that the rules of morality or ethics should serve for appetites or desires. To be sure, this is now a much-popularized view, but it was not such a simple matter at the time when Wolff lived, because human desires were controlled

<sup>28</sup> *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* 130.

<sup>29</sup> Par. 6277 65.

<sup>30</sup> *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* 130.

<sup>31</sup> *Oratio de Sinarum philosophia practica* 128: *Actionum honestatem et turpitudinem intrinsicam, quam moralitatem objectivam vocarunt.*

and regulated by the churches. According to Wolff, controlling one's desires is not a matter for the Church, but a matter of '*sibi conscius*'. In this point, it should not be overlooked that Wolff did not aim at designing a theory of psychology in the modern sense. Rather, he strove to provide a moral principle that was rooted in *natura humana*. Consequently, Wolff's *psychologia* is basically parallel to *Simhak* (心學). Let us listen to Wolff's own voice:

*Psychologia Rationalis* embodies a sublime philosophy, which leads to a deeper cognition of our mind. A sublime science of sublime things is properly required for sublime natures. This science nourishes *the spirit* with its delight. Even though self-knowledge was sometimes recommended by saints in past ages, it should be recommended particularly to know the innermost and noblest part of our mind, because from this a certain light of acquaintance not only of universal nature but also of the very originator himself, of the most wise and mighty deity, shines brightly in an unexpected way. In addition, this knowledge provides protection to each single virtue; this is what nobody knows unless it is experienced. What indeed is more delightful, what is more desirable than to see inwardly the nature of things, that admirable function which the supreme Master brought about for the purpose of acknowledging himself and to look upon the Master himself in it just as in the mirror?<sup>32</sup>

The 'self-cognition' (*cognitio sui*) is identified in the following passage from *Chum-Yum*:

What belongs to movements of mind is almost like those things which are not visible, because they are hidden and known only to one's own mind. They are in the same way like what is not manifest, because they are exceedingly subtle and quite minuscule. Therefore, the *vir perfectus* watches so carefully over his heart in secret and is very cautious about those innermost things which only he himself sees. This leads us to the fact that, even though the inner and secret parts of our heart are invisible and hidden from others, they are nevertheless evident to our own mind.<sup>33</sup>

The term self-cognition (*sibi conscius*) is noteworthy in that it later became used as a vital concept in modern psychology. Textual evidence is found in the following:

*Psychologia Rationalis* is examined in a scientific way [and from a scientific perspective], and through this way, what is made known about the human mind in dubious certainty

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32 *Psychologia rationalis, Praefatio 2.*

33 Par. 6277 66.

of experience is explained through the essence and nature of mind, and is published to be useful for cognition of our innermost nature and its performer.<sup>34</sup>

The remark “for cognition of our innermost nature and its performer” (*ad intimiorem naturae ejusque auctoris cognitionem*) refers to a specific form of self-cognition (*sibi conscius*). The Latin word *consciis* is used in the sense of *Gewissen*. *Sibi conscius* here is the same as *cognitio sui*. On this point caution is required, because Wolff’s idea of *cognitio sui* is closer to the notion of *cordis sui* in *Confucius Sinarum*, in which was highlighted the importance of practice in real life. This is evident in the passage ‘the *vir perfectus* watches carefully over his heart in secret and is very cautious for inner things which only he himself sees innermost’ (*ideoque perfectus vir tam sollicito invigilat cordis sui secreto et cautus est in internis quae solus ipse intuetur*). According to Dyck (2011) 2, Wolff’s most important ideas are based on the philosophy of Leibnitz, especially regarding the question of the discovery of cognition (*Entdeckung des Bewusstseins*). Testimonies provided by Dyck for this are chapters 208 and 214 of *Philosophical Essays*. To be sure, Leibniz was a very important philosopher for Wolff, but to argue further, Leibniz’s *Nouveaux essais sur l’entendement humain* was published in 1765, even though it had been completed in 1704. Wolff died in 1754, and so the question can be raised of whether Wolff indeed read this book. He might have read a manuscript, or he might have known about it through letters. As seen above, however, one should be cautious about whether Wolff’s philosophy was basically founded on that of Leibniz. All in all, the remark ‘the highest master’ (*artifex summus*) reminds us of the *vir perfectus* in *Scientia Sinica*. In addition to this, the word *speculum* (mirror) is noteworthy, because it echoes the ‘the cleanest mirror’ (*limpidissimum speculum*) in the *Scientiae Sinicae Liber Primus (Ta-hio)*.

The pinnacle of learning for great men is to polish or refine the rational nature bestowed on them from heaven in order that this can restore them to a primitive stage of clarity by removing the stains of crooked desires, just like the cleanest mirror. Next, it is to renew or to revive people through their own example and exhortation. Finally, it is to stand firmly or to persist in the supreme good.<sup>35</sup>

Wolff also uses the metaphor of a mirror in *German Metaphysics* (1719) 729:

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34 *Psychologia rationalis, praefatio 2: Psychologia Rationalis, methodo scientifica pertractata, qua ea, quae de Anima humana in dubia experientiae fide innotescunt, per essentiam et naturam animae explicantur, ad intimiorem naturae ejusque auctoris cognitionem profutura proponuntur.*

35 Par. 6277 1–2.



I am conscious that I see the mirror not merely when I distinguish the various parts that I see in it from another, but rather when I also represent to myself the distinction of the mirror from other things that I either see at the same time or saw shortly before.

As we saw in the above, however, it is difficult to find Wolff's self-concept in *Confucius Sinarum*. Nevertheless, the mirror idea of *Confucius Sinarum* is very similar to that of Wolff. To be sure, there is also a certain difference between Wolff and Confucius. Wolff's mirror is characterized by the fact that it functions as a cognitive mechanism, while that of Confucius is not a simple metaphor but a medium which embeds 'natural reason' (*natura rationalis*, 明德). What must be pointed out is that Wolff's *Psychologia* is a systematic and analytic theory which focuses on describing and categorizing the function and structure of mind or soul, clearly from a Western perspective. In a word, however, Confucius does not present such a theory. According to Dyck, anyway, Wolff's *psychologia* was a kind of *Vorlage* for Kant's critical philosophy. On this point, it is necessary to emphasize that one of the main reasons for his writing *Psychologia* was to establish some important moral-political values which were independent of the Church.

Nothing so sublime is given [to us] by Nature. This is what you need not to enlarge, to amplify, or to complete intentionally, so that you publish documents on those virtues still in the early stage of growth. These documents carry all the points needed for governing the country wisely and successfully. In particular, even the love of [our] ancestors for the profound sciences, through which secrets of Nature and scholarship are revealed, promoted such deep-bottomed roots in minds in order that they would be under an obligation to promise confidently that they will claim [our] minds to cultivate themselves, however many they are.<sup>36</sup>

Interestingly, Wolff clarifies the main aim of his text as demonstrating moral principles based in the human mind. It may be difficult to say that his aim arrived at its own *telos*, at least with his *Psychologia* project – it was Immanuel Kant who accomplished that; to show this, it is sufficient just to mention the *Kategorischer Imperativ*. But Kant does not call the moral principles external powers or conditions like religion; he does suggest seeking for reason and rationality in one's inner court. So far, it may not be by chance that one can see the similarities commonly found between Kant and Confucius, because the pure reason of Kant functions in a similar way to the natural reason of Confucius. At least, pure reason does not depend on religion. Rational nature also functions *per se* without any external condition. The rational nature of Confucius is distinct from Kant's

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<sup>36</sup> *Psychologia rationalis, praefatio 2.*

pure reason in that it was seeded from heaven and therefore was not a pure and simple thing. Thus, it is difficult to say that the *vir perfectus* has free will and autonomy (*voluntas libera et autonomia*), which are essential characteristics of Kantian philosophy, because he should always observe the laws of heaven (天命) assiduously. This may be a reason why Jesuit missionaries make a great effort to find similarities to Christianity in Confucius. On this issue, however, it is worth drawing a comparison between Kant's idea of autonomy and 'self-satisfying' (*sibi satisfaciens*, 慎獨) in *Confucius Sinarum*,<sup>37</sup> since one can ask the question concerning free will (*voluntas libera*) in the moment of 'self-satisfying' (*sibi satisfaciens*), even though it may be a problem of translation in this case. The Latin word *satis* (慎, so translated by Costa or by Intorcetta) is closely related to the idea of 'will' (*voluntas*), because the Latin word *satis-facere* refers to a decision based on *voluntas libera*. Up to this point, all in all, rational nature differs from pure reason on both points, pure rationality and free will. As for the question of religion, however, one can find some structural similarity between *Confucius Sinarum* and *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloßen Vernunft*. If this is the case, discussion is open, even though they are evidently different from one another. Especially on this issue, it is good to make a comparison between Kant and Cheung Dasan (丁茶山), because Kant might have read or at least heard about *Confucius Sinarum*, while Dasan had also read some important Chinese translations of Aristotle and the Ancient and New Testament.

## 5 Conclusion

To conclude, three stylistical colors that cannot be grasped in the original Chinese text are observed in Intorcetta's translation of *Chum-Yum*. One is *color Ciceronis*, another is *color Lactantii* and the third is *color philosophi moderni ut Wolffiani*. All in all, the issue of color leads to the question of how to read the Latin *Chum-Yum*. On a related issue, Zhang Si-Ping (張西平), a leading scholar in China, argues thus. First, *Confucius Sinarum* is to be read from the perspective of Christianity. Second, *Confucius Sinarum* is an answer to ritual discussions of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Third, it is a text which takes a critical position, particularly on Neo-Confucianism. Zhang concludes that *Confucius Sinarum* is a product that resulted from a misreading and misunderstanding of Chinese classical texts, but that it still provides us with a significant contribution for studying the interrelated history of China and Europe. *Grosso modo*, I agree with Zhang's arguments.

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37 Cf. *Scientiae Sinicae*, §2. f. 6. 2: *Huiusmodi dicitur sibi satisfaciens, seu se ipso contentus.*

There are, however, three points on which I do not agree with him. First, while Zhang believes that Jesuit missionaries tried to read the original Chinese texts of Confucius with Christian eyes, *Confucius Sinarum* is full of *termini technici* from Cicero and Stoic philosophy. Second, Zhang maintains that one has to be cautious in the interpretation of *Confucius Sinarum* because it is a ‘metamorphic’ (變異) text. I believe that it would be better to ask how to approach this metamorphic text. For this purpose, while Zhang suggests that readers should have some basic understanding of Christianity, I would add that some profound understanding of Western, and in particular, Hellenistic philosophy, is needed because the problems of *metamorphosis* in *Confucius Sinarum* mostly result from the so-called *abusio* problem that arose in borrowing, e.g., Cicero’s terms. As for Zhang’s estimation of *Confucius Sinarum*, at the end of the day, I am not sure whether it is a product of misreading because, according to a close reading of the original Latin text, *Confucius Sinarum* is a *metamorphosis* text in the Ovidian sense as well as a hybrid text because it allows at least three different modes of interpretation. In this regard, Intorcetta certified explicitly that *Confucius Sinarum* was a metamorphic text or at least a kind of compound text of both Eastern and Western philosophy, in the remark *nostrates scientias, ad quas nos iam suam ipsorum philosophiam adjunxissemus*. An example of this is Wolff’s term *psychologia*, which might be influenced by the *natura* concept in *Scientiae Sinicae Liber Secundus*, since Wolff’s concept *psychologia* is structurally compared with the *natura* concept in *Scientiae Sinicae Liber Secundus* (中庸). We should point out that Wolff’s *psychologia* is an idea which cannot be understood from a viewpoint of modern psychology. In my view, it is a concept which stands nearer to the *natura* concept of *Scientiae Sinicae Liber Secundus*. Anyway, the term did not come into popular use until Wolff used it in his *Psychologia Empirica* (1732) and *Psychologia Rationalis* (1734). In this regard, I would remark that the *natura* (性) concept in *Scientiae Sinicae Liber Secundus* is neither identical with the *anima* concept of Aristotle, nor with the understanding of *anima* in scholastic tradition. It is, in a way, a ‘hybrid’ concept: because, on the one hand, the term *natura* in the translation can be compared to the term *psychologia*, while on the other, the two are not completely identical. From this it is certain that the term *natura* in the translation is still unique in western philosophy, and *Confucius Sinarum* is, in my view, a ‘crossbreed’ text. Finally, I would ask once again, is Confucius a *Sinicus Cicero*? The answer is still uncertain. However, it is certain that he deserves still to be discussed in global perspective, because the Confucius in *Confucius Sinarum* spoke about the human condition in general, not only about *homo sinensis* from a national perspective. In my view, Confucius Latinus at least is to be considered not only a *philosophus Sinensis* but also a *philosophus universalis*. In the present day, some thinkers like Pierre Hadot

and Jeremy Rifkin have suggested seeking unity between mind and body. Scholars like ourselves today try to find a new way of human understanding through classical texts that remain important for sustaining and building civilizations. Unpopular though it may be, I think *Confucius Sinarum* is a good candidate for the role of a bridge between East and West. Who knows in the end what kind of a new philosophy will be born from a free reading of *Confucius Sinarum* in this global age?



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**D Key concepts: philosophy, literature and culture**



Christian Høgel

## ***Humanitas*: Universalism, equivocation, and basic criterion**

The Western world, or to be more precise the Latinate world, has deeply embedded within its language and thought a notion of *humanitas*, of humanity or, perhaps better expressed in English, of the humane. This notion covers immense ground, reaches into numerous discussions about human rights, humanitarian aid, humanistic studies or the humanities, and is at the bottom of many fundamental ethical and political arguments. Despite its far-reaching importance, the very concept itself has received surprisingly little academic attention, and in general only from the field of philology, the background of the present author, and – to some degree – from scholars in the history of ideas.<sup>1</sup> Few real philosophers or political scientists have taken up the concept in its complete range, and the reason for this is probably that the concept is messy: it contains or revolves around what could be labelled an equivocation. Here, equivocation does not imply mistake, but the fact that in the concept of *humanitas* we find things that are not the same, or not really the same, and yet they appear under the same name. And being a case of equivocation, a discussion of the concept of *humanitas* needs to focus in some detail on certain linguistic features and by consequence, due to its Latin origin, also on the ancient notion and use of *humanitas*, not least as found in the writings of Cicero, if we want to see the full picture.

But, in tracing the origins of the concept, we need to accept from the start that we cannot completely tidy up the mess and that we may end up with accepting a divide between conceptual precision on the one hand and getting the best out of a traditional manner of speaking on the other. And this traditional manner of speaking, so embedded in, e. g., the English language, the language of the present text, is almost unavoidably connected to particular interests despite its idealistic and universal claims. In fact, in dealing with the concept of *humanitas*, with its far-reaching influence in a Western and, from the twentieth century onwards also, in a global perspective, it is crucial that we come to realize its fundamentally ideological aspects. To state this ideological core briefly – but we shall return to it – the Latin/Western concept of *humanitas* combines and may denote separately 1. a common reference to man or mankind, in a sort of universal spirit, 2. a legal-ethical standard for the correct manner of interaction be-

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<sup>1</sup> Reitzenstein (1907), Heinemann (1931), Büchner (1961), Klingner (1965), Snell (1975), Koselleck (1979), Bödeker (1982), Veyne (1993), Bauman (2000).



tween people, and 3. some notion of the potentiality of men to reach such a standard through education and/or rational thinking. These three notions are all to be found in the writings of Cicero, even within the same literary work, and yet they stand in some opposition to each other. How can a universal reference to mankind at the same time be an indication of the ethically correct (as opposed to the ethically wrong)? Are not all human beings part of mankind regardless of their behaviour or education? And these are just questions that can be put at the most general level. This, however, is not to say that the implied notions in *humanitas* make no sense. If supported by arguments, fundamental issues concerning the nature of mankind, the justification of laws and states, and the basic needs of education may receive substantial and crucial attention, and *humanitas* has since antiquity given rise to such. But the central problem in the Latin tradition is that a full discussion is never given of the concept, but is rather implied in the writings of Cicero, the fundamental user and perhaps to some degree inventor of the concept for all posterity. Through the centuries, *humanitas*, including in its various modern translations, has repeatedly entered phrasings and discussions, but with no clear philosophical support. A lack of clarity has accompanied its use, e.g., through employing without clear distinction one and the same word to refer to three fundamental spheres (mankind – correct behaviour – education), and this leads to what I call an equivocation. Philologists and historians of ideas may know this, but despite the centrality of the concept for modern issues, many others do not.

And when modern philosophers and political scientists do not question this aspect of *humanitas*, fields such as human rights, humanitarian aid, and humanistic studies come to be viewed as separate. Even if a historical analysis brings you back to the same basically Stoic origins, with Cicero as an important step in the further development of Greek ideas, the common historical meeting point of these fields is hardly ever discussed and problematized. And yet they have – in a Latinate context – been tied to each other from a very early point. And it should be stressed that the claim here is not that the content of human rights, of humanitarian aid, or of humanistic studies are in any special way linked to the Latin language or to the Latin tradition. People have been ethical, altruistic, literate, and wise within any linguistic or cultural sphere on the planet. But it is a thing peculiar to the Latin language to make this narrow combination and to coin one central concept to encompass all these fields and to equate them conceptually with mankind in all its universality. As is often stated in works on *humanitas*, no equivalent concept ever developed in ancient Greek, or in Greek before the modern period. Greek philosophers asked all the fundamental questions reflected in *humanitas*, but they never came upon the idea to make one word cover all these aspects. Instead they talked of things such

as *anthrōpos/anthropotes* ('man/mankind'), *philanthropia* ('philanthropy', e.g. of a ruler) or *paideia* ('education/Bildung'). The same goes – per the contention of the present author – for practically all other languages preceding the Latin tradition. And again it is not the claim that other languages or cultures did not have the notions implied in *humanitas*. What they did not have, as opposed to Latin and the languages that copied Latin, was the combination in *one* word of a universal definition ('mankind') with an ideal ethical-legal standard ('correct humane behaviour') and a notion of fundamental education (*studia humanitatis*). This combination is unique to Latin and the languages that took over its manner of expression, that took over the concept of *humanitas*.

In a sense, we could simply take note of this particular – originally Latin, later widely diffused Western – use of one word and say that as is known from so many other cases, words may carry more than one meaning, and it makes little sense to insist on attempting to make a bridge between the meanings. The English word 'kind' may mean 'friendly' (e.g. a *kind* woman), but it may also mean 'type' or 'sort' (what *kind* of? what type of?). This does not lead to an intellectual discussion about the word *kind*. But in the case of *humanitas* a discussion is needed, because one of its meanings is often used to support or argue for another meaning. It is – to state such an argument in English – quite easy to argue that human beings should treat other human beings 'humanely', as this seems to be supported almost in its very wording. It may also be argued that the humanities are needed, for if not we lose our humanity, and so on. And these arguments are in no way groundless. What is being singled out here is the simple fact that since English has inherited the Latin use of 'humane', 'humanities/humanity' etc., it is possible in English to construct arguments that go very much along the lines of Cicero's restatement of Stoic thinking, a restatement that inserted the word *humanitas* (and the related adjective *humanus* etc.) into strong argumentative positions, that are also focused on values.

In the following, some examples will be given of these positions in Cicero's works, in support of the claim that it actually all goes back to Cicero. And here a central reason why the concept of *humanitas* has become so central in the Western tradition springs simply from the fact that in the more than twenty centuries since his death, Cicero's works have had millions of readers, and among them many enthusiastic readers. This is evident in ancient Rome, not least from the opposition that his writings evoked at the arrival of Christianity. Later, in the European renaissance, Cicero rose from being a praised stylist to becoming a central literary figure, with Ciceronians appearing in many places. Much has been written about his importance among especially Italian *umanisti*, but it will here be the contention that it is in the writings of Erasmus of Rotterdam that the full argumentative potentials in the concept of *humanitas* became revitalized,

and with fundamental consequences for the Latin/Western tradition. Through increasing globalization in our time during the last centuries, this Latinate tradition has left its marks in discussions all over the world.

We will briefly go through some central examples in Cicero's writings, comment upon the reactions of the church father Lactantius, and then jump to Erasmus. Finally, some words on modern practice and perhaps future dealings with the concept will round off this presentation.

In his *De oratore* (composed 55 BCE), Cicero depicts a discussion taking place between some Roman *nobiles* just before the outbreak of the Social war, the *Bellum sociale* (91–88 BCE). The whole scene, at the villa of Crassus, is fraught with liveliness but also with impending gloom, and in backdating a discussion that Cicero could have had with his contemporary peers, an argument of the good old days is established. In these good old days, the many sides of *humanitas* were still to be seen reflected in daily life and practice. Of all his works, the *De oratore* is the work in which Cicero tries to establish an argument based on the evocation of the many meanings of *humanitas*. In fact, Cicero is evoking the lost world of political debate before the rise of Roman civil wars. Here mankind, kindness, and education could, at least according to Cicero, rightfully be indicated by one word, *humanitas*. In the following quotations, all from the first book of the *De oratore*, these separate meanings of *humanitas* will be underlined through translating each instance with a clear, specific word in English. In fact, it often happens in translations of Latin texts that the word *humanitas* does not become 'humanity' in English but is translated with some more specific word. Such modern translations therefore give modern readers no idea of the importance of the concept of *humanitas* in the writings of Cicero. But here the Latin text will appear along English translations:<sup>2</sup>

*De oratore* 1.12.53<sup>3</sup>

*Quare, nisi qui naturas hominum, vimque omnem **humanitatis**, causasque eas, quibus mentes incitantur aut reflectuntur, penitus perspexerit, dicendo quod volet perficere non poterit.*

Therefore, unless you have fully perceived the natures of human beings and the whole force of **mankind**, and the reasons why the minds are incited or deflected, you will not be able to achieve what you want through your words.

Cicero here explains why the orator has to know how people are and react, to know their hearts, so to speak, in order to be able to convince them. So here *hu-*

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<sup>2</sup> All translations are by the present author.

<sup>3</sup> For editions and translations of the works of Cicero, see e.g. Loeb Classics Library since 1911.

*manitas* means ‘mankind’, ‘human beings in general’, as the audience one may be talking to in general will include all sorts of people.

*De oratore* 1.8.32

... *quid esse potest in otio aut iucundius aut magis proprium **humanitatis** quam sermo facetus ac nulla in re rudis?*

... what can in a moment of leisure be more delightful or a better mark of **education** than a well-phrased and in no way uncouth speech?

This quotation discusses *humanitas* as something like ‘education’, for the speech that is here recommended cannot simply reflect the fact that the speaker is a human being. The second half of the comparison describes what is the mark of this *humanitas*: refined – i.e., educated – speech.

*De oratore* 1.23.106

*Equidem te cum in dicendo semper putavi deum, tum vero tibi numquam eloquentiae maiorem tribui laudem quam **humanitatis**: qua nunc te uti vel maxime decet, neque defugere eam disputationem, ad quam te duo excellentis ingenii adolescentes cupiunt accedere.*

But just as I have always deemed you a god in the field of rhetoric, I have never praised you more for your eloquence than for your **kindness**; and it is fitting that you now employ that quality and do not avoid the discussion that our two bright young men want you to engage in.

Scaevola is imploring Crassus to take up the discussion that the young participants in the discussion are asking for, and he presupposes his willingness based on Crassus’ *humanitas*. Neither being human nor education can by themselves be guarantees of such; rather it must be some moral/ethical obligation – a kindness – that is invoked in this passage of the *De oratore*.

As you see, *humanitas* appears in the same text in all three indicated meanings and, as a reading of the *De oratore* will show, even in central passages that set the scene and the content of the depicted debate. To the Latinate reader these aspects would combine into an argument, a positive understanding of all three aspects, supporting each other. And in separate passages throughout the rest of the text Cicero will offer partial definitions (man is characterized in opposition to animals by his rationality, laws and education are part of man’s civilizing process, etc.<sup>4</sup>), but there appears no explanation as to why these aspects have the name.

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<sup>4</sup> See especially *De orat.* 1.9.35, 1.16.71, 1.23.106 (rationality); and the passage from 1.41.85 to 1.42.191 (civilizing process).

All through his career, Cicero invoked *humanitas* as an argument. In the *Pro Roscio* (80 BCE) the very concluding sentence is that unless the defendant was acquitted (and the true perpetrators found), “we lose from our souls all sense of *humanitas*”.<sup>5</sup> Here the ethical-legal meaning is clearly indicated, even if the context gives us little possibility of asserting this, given that it is the very last words of the speech. In his speeches against Verres, a governor accused of looting his province (70 BCE), Cicero highlighted the *humanitas* of Verres’ provincial hosts, opposing this to the utter lack of *humanitas* that Verres was showing.<sup>6</sup> For, even though former Roman leaders such as Marcellus and Scipio had been perfect exemplars of how to treat provincial minions humanely, Verres did not follow their lead and instead robbed and looted his province. He therefore fell below the standards of *humanitas*. Some years later, in 62 BCE, in his defence of the poet Archias, Cicero bases much of his argument in favour of seeing Archias as a person worthy of respect on Archias’ *humanitas*, here referring to his poetical skills. It is in discussing these that Cicero uses the compound *studia humanitatis* (lit. ‘the study of humanity’) to denote Archias’ activities. This compound later became a catch phrase and is at the bottom of why we still talk of ‘the humanities’.<sup>7</sup> Here *humanitas* implies something on top of general arguments in favour of Archias’ right to Roman citizenship, namely his status as an educated person. And such examples are found in plenty all through Cicero’s writings, also in passages of far less importance to the theme of the text, in which they appear. *Humanitas* and derivations of it became central to Cicero’s manner of speaking.

But, as indicated earlier, the interconnectedness of the universal meaning ‘mankind’ and at least of one of the more focused meanings of ‘kind’ and ‘educated’ makes the argument stronger and strengthens its full essence. It is hard to reject the claim that one should show *humanitas*, for rejecting it almost implies excepting oneself from ‘mankind’, the universal meaning of *humanitas*. And such casting out of the whole notion of mankind actually happens in Cicero’s writings, e. g. when he denigrates the Sicilian tyrant Phalaris, who was known for his sadistic punishments. In his *De officiis*, Cicero states that people like Phalaris may, like bodily members, be cut off and no longer be regarded as part of the body, the body of humanity (in the sense of ‘mankind’); in fact, Phalaris and his likes may

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<sup>5</sup> Cic., *Pro S. Rosc. Am.* 53.154: *sensum omnem humanitatis ex animis amittimus*.

<sup>6</sup> See e. g. *In Verrem* 2.1.17.46 and 2.4.44.98, and the discussions in Rothe (1978) and Schneider (1964).

<sup>7</sup> Cic., *Pro Archia* 2.3

rightfully be killed.<sup>8</sup> Here we see the mechanism of *humanitas* at work in its most ideologized way: be kind and educated, or you are no longer a member of the human race. The legal implications of this are of course serious. To make things clear, we must note that it is common, also outside the sphere of *humanitas*, to dehumanize, e. g., enemies by calling them ‘beasts’, ‘animals’ etc. and thereby implying that they are exempted from any kind of protection that the epithet human may give them. So, as we see, there is no need for the concept of *humanitas* for such denigrations to take place. But employing the concept gives a further support to this dehumanization.

Phalaris was to Cicero a historical character, though from Sicily, a place to which Cicero had special relations. These relations explain why he was the advocate chosen to accuse Verres, the former governor of Sicily. And, as is clear from two of the examples appearing above, Cicero was apt to use *humanitas* when defending the justice that he believed to be the basic or true mark of the empire, the Roman Empire. Verres fell below the standard of Marcellus and Scipio but also of some provincial hosts. *Humanitas* had a universality in its ethical claims that could be demanded of just about any person (or at least free citizen) in the empire. It was a moral standard, but it also meant a manner of talking that justified imperial ruling as long as it complied with these standards.<sup>9</sup> As for the status of slaves in view of Cicero’s constant reference to *humanitas*, an imagined scene appearing towards the end of Cicero’s *De officiis* is indicative. Reusing an imagined dilemma constructed by the Greek author Hekaton, Cicero asks “What would you do if you were on a sinking ship, and the only way to save yourself would be to throw overboard either an expensive horse or a

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<sup>8</sup> Cicero, *De off.* 3.32: *Nam quod ad Phalarim attinet, perfacile iudicium est. Nulla est enim societas nobis cum tyrannis et potius summa distractio est, neque est contra naturam spoliare eum, si possis, quem est honestum necare, atque hoc omne genus pestiferum atque impium ex hominum communitate exterminandum est. Etenim, ut membra quaedam amputantur, si et ipsa sanguine et tamquam spiritu carere coeperunt et nocent reliquis partibus corporis, sic ista in figura hominis feritas et immanitas beluae a communi tamquam humanitatis corpore segreganda est.* (For as concerns Phalaris, it is very easy to draw a verdict. We have no social bonds with tyrants, in fact there is rather complete separation, and it is not contrary to nature to take away, if you can, from the person whom it is rightful to kill, and one should in fact remove this whole pestiferous and impious sort of people from human society. For just as some members of the body are amputated, should they start lacking blood and life and are detrimental to the rest of the body, so should this wild and cruel monster in the shape of a man be removed from the common body of humanity).

<sup>9</sup> Rothe (1978).

cheap slave”.<sup>10</sup> Cicero then goes on by stating that if you put economy first you would save the horse, but if ‘*humanitas*’ then it would be the slave. Also in this story we see problems with the concept, for is it the implied humanity in the slave or is it the mildness of the slave-owner, or something else altogether, that would cause such a preference? Cicero does not tell us.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of *humanitas* had its critics already in the ancient world. Aulus Gellius decries in second half of the second century CE what he believes to be a wrong usage of the word, thereby showing exactly what he took the common (Ciceronian) usage to be, as we see in 13.17:<sup>12</sup>

*Qui verba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, ‘humanitatem’ non id esse voluerunt quod vulgus existimat quodque a Graecis φιλανθρωπία dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam benevolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscuam; sed ‘humanitatem’ appellaverunt id propemodum quod Graeci παιδείαν vocant, nos ‘eruditionem, institutionemque in bonas artes’ dicimus.*

Those who have shaped the Latin language and used it correctly did not want for *humanitas* to carry the meaning that people commonly think and which by the Greeks is called *philanthropia* and signifies some good ability or will towards all men indistinctly. They used the word *humanitas* to signify what the Greeks call *paideia*; what we call education and training in the (liberal) arts.

Gellius sets up two of the meanings of *humanitas* (‘kindness’ and ‘education’), rejecting the first (‘kindness’), approving the second (‘education’), but making no mention of the third (‘mankind’). But Gellius’ remarks reflect at least an awareness of distinct meanings in the same word and a personal stance supported by adducing the equivalent Greek terms. Gellius’ discussion, with or without the voiced criticism, recurs in many places during the renaissance and all through the centuries, not least in the encyclopaedic *Cornu copiae* of Perotti (1429–1480).<sup>13</sup> Likewise, we find *studia humanitatis* used as a common reference to learned studies in many places. It is important, however, to distinguish between the places where such Ciceronian expressions simply enter standardized language and where the argumentative implications are either reused or op-

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**10** Slightly paraphrasing the original, which goes as follows (Cicero, *De officiis* 3.89): *Plenus est sextus liber de officiis Hecatonis talium quaestionum, sitne boni viri in maxima caritate ammonae familiam non alere. In utramque partem disputat, sed tamen ad extremum utilitate, ut putat, officium dirigit magis quam humanitate. Quaerit, si in mari iactura facienda sit, equine pretiosi potius iacturam faciat an servuli vilis. Hic alio res familiaris, alio ducit humanitas.*

**11** See the discussion in Høgel (2015) ch. 2.

**12** Gellius (1903).

**13** Perotti (1995) 64.

posed. In the quotation from Gellius, we saw that one of the meanings implied in Ciceronian *humanitas*, that of *philanthropia* or ‘kindness’, was deemed unwanted. Other authors, already in antiquity and onwards, found faults with other aspects.<sup>14</sup>

In the sixth book of his *Institutiones divinae*, Lactantius (ca. 250–325), who late in life became the tutor of Crispus, son of Constantine the Great, vehemently opposes Cicero’s ideal of *humanitas*, setting Christian *miserericordia* up against it. Perhaps partly misreading Cicero, Lactantius insists that *miserericordia* is a better virtue, for it encompasses all people, unlike the more restricted *humanitas*.<sup>15</sup> We may find this critique surprising given the universal meaning of *humanitas*, but Lactantius may be thinking of the restriction that *humanitas* when taken to mean ‘education’ implies. In any case, protesting against Cicero’s utilitarian understanding of who deserves help, Lactantius goes as far as to address the deceased Cicero in the second person; see Lact. *Div. Inst.* 6.11 (PL 6.673 A):

*Hic, hic, Marce Tulli, aberrasti a vera iustitia; eamque uno verbo sustulisti, cum pietatis et humanitatis officia utilitate metitus es.*

Here, here, Marcus Tullius, did you err from true justice and did away with it in one word, for you have measured the duties of piety and humanity by way of utility.

Lactantius’ protest is a witness not only of new understandings arriving with Christian concepts, but also of the profound impression that Cicero’s writings had left on many Christian writers of late antiquity.

But even if Cicero continued to be read, his ethical teaching, including his use of *humanitas*, ceased to attract its former level of attention. Medieval authors would commonly speak of *studia humanitatis*, but apart from that they would not use the simple ‘*humanitas*’ frequently to mean ‘education’. The specific meaning of kindness in the sense of implying ‘a little help’, common at least since the *Satyrica* of Petronius (1<sup>st</sup> cent. CE), is found in, e.g., the Benedictine rule and elsewhere.<sup>16</sup> But *humanitas* does not seem to reappear in real argumentative usage before the age of the humanists. And even in the case of the early humanists, we find surprisingly little actual use of the full implication of *humanitas*. Though many humanists made a grand case for *studia humanitatis*, they hardly ever referenced this in direct connection with a universal reference to man, or to kindness. These seem not to have served their purposes to any serious degree.

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<sup>14</sup> See Høgel (2015) ch. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Lactantius (1844–65) cols. 0111–0822 A.

<sup>16</sup> See Høgel (2015) ch. 3.



The first person in early modern times who really took up the Ciceronian use of *humanitas* in an argumentative way was Erasmus of Rotterdam, in particular in his diatribes against war (i. e. internecine Christian wars). Here he depends on *humanitas* to decry the folly of warfare, building up his argument through successive writings appearing close in time: first the *Anti-polemus* (1515), then the *Enchiridion* (or *Institutio principis Christiani*) (1516), and finally the *Querela pacis* (1517),<sup>17</sup> where the personified Peace herself speaks and argues that internecine Christian wars make no sense, for man's nature is to seek peace, a view he supports with a reference to *humanitas*: see *Querela Pacis*, *Ausg. Schrift.* 5.366:

*Hinc est, videlicet, quod vulgus, quidquid ad mutuum benevolentiam pertinet, humanum appellat, ut humanitatis vocabulum non jam naturam nobis declaret, sed mores hominis natura dignos.*

This is presumably why people commonly call whatever pertains to mutual benevolence 'humane', so that the word humanity here no longer points to our nature, but to the behaviour that is worthy of man.

As mouthpiece for Erasmus, lady Peace refers to the meaning of 'mankind' and at the same time uses the word *humanitas* to refer to correct behaviour. Since Erasmus could not draw on Christian vocabulary to argue against war between Christians, he has recourse to Cicero's *humanitas*, claiming that it is against human nature – and the behaviour worthy of being called *humanitas* – to wage war. Writers before Erasmus had argued against warfare, not least Marsilius of Padua in his *Defensor pacis* of 1324, but Marsilius based no argument on Ciceronian *humanitas*.<sup>18</sup> With Erasmus began the European tradition – based on the Ciceronian concept – of taking humanists to be the defenders of peace and of other ethical implications derived from the same word *humanitas*, an endeavour that was at the base of their erudite-professional denomination as 'humanists'. And this tradition has more or less remained strong ever since, and in many languages a humanist is not only a learned person but also be a person with a big heart. This is at least common in Germanic languages as English, German etc.

Notions of *humanitas* also found their way into discussions of natural law and international law, the *ius gentium*. There is a long development leading up to this, and when, e.g., the Geneva convention insists that prisoners of war "should in all circumstances be treated humanely" or, in the French version, that they deserve "un traitement humain", we are again (or still) in the world of *humanitas*. How can a reference to man (humane, *humain*) secure any specific

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<sup>17</sup> Editions of the works are found in Erasmus (1990), to which references are made here.

<sup>18</sup> For text and translation, see Marsilius (2006).

treatment? Are torturers not human beings? They are, but the naturalized conception of Ciceronian *humanitas* suggests some ideal notion, implied but perhaps not fully explained, which resists our categorizing them so. *Humanitas* has become, at least in Western languages – through translation of fundamental texts like the Geneva convention, – a basic criterion and yet also a messy concept, to be used with care and in heavy need of dialogue with other normative systems.

We can on good grounds argue for human rights, for humanitarian aid, and for the humanities, but if we wish to do so, our arguments should, if based on Latin *humanitas* and its fundamental equivocation, be supplied with how we understand these, not on the simple – and feeble – ground that Cicero gave us a stronghold of a word, a word in constant need of definition. Also, the interconnectedness between these fields needs to be questioned. Are the humanities tied to ideas about human rights, or to humanitarian aid? This seems to be the case at least when using the term humanist ambiguously. These are ideological questions, but hard to avoid in a world of *humanitas*.



Stéphane Mercier

## Becoming human(e): Confucius' Way to 仁 and the Imitation of Christ in Yi Byeok's *Essence of Sacred Doctrine* (聖教要旨; *Seonggyo yoji*)

As it is well known, 仁 (*ren2*) or 'Humanity' is composed of the combination of two characters, namely that of human being (人, *ren2*) and that of two (二, *er4*); hence it is expressive of the relationship between human beings. 'Benevolence' is a valid translation too, but 'Humanity' carries the 'human' element that strikes the Chinese audience just the way it does for a Westerner, immediately relating man with *humanity*. Humanity is not primarily a matter of inner conscience or internal virtue but is first and foremost a social virtue, hence the link between humanity and what we can translate as 'empathy or 'reciprocity', 恕 (*shu4*) in *Analects* 15.24 about the 'one rule' that one can use and practice one's whole life, and that is about not doing to others what you wouldn't want them to do to you. The willingness to put oneself in the position of another to try and understand the world as another sees it is a closely related feature of reciprocity, and this is why Wing-tsit Chan, for example, translates the word as 'altruism'. *Analects* 4.15 is headed in the same direction with the all-pervading unity and single thread of Confucius' teaching as explained by Master Zeng: 夫子之道, 忠恕而已矣。 "The Master's way is all about being 'principled' (or 'sincere') and 'benevolent' (or 'fair')". (忠恕; *zhong1shu4*).

Confucius, to be sure, did not make up or coin the word 仁, but he gave it a key position within his philosophy: before him, it was just one virtue among many; in Confucius' thought, it became the very marker of virtue itself. Now, there's nothing like a 'systematic' philosophy in Confucius; and, to be fair, the very idea of systematic philosophy is so perfectly alien to Confucius and even to the Classical Chinese language that one cannot even forge an apt way of conveying the idea of what a modern Westerner has in mind when it comes to 'systematic philosophy'. And that is not because modern-day Westerners are smarter than the Chinese of old, but because we see things differently to begin with. As a result, one has to keep in mind that Confucius himself would rather think of himself as a political advisor, a pedagogue, a teacher, and a counselor who tries to address situations and events in context rather in the abstract. Confucius is quite the opposite of an idealist; he is a practical thinker keen to learn from

acts and facts. And Confucian learning is not of the bookish kind, but is more about learning how to become a better human being.

As for making progress towards this goal, Confucius believed that the concept of humanity was paramount to a proper understanding of what it requires for one to become a ‘nobleman’ or an ‘excellent person,’ a 君子 (*jun1zi3*) in the proper sense of the term. It is a well-established fact that the aristocratic title as Confucius understands it is used to refer to a *moral* aristocracy which he intends to re-establish, whereas the mere social aristocracy of one’s blood and lineage is perceived as a corruption of a more ancient and nobler use of the term.

Interestingly, the insistence on 仁 in Confucius’ teaching became somewhat of a label, and a convenient word to convey the Master’s philosophy in a nutshell. That’s why we read in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋), that is, in *Mr. Lü’s Annals*, that “Confucius valued benevolence” (孔子貴仁). This statement captures Confucius’ specificity as a teacher: he’s the one who made 仁 the highest principle of one’s moral life. Now, Confucius takes into account the various circumstances and interlocutors he faces; and that’s why, when asked about humanity, he offers various definitions, none of which he intends to be *the* proper abstract meaning of the word. A word of caution is nonetheless necessary here: I’m not at all advocating that Confucius’ stance on ethics favors the situational side. Indeed, I’m inclined to believe that the opposite is the case. It seems that there exists with Confucius a very strong ‘system’, but one that always remains implicit; Confucius may not be interested in disclosing the system, because that’s not the way he works, but the very tenets of his stance are firmly established and do not change according to circumstances. It is their output, as it were, that reveals how effectively and efficiently they are capable of answering every possible circumstance. This, for a Westerner, is reminiscent of the way Marcus Aurelius expresses his ideas in his εἰς ἑαυτόν, his personal diary: nothing systematic is apparent, yet the tenets are strong and there is an underlying framework accounting for the coherence and consistency of his fragmentary reflections on various issues.<sup>1</sup>

Back to the Master. What I said about not being into displaying a full-fledged system points to the fact that Confucius takes into account what the people he talks to need and what allows for their moral progress, since different persons do not have the same penetration of mind or understanding or social status, etc. This, however, does not mean that one cannot hope to find a fuller definition of what exactly is intended by humanity. At the very end of *Analects* 6.30, we read the following:

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<sup>1</sup> This has been strongly evidenced by Hadot (2001-1992).

子貢曰。如有博施於民而能濟衆、何如 可謂仁乎。子曰。何事於仁 必也聖乎。堯舜其猶病諸 夫仁者、己欲立而立人、己欲達而達人。能近取譬、可謂仁之方也已。

Zi Gong asked: “Suppose there were a ruler who benefited the people far and wide and was capable of bringing salvation to the multitude, what would you think of him? Might he be called humane?” The Master said, “Why only humane? He would undoubtedly be a sage. Even Yao and Shun would have had to strive to achieve this. Now the *ren* man, wishing himself to be established, sees that others are established, and, wishing himself to be successful, sees that others are successful. To be able to take one’s own feelings as a guide may be called the art of *ren*.”<sup>2</sup>

Note here that Confucius distinguishes the man who displays humanity from the sage. Because he contrasts the wise man or the sage on the one hand and the 仁 man on the other, the way he describes the latter must account for what is distinctive and what lies at the core of the virtue of humanity. Humanity is about establishing oneself and others, and about ensuring one’s success and that of the others. ‘Being successful’ is 達 (*da2*): this means to reach and attain one’s goal. As for ‘establishing’, the Chinese is 立 (*li4*). The Master uses the same word 立 quite a number of times in the *Analects* (26 times in 21 sayings), and most notably in his spiritual autobiography in 2.4: “At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right.” 立 is how he sees himself at thirty: an ‘established’ man, that is, a man who has reached a certain level of achievement that can be considered stable and firm. Then again, being established implies knowledge or ritual propriety (禮, *li3*), for “he who knows not ritual propriety doesn’t have what it requires to be established.” (不知禮、無以立也; *Analects* 20.3 – this is part of the last saying in the *Analects*)

One is immediately confronted with the connection here: humanity is about behaving properly as a member of society; it is first and foremost a social virtue. Hence it is necessarily grounded in ritual propriety, which includes social habits and behaviors. One needs to understand how to deal properly with others in order to excel as a social being.

There is more: humanity is about being established and successful, and at the same time it is also about seeing that others too are established and successful. This reminds us of the idea of reciprocity highlighted earlier. Humanity is thus about acknowledging one’s value and position, and also the other’s value and position. This is the meaning of one of the most famous definitions

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2 Quotations from the *Analects* are typically taken from A. Charles Muller’s rendering.

of 仁 in the *Analects* 12.22: when asked about humanity, Confucius answers very succinctly: 愛人, “To love people”.

The omnipresence of the concept of 仁 in Confucius’ *Analects* indicates that this word encapsulates the gist of his ethical stance. The fact that it covers a wide range of applications allows for an in-depth discussion about the hierarchy of values according to the Master. This in turn would allow for some fruitful comparison with Cicero, and all he has to say about (apparently) conflicting values, especially in his treatise *De officiis*, that is: *On Duties*.

I do want to point out the fact that if it is rather obvious that one should act according to virtue, though there might be some difficulty in case of a perceived conflict between virtues: for example, should I be true to my promise or should I break my promise if I believe it may harm the one who should otherwise benefit from my being true to my word? More precisely, in the case of Confucius, we’ve said a few words about ritual propriety being at the heart of the virtue of humanity. One may thus ask about which virtue, in case of a conflict, shall take precedence over which other virtue: in extreme cases, should the sense of propriety override humanity, or should humanity do away with rites? There is more: is such a question even worth asking? Once again, this is echoed in Cicero’s treatment of apparently conflicting virtues, and the apparent conflict between *honestum* and *utile*. Back to Confucius: does his understanding of humanity in direct relation with ritual propriety account for the rigidity of etiquette implementation or not? Conversely, is it even reasonable to imagine that there can be a case when etiquette and propriety can be downplayed in favor of humanity without at the same time doing away with what makes man really humane?

As we saw earlier, 仁 stands at the heart of virtuous conduct in Confucius; and although it seems to be first and foremost about ritual—in the sense that 禮 pervades one’s behavior towards others and toward the self—it is also inclusive of every other virtue, or so it seems. One clear example is *Analects* 17.5:

子張問仁於孔子。孔子曰。能行五者於天下、爲仁矣。請問之。曰。恭、寬、信、敏、惠。恭則不侮、寬則得衆、信則人任焉、敏則有功、惠則足以使人。

Zi Zhang asked Confucius about fundamental human goodness. Confucius said, “If you can practice these five things with all the people, you can be called a fundamentally good person”. Zi Zhang asked what they were. Confucius said, “Courtesy, generosity, honesty, persistence, and kindness. If you are courteous, you will not be disrespected; if you are generous, you will gain everything. If you are honest, people will rely on you. If you are persistent you will get results. If you are kind, you can employ people”.

Or see the more concise saying in *Analects* 13.19:

樊遲問仁。子曰。居處恭、執事敬、與人忠。雖之夷狄、不可棄也。

Fan Chi asked about *ren*. Confucius said, “Be naturally courteous, be respectful in working for superiors and be sincere to people. Even the barbarian tribes cannot do without this”.

Again, this allows for a fruitful comparison with the Stoic stance favored by Cicero regarding the possession of one virtue as constituting the possession of them all. The idea is that virtue is an all-encompassing and -inclusive word, and he who can be labeled as a virtuous man really possesses *all* virtues; whereas the lack of just one virtue (if such a thing were possible) would really mean that one isn't virtuous *at all*. This is a strong stance, to be sure, yet it's not quite as paradoxical as it seems at first: how could I be described as a virtuous person if I lacked one or more virtues? Such a person may be very courageous, for example, but also greedy; or one may be just and honest, yet definitely lack temperance – this implies some air of phoniness, doesn't it?

That is why Confucius is willing to admit his own defects and failures: because the ideal of humanity is immense indeed, and even one who makes tremendous progress towards the ideal at the same time gains a better appreciation for his own shortcomings. Hence his humble acknowledgment or, even better, confession, in *Analects* 7.34:

子曰。若聖與仁、則吾豈敢 抑爲之不厭、誨人不倦、則可謂云爾已矣。公西華曰。正唯弟子不能學也。

The Master said: “I dare not claim to be a sage or a *ren* man. But I strive for these without being disappointed, and I teach without becoming weary. This is what can be said of me”. Gongxi Hua said, “It is exactly these qualities that cannot be learned by the disciples”.

In the saying preceding the one just quoted, Confucius avows that he himself might be a learned man, and yet he “cannot manifest the behavior of the 君子”. Now, as a teacher and a pedagogue, Confucius is certainly aware that one who posits too high an ideal runs the risk of discouraging his addressees and turning them away from the demanding challenge of become a virtuous person. That is why he wants either to console or to encourage his listeners by saying the following (*Analects* 14.6/7):

子曰、君子而不仁者有矣夫、未有小人而仁者也。

The Master said: “There are some cases where a noble man may not be a perfectly humane man, but there are no cases where an inferior man is a perfectly humane man”.

This advice is both sound and sensitive: it reminds one that the goal of one's efforts towards becoming a virtuous person remains far distant (so that no one is tempted to be content where he is), but at the same time that moral progress is



real and should be accounted for. Similar strategies of persuasion are to be found in Seneca who, as a Stoic philosopher, will adamantly stick to the idea that one is either basically virtuous or vicious (just as a line is either straight or isn't, even though the curve might be very slight) and at the same time he will observe that even though a sick person does not qualify as a healthy person, one really does feel better when his sickness is slowly fading away.

Let us turn back to the relationship between 仁 and 禮, humanity and propriety or etiquette. It is well-known that the rites are about everything in one's life, from courtly ceremonies and the observance of religious customs to the more minute details of sitting properly, dressing, and walking around.<sup>3</sup> The relationship between this fully-fledged etiquette and humanity is obvious: it is precisely the integration and display of social habits that distinguishes a civilized human being from a beast or from a beastlike barbarian. The romantic myth of the noble savage and the whole Rousseauist dream is utter nonsense, to be sure: the very ability to live with other human beings and interact with them properly is what makes us both human and humane. Ritual propriety represents the dikes we must form against the tidal waves of our otherwise excessive feelings and unregulated emotions.

Although dikes are necessary, they may very well become burdensome, absurdly coercive, even pointless. Confucianism has its own tradition of self-righteousness and narrow-mindedness. The whole challenge is to keep the rules and abide by them, and yet to avoid ideological rigidity. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus made a similar point against the Pharisees: He himself wouldn't do away with the Law—this is the famous *iota unum* teaching—and yet he condemned the self-righteous Pharisees who did not keep in mind that “the Sabbath was made for man; and not man for the Sabbath” (Mark 2:27).

Confucius' own stance shows that he is very aware of both the dangers of downplaying the rites and of focusing on the outer demands of ritual. Hence the idea that morality is first and foremost about the transformation of the inner person. This is one of the meanings of the much-commented upon saying in *Analects* 2.7:

子游問孝。子曰。今之孝者、是謂能養。至於犬馬、皆能有養。不敬、何以別乎。

Zi You asked about the meaning of filial piety. Confucius said, “Nowadays filial piety means being able to feed your parents. But everyone does this for even horses and dogs. Without respect, what's the difference?”

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<sup>3</sup> This is why ritual propriety is somewhat similar to the Jewish Law, according to the insightful remark by Lin Yutang in his 1937 book on *The Importance of Living*.

The idea to be highlighted here is that humanity is certainly meaningless without a very strong sense of ritual propriety. *Analects* 12.1 provides a fine example:

顏淵問仁。子曰。克己復禮、爲仁。一日克己復禮、天下歸仁焉。爲仁由己、而由人乎哉。顏淵曰。請問其目。子曰。非禮勿視、非禮勿聽、非禮勿言、非禮勿動。顏淵曰。回雖不敏、請事斯語矣。

Yan Yuan asked about the meaning of *humaneness*. The Master said, “To completely overcome selfishness and keep to propriety is *humaneness*. If for a full day you can overcome selfishness and keep to propriety, everyone in the world will return to *humaneness*. Does *humaneness* come from oneself, or from others?” Yan Yuan asked: “May I ask in further detail how this is to be brought about?” Confucius said, “Do not watch what is improper; do not listen to what is improper; do not speak improperly and do not act improperly”. Yan Yuan said, “Although I am not so perspicacious, I will apply myself to this teaching”.

Conversely, outer and strictly formal display of propriety is devoid of meaning without a proper appreciation of others and a deep sense of humanity, as can be grasped from *Analects* 3.3:

子曰。人而不仁、如禮何。人而不仁、如樂何

The Master said: “If a man has no *ren* what can his propriety be like? If a man has no *ren* what can his music be like?”.

Humanity corrects the danger of mere outer formality; and propriety is the dike against unrestrained emotions conflicting with the social nature of human beings.

\* \* \*

One and the same word thus allows for different aspects of one and the same virtue, and hence the different interpretations of what it means to be a man of 仁 and the efforts this requires. We can illustrate this by having a look at a Korean-Christian way of dealing with the issue of humanity.

Yi Byeok (이벽; 李檠; 1754–1785/6) was a Joseon scholar who played a major role in the establishment of the very first Catholic Community in Korea.<sup>4</sup> He was born in the township of Naemyon in Gyeonggi-do, in the northwest of Seoul. He was from a military official’s family, but he himself wouldn’t join the army; that,

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<sup>4</sup> Our main source for Yi Byeok and the beginnings of Catholicism in Korea here is Dallet (1874), vol. 1, chap. 1–3 (in which Yi Byeok’s name is written Piek-i). See also An/Anthony (2014), and the following note.

supposedly, is where he got his nickname from, since 欐 means ‘cork-tree,’ a tree that is known for its thick and hard wood: the man was stubborn indeed.

His family belonged to the Southerners’ (Nam-in) faction, which at that time was not in power. Hence, its members were most likely to be excluded from official employment, and they were, as a consequence, pursuing their studies in a freer way than those who studied to secure high-ranking positions of power within the State apparatus. Since he was not interested in a military career, and since hopes for a government position were scarce, Yi Byeok could focus on the Classics for his own moral and intellectual progress, which he did.

One of Yi’s ancestors had been traveling to China with Crown Prince Sohyeon (소현세자, 1612–1645) in the mid-seventeenth century, and had been in contact with the Jesuit Fathers at the Imperial Court in Beijing. The Crown Prince brought back the teachings of the Catholic Church to Korea, but displeased his father King Injo (r. 1623–49) by doing so, and was poisoned not long after his return in 1645.

In 1777 (or 1779), a group of Nam-in scholars joined together close to Gwangju (in Gyeonggi-do, a suburb in the South-East part of present-day Seoul – not the better-known city of Gwangju in Jeollanam-do) to study the Classics and several books of European lore, including books on Catholicism. According to reports, in 1783 Yi Byeok urged one of his friends, Yi Seung-hun (이승훈, 1756–1801), to accompany Byeok’s father to the court in Beijing to retrieve more information on Catholicism. Yi Seung-hun did so and was baptized under the name of Peter; he was later to be put to death and die a martyr in 1801 when the Joseon authorities wiped out the young Catholic community of Korea. When Yi Byeok received books on Catholicism from his friend after the embassy to China, he studied them and converted to the faith. Just a few months later, Yi Byeok was the one who showed Jong Yak-yong Dasan a book that introduced him to the Christian faith. In the same year, Yi Byeok received the sacrament of baptism (and it is not known whether Dasan too was baptized at that time or not) and the name of John the Baptist, because of the part he’d played in the first rooting of the faith in Korea. Some say that the minister of justice Yi Ga-hwan, tried to convince Yi Byeok to jettison the new faith, but was himself converted by Yi, and eventually died a martyr himself in 1801.

In 1785, the small Catholic community moved to the hill in Seoul where Myeongdong Cathedral now stands. The government became suspicious; the house where the Christians gathered was closed and its owner put to death. As for the yangban associated with the practice of Catholicism, they were strongly advised to keep a low profile and to refrain from gathering and practicing their faith in the open. It is not clear what happened to Yi Byeok; either he was put under heavy pressure by his family (his own father apparently threatened to

commit suicide) and had to give up his faith, then became inconsolable and died the next year from illness; or he stood firm and died shortly afterwards. His tomb was later uncovered at his birthplace in 1979, and his remains have since then been transferred with that of the other founding fathers of Christianity in Korea to the Catholic shrine in Cheon-jin-am, the Buddhist complex where the first converts of Korea began gathering close to Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do.

Yi Byeok didn't live a long life as a Christian, so he couldn't write much. Interestingly, although much of the writings of early Korean converts has been lost, a collection of their writings came to light in 1970. The volume is known as the Mancheon collection, 蔓川遺稿 (만천유고), and it offers a collection of poetry and prose compositions from Yi Seung-hun and Yi Byeok, among others. Yi Byeok is presented—whether this is trustworthy is disputed—as the author of two of the texts from this collection: a short *Hymn of Adoration of the Lord of Heaven* (天主恭敬歌, *tian1zhu3 gong1jing4 ge1*) and a treatise on the *Essence of Sacred Doctrine* (聖教要旨, *shang4jiao4 yao4zhi3*), both written in Classical Chinese.<sup>5</sup> The first text is a short poem (thirty-five verses) written in 1779, when Yi Byeok still had a somewhat shallow knowledge of the Christian teaching; the whole poem revolves around the idea of God being the Lord who deserves to be adored, the foundation of human life and of the whole world. As for the second work, it is a longer piece of poetry intermingled with prose commentary, but it is difficult to establish precisely the date at which it was penned. The treatise is about the teaching of the Bible (the Old Testament part is rather short compared to the part devoted to the New Testament); then Yi Byeok proceeds with a summary of Christian teaching influenced by the Chinese Classics (mostly the *Zhongyong* and the *Daxue*) and the direct contemplation of nature. The focus is less on God as Creator than on Jesus Christ the Redeemer.

It is noteworthy that Jesus' depiction matches the traits of the accomplished man according to Confucius. More precisely, Jesus Christ according to Yi Byeok perfectly embodies the Confucian ideal of humanity. Obviously, there is not just one interpretation of what humanity means to a Confucius, let alone to a Confucian scholar. It is well-known too that Silhak 'practical studies' scholars thought it necessary to go back to a more genuine interpretation of Confucius, beyond the metaphysics of Neo-Confucianism. As for Dasan, to take just one example, he criticized the Confucian orthodoxy that had become prevalent in Joseon Korea, and wanted to recover a more authentic approach to humanity according to its original meaning in the teaching of Confucius himself.

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5 See Sangbae Ri (1979). The author provides a French translation of Yi Byeok's works.

Confucius uses the word humanity more than a hundred times in his *Analects*, in sixty of his sayings. We have been reminded in the first part of this paper about the fact that the meaning of humanity is flexible, as Confucius doesn't provide an abstract answer to a theoretical question, but is very keen on taking various circumstances into account, so that his answer is always appropriate to such circumstances. Whereas the Neo-Confucian scholars tend to betray a strong tendency towards abstraction, Confucius always refers his understanding of humanity to a context; that is: to the relationship(s) between real-life individuals.

Yi Byeok himself was struck by the downfall of man as it is accounted for in the Christian doctrine of sin. Interestingly, the aspect of sin which is paramount to Yi is the murder of Abel by his brother Cain in Genesis 4. In his eyes, the killing of his brother by Cain was the most salient aspect of sin's advent, which resulted in the destruction upon mankind with the Flood (see Genesis 6–9). Yet the flaw remained, and everything that is miserable and sad in the state of human affairs is explained by original sin. One just man could reverse the tide, though; this was readily understandable for a mind schooled in the Chinese Classics, where the sage-kings Yao and Shun were extraordinary individuals who brought about a decisive change in the lives of men from their time onward. Noah was a prime example of a man whose actions helped restore the condition of mankind; but everything was eventually brought to completion through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The whole first part of the *Essence of Sacred Doctrine* is thus about Jesus as the very embodiment of humanity, as it appears from his teaching and from his actions. The Incarnation occurred for the world's sake; and the second Person of the Holy Trinity chose to take flesh from the 'five elements' to bring back humanity to its previous state from before the Fall. Jesus is shown as going to the Temple, being received amongst scholars, and then reading and explaining the holy books. All this would have been familiar to a Confucian scholar: learning the holy books and entering a public life was normal. As a private man, Jesus was most pious, and that again is something that speaks for itself (from a Confucian point of view): Jesus is obedient to his parents in the first place; then he shows his humanity by accomplishing his social duties and resisting the temptations of the devil. Yi Byeok answers an objection to the Christian faith here: the critics had said that one becomes Christian out of self-interest, namely to avoid Hell and to go to Heaven. Of course, that has an educational purpose, so to say, but one does not practice virtue as a Christian *simply* because he wants to avoid Hell and go to Heaven (although he wishes that too, obviously); but virtue is practiced for its own sake. Now, everything in Jesus' life is an expression of humanity, and of humanity in the sense of love. The perfection of humanity is

tightly linked to the idea of sincerity, a key concept in the *Zhongyong* and in Jesus' life as Yi Byeok understands it.

This is no original finding of Yi Byeok, of course, for Matteo Ricci had already observed that humanity properly understood has to do with sincerity. Yi nonetheless insists on viewing Christ through the lens of sincerity, for this concept involves the idea of a sacrifice and signals a divine realm. Confucius himself did not dare to style himself a man of utter sincerity, as is clear from *Analects* 7.33/34:

子曰。若聖與仁、則吾豈敢 抑爲之不厭、誨人不倦、則可謂云爾已矣。

The Master said: "I dare not claim to be a sage or a *ren* man. But I strive for these without being disappointed, and I teach without becoming weary. This is what can be said of me".

The Master, once again, is prone to uncover his own shortcomings, and even those of the sage kings of a distant past, as we saw in *Analects* 6.28 earlier. Now, the Christians in Korea understood that Confucius rightly said this, since it was Jesus Christ alone whose humanity was perfect, and hence his sincerity too was complete. Then again, one understands why this key concept appears time and again in Yi Byeok's *Essence of Sacred Doctrine*: sincerity is the very accomplishment of humanity realized as love in the life of Jesus; it is the essence of the social virtues and the main characteristic of the Christian way. Sincerity as the accomplishment of humanity is Christ himself as a teacher, as an example through his deeds and his sacrifice, with all of this leading Christians to praise the Lord on High.

Jesus thus embodies the way of the sage and the wise man: he knows perfectly well the principles of faith and conduct; he then perfects himself (so to say) by his piety towards his parents and through trials and hardships such as the temptations by the devil; because his heart is 'honest and sincere', he is victorious in every ordeal. He then proceeds to establish peace around him by his meekness and good deeds, which he performs out of humanity-as-love. He shows the way to Heaven by performing heavenly deeds, the many miracles which account for the authority and power he possesses. Most perfect in the end is his sacrifice out of love for the salvation of all mankind. The way of man, brought to completion by Jesus, is thus equal to the way of Heaven; as for man, it is incumbent upon him to achieve sincerity, which consists of union with Christ through the practice of virtue.

Philippe Thiébaud,<sup>6</sup> in the same spirit, considers that the Confucian notion of humanity makes one think of the Christian *agapê*. Not that the two are simply equivalent to each other, but there is some kind of similarity that allows for bridging the two concepts together. Confucius, to be sure, was an admirer of the ancient wisdom that is echoed in the 易經. In the *Book of Changes* and its ten ‘wings’ the concept of humanity comes back ten times in eight passages (including three in the core text of the 易經); in the fifth and sixth wings known as *The Great Treatise*, we read the following:

一陰一陽之謂道，繼之者善也，成之者性也。仁者見之謂之仁，知者見之謂之知。百姓日用而不知，故君子之道鮮矣。顯諸仁，藏諸用，鼓萬物而不與聖人同憂，盛德大業至矣哉。富有之謂大業，日新之謂盛德。生生之謂易，成象之謂乾，效法之為坤，極數知來之謂占，通變之謂事，陰陽不測之謂神。

The successive movement of the inactive and active operations constitutes what is called the course (of things). That which ensues as the result (of their movement) is goodness; that which shows it in its completeness is the natures (of men and things). The benevolent see it and call it benevolence. The wise see it and call it wisdom. The common people, acting daily according to it, yet have no knowledge of it. Thus it is that the course (of things), as seen by the superior man, is seen by few. It is manifested in the benevolence (of its operations), and (then again) it conceals and stores up its resources. It gives their stimulus to all things, without having the same anxieties that possess the sage. Complete is its abundant virtue and the greatness of its stores! Its rich possessions is what is intended by ‘the greatness of its stores;’ the daily renovation which it produces is what is meant by ‘the abundance of its virtue.’ Production and reproduction is what is called (the process of) change. The formation of the semblances (shadowy forms of things) is what we attribute to Qian; the giving to them their specific forms is what we attribute to Kun. The exhaustive use of the numbers (that turn up in manipulating the stalks), and (thereby) knowing (the character of) coming events, is what we call prognosticating; the comprehension of the changes (indicated leads us to) what we call the business (to be done). That which is unfathomable in (the movement of) the inactive and active operations is (the presence of) spiritual (power). (Tr. J. Legge)

There is a strength in the universe, and it accounts for what is known as the Way (道, *dao*4); that Way brings about the goodness (善, *shan*4) that appears in the nature (性, *xing*4) of things. Those who are endowed with the virtue of humanity see the Way and call it humanity (仁者見之謂之仁), and those who possess wisdom call it wisdom (知者見之謂之知). This positive account of the fundamental nature of things and their goodness allows for a better understanding of Men-

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<sup>6</sup> Philippe Thiébaud, who died in 2012, was one of the most prominent French-speaking promoters of Korean culture and philosophy; he authored several (important for all their shortcomings) books, among which is *La pensée coréenne. Aux sources de l'esprit-cœur*, Paris: Autres Temps, 2006.

cius' famous idea that nature is good, and explains the centrality of humanity in Confucius' own approach to virtue.

It is noteworthy that the two key concepts about human perception and understanding in this passage of the *Book of Changes* are used with a very similar frequency by Confucius: 110 occurrences in 60 passages for humanity (the *Analects* have about 500 passages in total); 118 occurrences in 73 passages for 'knowledge' (知, *zhi*). Now, in both the 中庸 and the 大學, the very essence of the Way is expressed in terms of sincerity (誠, *cheng*<sup>2</sup>). This teaches us a few things: there is a mysterious force at work in the universe, which is fundamentally good, and man gains access to it through a kind of knowledge that is about being sincere and displaying the virtue of humanity, which in turns entails a relationship with other human beings. Hence this most admirable saying in *Analects* 4.1:

里仁為美。擇不處仁，焉得知？

It is virtuous manners which constitute the excellence of a neighborhood. If a man in selecting a residence, does not fix on one where such things prevail, how can he be wise?<sup>7</sup>

A translation closer to the original encapsulates it better: "As for a neighborhood, it is its 仁 that makes it beautiful. If you choose to live in a place that lacks 仁, how can you grow in wisdom?"<sup>8</sup> Through the social immersion that fosters one's own virtue of humanity, one gains a deeper understanding—or better: one delves more deeply into the Way of all things. Mencius (7B16), as a matter of fact, says exactly that in a profound and enlightening way: 仁也者，人也。合而言之，道也。 "Humanity is man; as for their combination, it is the Way." (Another tentative translation would be: "The Way is about being united with benevolence and speaking in a benevolent way.") Notice here the striking affirmation that goes even further than the Master's saying about 'humanity' being equated to 'loving men': here Mencius says that *humanity is what man truly is*. This is not to say that we've accomplished anything virtuous before we even knew about it. We all know about Mencius' doctrine of the sprouts of virtue being in need of caretaking to ensure their development; yet his metaphysical insight is considerable nonetheless, and it goes back to the extract from the *Great Treatise* quoted earlier. Becoming human is all about becoming humane, and *vice versa*.

<sup>7</sup> Legge (2013–1893).

<sup>8</sup> Tr. Muller (1990).





Kihoon Kim (김기훈)

# *Pietas in pro Sexto Roscio* of Cicero and Confucian 孝 (*xiao*)

## 1 The case of *pro Sexto Roscio*<sup>1</sup>

Cicero's early speech *pro Sexto Roscio* is a well-known source in which a certain conception of Roman *humanitas* is contained.<sup>2</sup> The case was about *parricidium*. In early 80 BCE, Cicero, a 26-year-old youngster at the time, took the case, and successfully defended Sextus Roscius the younger, who had been accused of killing his own father Sextus Roscius the elder, a rich Italian in the *municipium* of Ameria. Cicero won and Sextus Roscius was acquitted. This criminal case, however, also has political implications, because beside the prosecutor lurked an influential figure named L. Cornelius Chrysogonus. He had been a Greek slave under L. Cornelius Sulla, who had marched with his army into Rome and obtained hegemony in 82 BCE. At that time of the trial of Roscius, Chrysogonus was arguably a *libertus* of some, perhaps substantial, influence.

According to Cicero in this speech, Sextus Roscius the elder was killed in Rome some months after 1st June 81 BCE. This date seems to be the deadline of Sulla's *tabula proscriptiois*, up until which the proscription could have been valid. The death of Roscius the father was communicated to relatives sooner than to his immediate family. Following his death, he was proscribed. His possessions were auctioned, bought by Chrysogonus at a giveaway price, and some were brought to the Roscii. Thus, Roscius the son was disinherited before the funeral ceremony was over, and forced to take refuge in Rome, since he was targeted to be killed by the Roscii who felt themselves to be in danger after the *decemviri*'s visit to Sulla's camp. Among this delegation from Ameria, through which the local leaders attempted to seek amnesty for Roscius the elder from Sulla, T. Roscius Capito was the chief member, but its request, a meeting with Sulla, was blocked by Chrysogonus. After Roscius the younger had escaped to Rome, the delegation members accused him of parricide, enforcing the *lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* and employing Erucius as the prosecutor. Such is a sum-

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2 Cf. Ahn (2009); Storch (2006).

mary of the circumstances in which Roscius was accused, based on Cicero's argument.<sup>3</sup>

The political reforms of the dictator Sulla seemed to have been accomplished and the Roman constitution normalized by the revival of regular lawsuits such as the Roscius case in the early 80s BCE. Nonetheless, there was probably no one who would take the case and defend him against the charge while the cruel traces of civil war and the terror of Sullan rule were still haunting the Roman people. Moreover, the situation might have been even more unfavorable to the accused since the prosecutor Erucius was believed to be supported by Chrysogonus and the Sullan party. Still a novice, and not yet holding any magistracy, Cicero took on the case, and by defending his client successfully rose to prominence as a brave *patronus*. This case is also well-known as his first *causa publica*. The main issue in *pro Sexto Roscio* is parricide, the ultimate crime of filial impiety. Although the other, no less important, aspect of this speech is Cicero's judgment about the political situation of the period described above, the focus of this paper will be limited mainly to part of the *argumentatio*, especially §§ 37–72, in which the theme of *pietas*<sup>4</sup> is more directly addressed.

## 2 Reading *pietas* in *pro Sexto Roscio*

The issue in the case on which Cicero concentrates, and the *constitutio coniecturalis*, is whether Roscius killed his father or not. This appears in the first part of the *argumentatio*. In §§ 35–36 Cicero divides his speech and says that there are three things which obstruct the charged man, *crimen adversariorum et audacia et potentia*. Among these, his responsibility consists in rejecting the charge that the accuser Erucius has brought forward. On the other hand, to resist the other two, he says, is a matter for the Roman people to entrust to the jury, but this he will also deal with himself in the latter part of his speech (§§ 83–123; §§ 124–142), which is especially concerned with the political dimension of the case.

The word *parricidium* is used in the speech 9 times, and most examples occur in §§ 37–72. Confronting the question of *an parricidium commiserit*, Cicero answers in the negative by arguing *ex persona* (§ 39), *ex causa* (§§ 40–54) and *ex facto ipso* (§§ 73–79). These strategic elements may have been a response to the argument by which Erucius would try to convince the jury. At the very beginning

<sup>3</sup> Cf. §§ 15–29, *narratio* of *pro Sexto Roscio*.

<sup>4</sup> All the words which are concerned with *pius* or *pietas*, are in §§ 37–72: *pietas* (§ 37); *pīi* (§ 66); *impie*, *impiis* (§ 67); *impios* (§ 69).

of his argument, Cicero asks with assurance a rhetorical question about the wickedness of the charge:

§ 37: Sextus Roscius stands accused of the murder of his father. Immortal gods, what an outrageously criminal act, the type of act that seems to comprise within it every crime that exists! The philosophers rightly point out that filial duty (*pietas*) can be violated by a mere look. What punishment, then, could be devised which would be severe enough for a man who had murdered his own parent — a person he was bound by every law, human and divine, to defend with his life if necessary?<sup>5</sup>

In the cited passage, the word *pietas* attracts attention. Though it is not the direct theme of the argument or of the speech, Cicero seems to consider the charge as referencing an impious crime. It is interesting that he prefers to emphasize or even exaggerate rather than to minimize the criminality of the charge itself. This attitude of Cicero's about parricide is shown consistently in the argument. According to him, parricide is a cruel, unnatural, even incredible crime. On this point, his choice of *topos*, the crime's inconceivability, is strategic and effective,<sup>6</sup> because, as he will state more concretely in §§ 70 – 72, parricide and the punishment for it were well-known not only to the jury, but also to the audience of Roman people.

Answering the question *qui homo?* (§ 39), Cicero tries to show that the character of Roscius is quite different from what the prosecutor would have claimed. In short, since Roscius has been removed from *luxuria* and *cupiditas*, and because his life has been characterized by duty, such a man could not have committed one of the cruelest crimes. Likewise, Cicero keeps insisting that there was no sufficient cause or motive for Roscius to kill his father. In other words, Roscius had neither any inner *impietas*, nor any abnormal external impetus urging him on. Whereas the prosecutor had claimed that Roscius was so deviant that he might dare to kill his father, the strategy of Cicero's argument, appealing to common sense, focused on the claim that such a heinous crime would have require sufficient motivation. Thus, Cicero assumes a dual refutation: on the one hand, the anomalous nature of parricide has to be emphasized; on the other, Roscius is portrayed as an ordinary, or indeed a rather pious son. In the course of this argument, the early perspective of Cicero and the Romans on filial piety appears to be reflected in a roundabout way.

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<sup>5</sup> All the English translations of *pro Sexto Roscio* in this paper are cited from Berry (2000).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Lentano (2015) 144. The theme of parricide in the *declamatio* might have had some educational role within Cicero's conception of filial piety.

§63: For men's tender feelings are strong, the ties of blood are powerful ones, and nature herself protests against suspicions of this kind. It is without doubt unnatural and monstrous that a being of human shape and form should so far surpass the wild animals in savagery as to have deprived of the light of day, in the most shocking way possible, the very people to whom he owes the fact that he too can enjoy this light. Even wild animals live at peace with each other, thanks to the ties of birth and upbringing, and thanks to nature herself.

Frequently, Cicero characterizes parricide as a crime against human nature. As in the cited passage, the words which he uses to describe parricide in the speech are mainly described as, e. g., extraordinary, ominous, and unnatural: parricide is *nefarium* (§§ 37; 62; 65 ff.), *scelus/scelestum* (§§ 37; 64; 66; 67 ff.), *novum* (§§ 1; 44, 82, 124, 126, 153), *portentum* (§§ 38, 63), *prodigium* (§ 38), *monstrum* (§ 63). In short, parricide is an inhumane crime and so it is inconceivable that the nature of any human being could be the cause of such a crime, unless he or she were less than a wild animal. So, the very nature of anyone who severed the blood-relationship by committing parricide is monstrous and out of order, since the filial bond is based on the relationship between children and parents which even wild animals by nature recognize. Therefore, unless some unnatural cause intervenes, such a relationship should be unbreakable. On this point, *pietas* is a kind of or a part of *humanitas* or human nature,<sup>7</sup> in contrast to *immanitas* (§ 63).

If the relationship could be called *pietas*, especially on the side of the children, it is interesting that, as seen in § 37, Cicero also seems to suppose that *pietas* can be undermined quite easily and often (*voltu saepe laeditur pietas*). In other words, not only are human beings endowed by nature with *pietas erga parentes*, it is also something that deserves to be maintained. If *pietas* in its earlier form is part of the human condition based on biological causation and dependency, it later becomes filial 'duty', deriving from a continued relationship bound by every divine and human law (§ 37). This social and legal dimension of *pietas* would appear to be related to *patria potestas*. The prosecutor Erucius might have pointed out that the son's violation of *pietas* incurred his father's hatred and the enmity aroused *impietas* in his resentful son, finally leading to *parricidium*. So, a son's duty of *pietas erga parentes* is tied up with his father's natural responsibilities of *paterna pietas*<sup>8</sup>, for example to give birth, to bring up, to educate and punish, and to pass on a fortune. This filial piety is, therefore, a dutiful virtue

<sup>7</sup> Ahn (2009) 124.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *animus patrius in liberos* in § 46. And also in §§ 43, 53 it is suggested indirectly what the father's role and responsibility is.

derived from *ius/iustitia* as recognized among human beings;<sup>9</sup> according to Cicero,<sup>10</sup> not only is it derived from nature, but it also implies a socially extended range of application.

A part of Cicero's refutation *ex causa* against Erucius (§§ 40–54) is especially focused on arguing that the motives for the murder which the accuser tried to prove are groundless, or rather that some more strong causes are required, because no one with common sense would dare to commit such an unnatural crime. According to Cicero, a relatively light neglect of *pietas* is a more frequent situation than an extreme one, but the point that he tries to make obvious is that if Roscius the son did not have any trivial motive for violating *pietas*, then *a fortiori* he should have had no reason for killing his father. So Roscius' life is characterized as rather dutiful, obedient, ordinary, and traditional in Cicero's argument.

On the other hand, in a digression about parricide and its punishment (§§ 61–72), other features of *pietas* are shown indirectly by Cicero. This phase of the speech looks more impassioned than the others, and the apparent reason why the digression is prolonged is due to the pathetic means of persuasion used. However, this probably happens because Cicero has scarcely used any non-technical evidence except the decree of the *decemviri* of Ameria (§25), and this lack of evidence might have driven him to extend the length of the digression. In an attempt to avoid leaving a pedantic impression, he adapts some themes familiar to the audience from tragedy and history. The gist of Cicero's argument is that certain abnormal signs should obviously attend whomever offends *pietas*, such as madness, violence or fear.

§ 66: The poets tell of sons who killed their mothers to avenge their fathers. Although they are said to have killed them in response to the commands and oracles of the immortal gods, you have read how the Furies hound them even so, and never let them rest, because they were unable to fulfil their duty towards their fathers without committing a crime. And that is how it really is, gentlemen. The blood of a father or a mother has great power, it is a great bond, and it possesses great sanctity (*magnam religionem*). The stain it produces, however small, cannot only never be washed out, but seeps right into the mind, so that the utmost violence and insanity ensue.

The Furies, which Cicero interprets in § 67 as a psychological symptom, are unavoidable even by those who would violate *pietas* on account of divine causes. In other words, when any crime is committed, even from pious motivation, it cannot be considered a pious act in itself. Conflict between pious actions brings about

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Partitiones oratoriae* 78.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *De inventione* 2.66.161.

an impious vice. At least in this moment, Cicero appears not to permit the innocence of a kind of *pia impietas*.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, no breach of *pietas*, however small, ought to be overlooked, Cicero says, since it might give rise to violent insanity. This claim, which Cicero ascribes in § 37 to certain philosophers, makes *pietas* even more compulsory. A son has a difficult but unavoidable duty towards his father, but violation of this duty can happen easily, and the stain created by a non-pious action is never washed out entirely. Nevertheless, the other important aspect of *pietas* is that the blood relationship has strong power to sanction or prohibit unnatural *impietas*. In this context, *religio*<sup>12</sup> would seem to be an innate force impelling children to keep their human nature, and as a sanction or prohibition to keep one's *pietas* intact. Because this *religio* is similar to a kind of commandment given by *di parentes*<sup>13</sup> to human nature, *pietas* would also seem to involve an inseparable relationship with the gods. Therefore, *pietas erga parentes* should be built on *religio*, which is *pietas erga deos*. But in a quite different way, Cicero tries to distinguish it clearly from *religio* in his early works and rhetorical treatises.<sup>14</sup>

Cicero seems to distinguish *pietas* from *religio* by definition, at least theoretically. On the one hand, filial piety, in the narrower sense of *pietas*, expands its denotation and encompasses a broader range – one's own relatives, citizens, country. This extension of meaning is comparable to the anthropological progression of human society.<sup>15</sup> A man who had been simply a son of his family became a son of an extended family, then a son of a country. Thus, Cicero's definition of *pietas* reflects the diachronic extension of meaning from *erga parentes* to *erga patriam*. At the same time, the meaning seems to be related to the development of the concept of *humanitas*.<sup>16</sup> Although the question to what extent the particularity of Roman society had influenced the idea of *pietas*, or how great the influence of Hellenistic philosophy was on it, is difficult to answer, at least by the 2nd century BCE this extended idea of *pietas* might have been

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11 Cf. Hinard (2006) n. 4 on § 66.

12 The *OLD* suggests this *religio* as an example of the subsection 7a: “a quality (attached to a person, place, object, action, etc.) evoking awe or reverence, sanctity”. But it seems also reasonable to adapt 1a, which Dyck (2010) and Berry (2000) preferred: “a supernatural feeling of constraint, usu. having the force of a prohibition or impediment”.

13 Cf. Dyck (2010) on § 37.

14 For example, *Partitiones oratoriae*, 78; *De inventione*, II.161.

15 In contrast, *impietas* is a characteristic of the Iron Age, according to Ovid (cf. *Metamorphoses* 1.148–149: *filius ante diem patrios inquit in annos; / victa iacet pietas* ...).

16 Wagenvoort (1980) 3–6.

well-established. And the idea of *pietas* as a kind of civic virtue is already shown in a famous verse of Lucilius.

*commoda praeterea patriae sibi prima putare  
deinde parentum, tertia iam postremaque nostra.*  
(Lucilius: Marx vv.1337–1338)

But *pietas* in the *forum*, as seen above, was neither restricted to the social domain, nor was its religious meaning yet excluded. Actually in Cicero's later works, *pietas* often means piety towards the gods and is synonymous with *religio*.<sup>17</sup>

Although the differences in the genre and topics of each work should be taken into account, it is still important that Cicero consistently correlates the idea of *pietas* with *iustitia* or *aequitas*. Of course, the change of terminology from earlier usage to that denoting *pietas erga deos* can be interpreted as the result of Cicero's retreat to philosophy, either because of his weakened political status or because of his private grief following his daughter's death.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, in the late Roman republic and the early principate, the concept of *pietas* is adjusted to this current in the literary works of, for example, Virgil and Livy. Moreover, especially Augustus, who always tried to position himself in the guise of *res publica restituta*, could conceive of *pietas* as respect and duty for fathers generally. He still permitted the established republican government, the council of the *patres* and *seniores*, to continue by denying any privilege beyond what was allowed by tradition. He became a pious son of *parentes* and *patria* by having saved the Roman people from the danger of civil disorder. At the same time, he became an example of the most pious son of a god by avenging his father's murder and by deifying him. Thus, Augustus' policy seems to have merged the dual aspect of *pietas/religio* into one. This would be the starting point of imperial *pietas*,<sup>19</sup> which, in the near future, would come into conflict with Christian *pietas*, understood as the devotion to only one god.

So, to sum up, *pietas* is born out of condition of dependency imposed on sons by nature. It is also a virtue which Romans have a duty to maintain towards their parents, especially towards the *pater familias*, arising from the condition of a patriarchal society. The blood relationship and the socially defined role impose obligations on fathers and sons. In this way, *pietas* would appear to be a typical

<sup>17</sup> For example, *De natura deorum* 1.116, 2.153; *De finibus bonorum et malorum* 5.65; *Topica* 90.

<sup>18</sup> Wagenvoort (1980) 8–10.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 1.200–205: ... sic, cum **manus impia** saevit / ... / nec tibi grata minus **pietas**, Auguste, tuorum est / quam fuit illa Iovi.



norm of patriarchal society. On the other hand, the undifferentiated feature of *pietas* and *religio*, as seen in the case of *pro Sexto Roscio*, arguably received an extension of meaning by which later Roman emperors shed light on the aspect of imperial hierarchy of *pietas*. *Pietas* between son and father turned into *pietas* between human son and divine father. Moreover, the deified emperors were to be deferred to both as fathers and as gods. Although Cicero sometimes tried to distinguish the concept of *pietas* from *religio*, *pietas* maintained a latent ambiguity of meaning, capable of ranging from the necessary human nature given by divine origin to the dutiful virtue towards one's parents and to the gods. And with the change of the object or range of application of *pietas*, the social roles of a man with *pietas* will have altered gradually, as a son, a citizen, a subject, until the meaning of piety came to mean being faithful before God in Western civilization.

### 3 Translating *pietas* into *xiao* (孝)

*Pietas*, as one of the primary concepts of the Western world, is ostensibly familiar to East Asians, or at least to those who are accustomed to Confucian tradition. Because, as we have seen, the narrower sense of *pietas*, namely filial piety, is similar to *xiao* (孝), which traditional Confucianism has always emphasized. It still remains valid in some sense today, even though modernity has changed so many things in the daily life of East Asians. Especially in the language of each nation, as a kind of common cultural property, Chinese characters (漢字) appear to maintain the idea of Confucianism. By reviewing each translation a part of *pro Sexto Roscio*, discussed above, the way(s) of understanding Cicero's idea of *pietas* in East Asia may provide a clue to understanding and drawing comparisons between two different civilizations.

First of all, the word *pietas*, which appears prominently in § 37 (*voltu saepe laeditur pietas*) of *pro Sexto Roscio*, has very similar translations in East Asian versions:

종종 표정 하나만으로도 불효(不孝)가 되는 마당에  
Just a look often causes **filial impiety**: Kim et al. (2015)

百惡不孝為先  
**Filial impiety** becomes the first of a hundred evils: Wang (2008)

親に対する孝心は、しばしば子が恋な目つきをするだけで台無しになる  
The **filial heart** towards parents is often ruined by the son with just a lovely glance: Takenaka (2001)

In some modern Western translations, this *pietas* is translated into similar expressions, “filial duty” (Berry 2000) or “piété filiale” (Hinard 2006). Because the word-for-word translation ‘piety’ or ‘piété’ might produce misunderstanding of its meaning, the translators seem to choose expressions carefully. Likewise, the non-classical term *pietas* causes some confusion with a religious meaning, especially regarding Christian piety. The latter usually receives the corresponding translation 虔敬 (*qianjing*)<sup>20</sup> or 敬 (*jing*), which means reverence or deference toward a superior being. On the other hand, as seen above, *pietas* as filial piety enjoys a similar translation 孝 (*xiao*) in every translation given. Among these, however, particularly noticeable is Wang’s translation, which seems to be a contrary proposition to the well-known idiom “Filial piety becomes the first of a hundred goods” (百善孝为先), the significance of which will be discussed later.

Another example comes from § 66 (*quod ne pii quidem sine scelere esse potuerunt*):

그들은 범죄를 저지르지 않고서는 부친에게 효도(孝道)를 다할 수 없었기에  
since they could not to fulfil the duty of **filial piety** towards their fathers: Kim et al. (2015)

因为他们不犯罪就无法完城他们对父亲承担的义务  
because unless committing a crime, they could not discharge **the duty** towards their fathers: Wang (2008)

彼らが罪を犯すことなしには、子としての義務を果たすせなかったからだ  
without committing a crime, they could not fulfil **their duty** as sons; Takenaka (2001)

The translations in the Chinese and Japanese versions are similar to Berry’s consistent choice of word, “duty”.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, *xiao* still occupies a part of the word, which also incorporates *dao* (道) as a component of the Korean translation. Although it is necessary to examine every nuance of expression in each nation’s language, it appears that the idea of *pious/pietas* in *pro Sexto Roscio* is understood as the son’s duty towards his father, and the concept of *xiao* also seems to imply this nuance. In other words, *xiao* incorporates *yi* (righteousness, 義/义) and thus duty (*yiwu*, 義務/义务) follows after it.

And next, in § 69, *quod in impios singulare supplicium invenerunt* has translations as follows:

특히 패륜자(悖倫者)들에게 유례없이 가혹한 처벌을 고안해 낸 사실에서  
especially from the fact that they devised an unparalleled harsh punishment **for the filial-immoral**: Kim et al. (2015)

<sup>20</sup> By a changing the order of the characters, 敬虔 is usually the standard orthography in Korea and Japan.

<sup>21</sup> By contrast, Hinard (2006) maintains the expression “piété filiale”.

为惩罚不义之人, 他们发明了非常奇怪的惩罚办法  
for the punishment of **undutiful people** they devised a very monstrous means of punishment: Wang (2008)

神をも恐れぬ者たち対して独特な罰を案出したことで  
By that means they devised a unique punishment for those **who are not afraid of God**: Takenaka (2001)

Berry translated the phrase *in impios* as “for sons who violated their filial duty”. His choice of words appears to avoid any unnecessary misunderstanding that ‘piety’ would otherwise bring about in the modern reader’s mind. This tendency is also observed in the Chinese translation, but there because the translator referred to the LCL text in which the English translation reads “undutiful” for *impios* in § 69, as is also the case with ‘duty’ for *pui* in § 66. Of course, we might say that *yi* (義) and *xiao* (孝) share an inseparable relation, as do *pietas* and *iustitia*. On the other hand, it seems a little odd that the Japanese translator reads the meaning of *impui* as ‘those who are not afraid of god’. With regard to this, since as we saw that Cicero also seems to incorporate *religio* or *pietas* given by the gods into the idea of filial piety, *impui* might not be entirely off base. But since, in the text following §§ 71–72, the punishment to which Cicero is referring is the so-called *poena cullei*, a more exact meaning of *impios* might be “those who have committed parricide”.<sup>22</sup> On this point, “the filial-immoral”<sup>23</sup> in the Korean translation seems stronger than other renderings, but it appears to reflect in context the enormity of the crime. If so, such an evaluation of the characteristics of parricide is similar to that discussed above, which Cicero also tried to emphasize. In fact, a violator who breached the precepts of *xiao* would have been punished with severe penalties in a traditional Confucian society. Such things are also recorded in the *Xiaojing* (孝經. *The Classic of Filial Piety*).<sup>24</sup>

The *Xiaojing*, which deals with filial piety in principle and in concrete precepts, has been read by thousands in East Asia since ancient times when Confucianism became established as a leading ideology of governance, culture, and education. The words above were translated into Chinese characters, which mostly came from this traditional background and are still used in ordinary

<sup>22</sup> Translating into “pour les impies”, Hinard (2006) points out the difficulty of translating the word *impui* into French. But he comments that the word signals those who violated the sacred value of Roman family, namely *pietas*: Hinard (2006) n.2 on § 69.

<sup>23</sup> 패륜 (悖倫) in Korean means a state of morally deprived human who is usually treated as a lesser being than an animal and excluded from society, just as the Latin *homo sacer*. In chapter 15 of the *Xiaojing*, *bei* (悖) means ‘to violate’ or ‘to pervert’.

<sup>24</sup> *Xiaojing*, ch. 11 has the title “The Five Punishments”. It emphasizes that there is no graver crime than *buxiao* (不孝), namely “the violation of *xiao*” or *impietas*.

life these days, although some ideas of traditional Confucianism are regarded as old-fashioned and sometimes even obsolete. But *xiao* still remains in the language and in the mentality of East Asians in their different ways of thinking, according to their own cultural heritages. To examine and compare such subtle differences is beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, if *xiao* represents the common way of translating and understanding Western ideas such as *pietas*, and if this correspondence is meaningful, then the following preliminary account of the *Xiaojing* might justify more specific studies to broaden and deepen understanding between East and West by providing new perspectives from one to another.

## 4 Reading *xiao* and translating it into *pietas*

The *Xiaojing* is a dialogue between Confucius (551–479 BCE) and his disciple Zeng Shen (曾參, 505–436 BCE), also known as Master Zeng or Zengzi (曾子), who was famous for his *xiao*. This work seems to have been written by the Confucian followers of Master Zeng and established as a complete text in the later Warring States period between the 4th and 3rd centuries BCE.<sup>25</sup> It consists of 18 short chapters and the volume containing the modern English translation together with the original Chinese text is about 10 pages long.<sup>26</sup> In the first chapter, Confucius teaches the importance of *xiao* as both the fundamental principle of *ren* (humaneness, 仁) and the source of *jiao* (education, 教). Then, through a question and answer with Master Zeng, he unfolds the concrete precepts of *xiao*, which should be observed by each rank of the Confucian imperial hierarchy, from the emperor to the common people. In short, the *Xiaojing* explicates Confucian social-role ethics on the basis of *xiao*, or filial piety.<sup>27</sup>

According to Confucius, the emperor should love (*ai*, 愛) and respect (*jing*, 敬) his own parents, whereby the exemplary *xiao* of the son of Heaven (天子) is then able to educate the common people (ch. 2). This duty of love and respect (愛敬) towards one's parents will also be emphasized at the end of the *Xiaojing*, which deals with mourning for deceased parents.

When parents are alive they are served with love and respect; when they are deceased they are served with grief and sorrow. This is the basic duty to be discharged by the living, the

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Ames/Rosemont (2009) 18–19.

<sup>26</sup> So in the edition of Ames/Rosemont (2009)

<sup>27</sup> 'Filial piety' has been conventionally used as the translation of *xiao*.

fulfilling of the appropriate obligations (*yi*, 義) between the living and the dead, and the consummation of filial service which children owe their parents.<sup>28</sup>

On the one hand, the duty of *xiao* is justified as both a heavenly principle and as righteousness (*yi*, 義) on earth (ch. 7), and the relationship between father and son, which is given by nature, becomes by analogy the dutiful righteousness exercised between sovereign and subject (ch. 9). Thus, *xiao* is the proper way (*dao*, 道) given by nature to children when they are born into the world. So, Confucian tradition from ancient times has taught followers to preserve one's own person unharmed, even one's hair and skin, which are given by parents along with life. This idea derives from the discipline of the *Xiaojing*, in which it is suggested as the beginning of *xiao* (ch. 1). In this way, the Confucian *xiao* is based on the blood relationship between children and parents, comparable to the notion of filial piety discussed above. So *pietas erga parentes* imposes on children a necessary and basic duty in the same way that Confucian *xiao* requires unconditional love and respect for parents. In other words, *xiao* and *pietas* both arise from the condition of children's natural reliance upon their source of life, namely their parents. Following birth, children are at first dependent on their parents. From this relation of dependency, dutiful virtues such as love, respect, and obedience are expected and demanded from children while they are under the protection and upbringing of parents. In this way, *xiao* and *pietas* are both based on a kind of naturalism, where nature itself is a source and a cause of human conduct. And this retrospective to origins proceeds to a superior or fundamental causes, for example, ancestors, gods, or heaven (天) itself. There can be a way in which *xiao* and *pietas* both virtually imply *religio* in *pietas*, 敬 in 孝.

While initially based on this naturalistic justification, the duties of *xiao* or *pietas* appear to develop in social ways. As mentioned above, *pietas* in the narrower sense and *patria potestas* have a form of mutuality. In Roman society a kind of dependence could not be dissolved until the son himself became an independent *pater familias*, and a father had responsibilities for his son, for example, to bring him up, educate him, get him married. And given the well-known role that fathers usually played in the education of their sons in Cicero's times, Roman *pietas* from the fathers, namely *paterna pietas*, should have been a source of education in the same way that the educational importance of *xiao* is emphasized in the *Xiaojing*. In fact, *pietas* or *xiao* is an intergenerational duty which has to be passed down by extension to one's son(s), vassal(s) or subject(s). Thus, both in ancient Rome and in traditional Confucian societies,

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28 *Xiaojing* ch. 18. The translation of cited passage is from Ames/Rosemont (2009).

the elders or seniors, the high rankers of order, are deferred to and respected by the younger and/or the lower class. On this point, *xiao* or *pietas* functioned as central ideas which sanctified a social system based on a patriarchal ideology.

The Confucian governmental ideal in the *Xiaojing* expects even the ruler-emperor to assume *xiao* in his ruling policy, just as it occurs in the family (ch. 8). This metaphorical expression of family appears to signify the role of the emperor as a son of parents, the son of Heaven, and the father of the people and the state. The dual identity of both son and father implies some overlapping or ambivalence, but it is similar to the symbolical representations of ruling roles which were given to the later Roman rulers of the imperial court. The state, as an extended family, is prescribed in the *Xiaojing* to be governed in accordance with the principle of *xiao*. Although *xiao* itself is not the absolute goal of such an ideal Confucian society, it is suggested as the proper rule and the principal code of human conduct that guarantees that if all the members of society attend to their duties in compliance with *xiao*, such a state could be seen as peaceful (*he*, 和) (ch. 8). On this point, *xiao* is the basis from which the other important principles of Confucian social ethics develop, for example *ren* (仁), *yi* (義), *li* (禮) and *zhi* (智).<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, to fulfil one's *pietas* of filial duty, or *xiao*, is something assigned to men whose aims are personal aggrandizement in androcentric societies. On one side of the social ethics of *xiao*, there are the duties regarding obedience to the elder or ruling class and the fulfillment of one's roles given by the order of hierarchy. On the other hand, it is necessary for a man to take care of the younger generation and the lower class and to lead them such that he would function as a father and an authority in an extended family, a broader society, and a state. Likewise, in this way, Roman *humanitas* might be said to embrace *pietas* as a virtue of manliness by which a *vir bonus* could be characterized by his actions towards his parents, his citizens, and his country. Thus, such social ethics arising from filial piety would provide an efficient program to socialize and accommodate someone into the established order. But the educational function of filial piety in the family, which seems to be applicable to more extended social relations, is restricted to maintaining and reproducing the order of patriarchal hierarchy. In contrast, the Stoic ethics of οἰκείωσις seem to be more flexible, implying rather open cosmopolitan role ethics. Thus it might have had some influence on the formation of Roman *humanitas* and the development of the idea of *pietas*.

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<sup>29</sup> Ames/Rosemont (2009) 22–23. See also, *Analects* (論語, *Lunyu*) I.2: “孝悌也者，其爲仁之本與!” (Filial and fraternal piety, they are the foundation of the humaneness (*ren*, 仁)!)

The Confucian *xiao* was transformed into a systematic ethics of conduct at a relatively early period because Confucianism was adopted as the philosophy and ideology of governance of the empire. The imperial constitution, which was supported and justified by Confucianism, began to demand that its administrators be well-matched to its ideal. Thus almost all of the state's offices were managed by Confucian scholar-officials, who became the main ruling elite of the empire. The *Xiaojing* was the main source from which such a political elite could learn *xiao* at a young age. *Xiao* was a basic duty to learn from childhood, and it was the first step to following the rules laid down by society. In this regard, *xiao*, filial piety, like Roman *pietas*, is not only a human duty given by nature, but also a duty imposed by the social system. Also, it is well illustrated as the so-called *zhengming* (正名, the rectification of names) in the *Analects* 12.11:

Duke Jing of Qi asked Confucius about good governance. Confucius answered: "The ruler becomes ruler, the minister minister, the father father, and the son son".<sup>30</sup>

Thus the violation of *pietas*, or *buxiao* (不孝), may be considered disobedience and disloyalty to the conservative order of society.<sup>31</sup> With this point in mind, an undertone may be understood in the word choice of the translators for Cicero's expressions relating to *pietas*. It is difficult to answer which translation is most acceptable. And this difficulty is not only for East Asian translations and studies of Cicero. For example, a new recent translation of the *Xiaojing* has made a fresh attempt, choosing the phrase "family reverence" instead of the conventional "filial piety" for *xiao*. The translators suggest some reasons for this, but it is doubtful whether their choice will be welcome.<sup>32</sup> Another interesting example is the Latin translation of the *Xiaojing* from the 18th century. Perhaps François Noël wanted to avoid the misunderstanding that could arise from using the word *pietas* for *xiao*; he translated the end of the *Xiaojing* which is cited above, like this:

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**30** “齊景公 問政於孔子。孔子對曰：君君臣臣父父子子”。

**31** But it is interesting that the possibility of disobedience is partly guaranteed for the sons in the *Xiaojing*, ch. 15. *Jian* (諫) is similar to *libertas* or *παρρησία*, and it can be called *pia impietas* in some sense. On the other hand, it is worth considering the famous example of the Confucian dilemma between *pietas* and *iustitia* (*Analects*, XIII.18), which has often been compared with the case of Plato's *Euthyphro*. In short, the issue in both cases is whether the son should accuse the father of the criminal offence.

**32** The emphasis on the role ethics of Confucianism seems to make them consider *xiao* 'in' the family. For their justification of this provocative attempt, see Ames/Rosemont (2009) 1–3, 87–90.

*denique si vivis Parentibus amore et honore, mortuis luctu et maerore inserviat, videtur viventis filii munus omnino adimpletum esse, mortisque ac vitae aequitas exacte servata. atque is est filialis erga Parentes observantiae ultimus finis.*

Although it may not be claimed that the equivalence between *xiao* and *pietas* is simply demonstrated and that they are interchangeable terms, nevertheless a detailed comparison of the two will provide more helpful guidance for understanding, translating, and communicating with new perspectives. In order to achieve this, more comparative studies will be needed in the future. At first glance there may appear to be no direct equivalence, yet some comparisons may provide the possibility of studying further the relationship between the two concepts. Incidentally, the Confucian ideal portrait of the pious son is described virtually in the character *xiao* itself. 孝 is the composite character of *lao* (老, *senex*) and *zi* (子, *filius*). And the shape of the more complex 孝 ostensibly shows the image of a son holding onto the shoulder his old father. This image recalls the famous sculpture of G. L. Bernini, “Aeneas, Anchises, and Ascanius” (1618–19), which holds forth a model of the pious man of Rome. Someone standing before the statue might reasonably think of Aeneas as a hero of Confucian *xiao*.





Stefania Stafutti

# “Be modest and avoid wastefulness”: table manners and beyond from Confucius to Xi Jinping

The choice of an odd title for my paper on the re-evaluation of Confucius in contemporary China is inspired by a campaign run by traditional media, social media and political bodies against wasting food (‘Operation Empty Plate’, 光盘行动 (*guang pan xingdong*), which was launched in April 2012 by Xu Zhijun (徐志军), a journalist born in the eastern part of Jiangsu province who moved in Beijing to work at an agricultural newspaper). As media report:

Mr Xu was shocked to see piles of half-finished dishes left on restaurant tables. After learning that the food wasted by Chinese university students could feed 10 million people a year, Mr Xu reached his boiling point.<sup>1</sup>

Mr Xu decided then to post a photo on Weibo, a China-based microblogging platform (something in between Facebook and Twitter) showing his empty plate at the end of a meal and urged everybody to behave the same when dealing with food. ‘Operation Empty Plate’ received little attention until December 2012, when Xi Jinping, who had just assumed office as the new Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party and was going to become President of the PRC in March 2013, during a tour of China’s Hebei province in December, ate a simple meal featuring four dishes and one bowl of soup: “China’s blogosphere took note; Operation Empty Plate’s followers began to climb.”<sup>2</sup>

The ‘Operation’ received front-page mention in all the most influential papers in the county and was mentioned among the top stories by almost 2000 television newscast. ‘Operation Empty Plate’ was not but one of the first steps of Xi Jinping’s battle against corruption, which had and has much more wider political and economic implications. But what is interesting to me and what matters here is the fact that this call for avoiding wastefulness of food does not rely on the ‘sustainability’ of eating habits, which are not concerned first and foremost about wasting food. On the contrary, it recalls and aims to highlight some tradi-

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1 Hatton (2013).

2 *Ibidem*

tional values which are connected with an idea of ‘Chineseness’<sup>3</sup> or, to put it as they do in mainland China, 中国特色, *Zhongguo tese*, China peculiarities/China-distinctive features. These values involve frugality and moderation.

To make reference to the tradition and to the past to confer authority upon present policies is an old and long-lasting strategy used by the leading class throughout Chinese history. This ‘pattern’ has contributed to China’s not completely cutting ties with the past in the periods when its ‘heritage’ has been heavily questioned and charged with responsibility for China backwardness. We know that, from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>, relationship with traditional culture was not a minor concern among those intellectuals who, while sharply criticizing the past, were also aware of the value of the heritage rooted in the past. We also know that this concern was shared by Mao Zedong himself, to whom is attributed the famous slogan “Make the past serve the present” (*gu wei jin yong* 古为今用).<sup>4</sup>

The heritage of the past was dramatically disowned during the so-called ‘Cultural Revolution’ (1966–1976). This did not happen during the so-called ‘Seventeen years’, i. e. from 1949, when PRC was founded, to 1966, when the Cultural Revolution began. The Fifties, with the need of a new periodization of Chinese history according to Marxist criteria, had provided room for a new problem: the assessment of class membership by historical figures and the evaluation of their historical role and significance on an ideological basis. Anyway, generally speaking, Although Confucius was considered as belonging to the upper classes

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3 I use this term ‘Chineseness’ as it is somehow more comprehensive than ‘Chinese values’, but the concept of *Chineseness* (中国性, *Zhongguo xing*) deserves its own analysis and discussion. The term is used in Taiwan and among Chinese communities outside China, but not in mainland China, which rather refers to ‘Chinese values’. As professor Allen Chun states: “What it means to be Chinese was and has been constructed in completely different ways in different societies” (<http://international.ucla.edu/Institute/article/172547>, seen 30.06.2018).

4 The sentence runs longer: “Make the past serve the present, make foreign things serve China (古为今用, 洋为中用, *gu wei jin yong, yang wei zhong yong*), and partly echoes a similar sentence – and concept – which became popular at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when intellectuals such as Zhang Zhitong (张之洞, 1837–1909) and Feng Guifen (冯桂芬, 1809~1874) were calling for China’s “self-straightening” strategies after the disastrous defeat the empire was facing during the Opium Wars. [Interestingly enough, the contribution of Western culture is always given an ancillary role]. Sticking to our point, we take into consideration the first part of Chairman Mao’s sentence, which is reported to be used for the first time in his response to a letter dating Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 1964, addressed to him by Chen Lian (陈莲), a young musician who was studying at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, and who questioned Mao about the relationship among tradition/ modernity/East/West when performing and composing music. Cfr. *Guangming ribao* (Brightness), December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, <http://www.chinanews.com/cul/2013/12-22/5648204.shtml> (seen 20.07.2018)

and that the appreciation for his contribution to Chinese culture was not unanimous, praise of his ideas on education was rather pervasive and could be useful for feeding a new sort of ‘Chinese nationalism’.<sup>5</sup> But with the radicalization of the Party political line during the Cultural Revolution, Confucius became a ‘symbolic’ target of attacks against the members of the ‘bourgeois rightist’ clique of the party and was bashed with tremendous virulence:

In our socialist new China, there is absolutely no room for Confucian concepts and capitalist and revisionist ideas which serve the exploiting classes. If these ideas are not uprooted, it will be impossible to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and build socialism and communism. In the great proletarian cultural revolution, one of our important tasks is to pull down the rigid corps of Confucius and thoroughly eradicate the utterly reactionary Confucian concepts.<sup>6</sup>

Confucius prestige was largely restored after the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the 1980s a wide process of “reconstructing the Confucian Idea” together with a sort of “cultural craze”<sup>7</sup> (文化热 *wenhua re*) for the culture of the past took place in mainland China,<sup>8</sup> being characterized by a rich academic debate and being at the same time crosscut by a tension and rivalry<sup>9</sup> between mainland scholars and overseas scholars “concerning property rights over New Confucianism”.<sup>10</sup> The debate on the theories of Confucius and his disciples, as a matter of

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5 Kam (1980) 74.

6 Kam (1980) 91.

7 Song (2005).

8 One of the prominent figures in China was Zheng Jiadong (郑家栋, 1956-). This scholar lives now in Canada and his theoretical positions are closer to Christian ideas. He was a leading figure, held the post of Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was a Council Member of the International Confucian Association and an Executive Member of the Council Chinese Modern Philosophy Association, and was held in great esteem both in the academic realm and among media outlets. In 2006 he was suddenly accused of using fraudulent visa documents in order to help some women to reach U.S. illegally. He was arrested and detained for 2 years. Later on he left China and spent his career as visiting professor in various Universities of Canada and the United Kingdom, having also acquired a Western personal name, *Stanley*. *Stanley Jiadong Zheng* is now basically working on the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity. This quite obscure “incident” has never been totally cleared up.

9 Makeham (2005).

10 Solé-Farràs (2008) 5: “Nowadays in China, roughly speaking, New Confucianism is made up of three groups according to Bresciani, 2001” (a) scholars who unconditionally identify with the New Confucians of Hong Kong and Taiwan; (b) those advocating the creation of an independent and different group; and (c) people who think that future Chinese culture should be a Confucianism that has absorbed Marxism, a ‘New Socialist Confucianism’. In addition, some people advocate that those elements of the Confucian heritage that are still valuable should be incor-

fact, was kept alive within the community of Chinese scholars outside of mainland China. In spite of rivalry, for a while, the debate seemed to provide a common ground for intellectuals both inside and outside mainland China and to provide a common ideological platform.

I am not drawing an overall picture of the development of New Confucianism in China, which by the way happened soon to collide with the mainstream understanding and interpretation of ‘orthodox Marxism with Chinese characteristics’. I am, rather, interested in investigating the way in which the academic debate turned into a sort of ‘plain narration’ used in contemporary propaganda and fitting the Marxist vulgate. The reasons why some traditional concepts have been revitalized and are now widely used in the political discourse targeting common people have to be traced back to the 1980s.

The end of Maoism and the beginning of the policies of liberalization inaugurated a long process of re-evaluating Confucianism. [...] From the very beginning of the 1980s, traditional Chinese philosophy was featured again as the subject of conferences and articles, at the same time that official organs were created, like the China Confucius Foundation in 1984.<sup>11</sup>

If it is true that Confucianism “is such a big basket you can select whatever you want”,<sup>12</sup> it is also true that the use of the Confucian tradition by party leadership could not but pursue political goals and should not be expected to have devoted any interest to the theoretical issues of the Great Master from the State of Lu. Within this political agenda, the new appraisal of Confucius was basically stimulated by the need for some indigenous elements with which to re-construct a ‘Chinese identity’, yet which could not rely on Chinese Marxism, due to the deep disappointment and frustration caused by the Cultural Revolution (and, even more painfully, by the Tian’anmen Incident, which occurred on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989). The fascination towards Western culture which spread widely at the beginning of the Eighties was apprehended with some concern. In 1983 the Chinese leadership reacted against the so called ‘spiritual pollution’ (*qingchu jingshen*

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porated into the CCP’s line of “Socialism with Chinese characteristics.” Kang Ouyang (2001) itemizes the elements in traditional Chinese culture and philosophy that may be absorbed into Marxist philosophy. These elements are: (a) the idea of the unity of Man and Heaven (Nature); (b) the outlook and method of the Middle Way, which in the context of social life prescribes that each human being should form his/her own judgment regardless of the opinions of others; and (c) harmony among peoples, in so far as harmonious relationships between human beings is to be based on the common understanding of virtues”. See also Solé-Farràs (2014).

<sup>11</sup> Billioud (2007) 52.

<sup>12</sup> Yee (2011), quoted in Gary (2012) 4.

wuran, 清除精神污染) coming from Western countries, which involved various features, both theoretical and tangible, from the so called ‘humanitarianism and theories of alienation’ (*rendaozhuyi he yihuade lundian*, 人道主义和异化的论点)<sup>13</sup> to new trends in music, art, and literature, the latter allowing room for taboo subjects like sex and sexuality. The revaluation of the ‘indigenous culture’ was urgent, in order to ward off the overwhelming Western influence; the party secretary Hu Yaobang (胡耀邦, 1915–1989) and the entire leadership were aware of this crucial issue and decided to explore the possibility of integrating Confucianism “into the narrative of China’s long march towards socialist modernization”.<sup>14</sup> This political strategy also fit the mood of many intellectuals, who felt quite uncomfortable and were not able to cope with the trend of accepting a sort of ‘American cultural model’ unquestioningly.<sup>15</sup> The so called ‘cultural craze’ “was marked by two dominant tendencies: a prevailing aspiration towards Western modernity [...] and the discovery of traditional culture, especially within the most educated and urbane fringe of society”.<sup>16</sup> Some side effects of this fascination with traditional culture were quite *naïve*, as, for example, the so-called ‘Han Clothing Movement’ (汉服运动, *Hanfu yundong*), which gained sympathy among the youngest demographics, usually university students, but which was regarded with favour also by elder people on college campuses. Born at the beginning of the Nineties, the Movement advocated the restoration of an imaginary ‘real China’ and could boast of a larger number of supporters from the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century; in 2003, the website *Hanwang* (汉网 ‘Han Network’) was launched to promote ‘traditional’ Han clothing and a Han supremacist agenda.<sup>17</sup> This ‘neo-

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13 Both humanitarianism and theories of alienation are actually outcomes of the debate among the scholars engaged in the debate on New Confucianism.

14 What Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (2006) 1075 affirms, analyzing the way Chinese official historiography deals with the Cultural Revolution, can also be referred to the strategy of revaluating Confucius and Confucianism: “When ‘de-Maoification’ was put on the agenda, Party historiography did not dare to deconstruct the general principles and basic assessments. Instead it broadened the scope of data to be included in the narrative”. This ‘broadening’ also included the recovering of a so-called ‘tradition’ based on the ideology of the old Master.

15 The uncritical “Western fever” became also the subject of a number of literary works, often mocking those who took for granted that anything coming from the West was good by definition. See, for example, the hilarious short story *The rocky-watery-porridge* (*Jianying xizhou*, 坚硬稀粥), by Wang Meng (王蒙), published in the issue n. 2, 1989, of the monthly *Zhongguo zuojia* (中国作家, Chinese Writers), on the economic and emotional breakdown caused to a family in Beijing which followed the advice of the youngest and adopted a Western diet.

16 Billioud (2007) 52.

17 In spite of its inconsistency both in historical and in theoretical terms, this ‘neo-traditionalist and ethno-nationalist’ movement, intermingled with a strong nationalist attitude, has left some traces in the propaganda strategies of recent years.

traditionalist and ethno-nationalist' movement locates its model for a 'real China' in the archaic times of the Yellow Emperor:<sup>18</sup>

The claim is that such authentic China can be recovered by wearing a particular type of clothing, which enthusiasts in the movement identify as ethnically Han.<sup>19</sup>

Those feeding this sort of *nostalgia* for the past were/are not sensitive to nor interested in any philological issue, and when referring to the Chinese 'traditional culture' (传统文化, *chuantong wenhua*) or to the Chinese 'cultural tradition' (文化传统, *wenhua chuantong*),<sup>20</sup> it was and is not actually clear what the neo-traditionalists were/are talking about. It could be objected that this use of nostalgia often occurs in cultural-political contests other than the Chinese one,<sup>21</sup> but, in contemporary China, this so-called 'cultural tradition' has become a pillar upon which the strategies for political legitimation and consensus rely. This process of 'rediscovering tradition' was probably accelerated after the Incident at Tian'anmen, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989. As Werner Meissner asserts: "the political leadership clearly functionalized traditional concepts to broaden its dwindling legitimation after June 4th".<sup>22</sup> According to him, the 'authoritarian' aspects of Confucianism helped in shaping a so-called 'socialist spiritual civilization' and its prestige offered a cultural antidote to the trend towards Westernization.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, particularly during the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and with more incisiveness from 2012 onward, there was more than the need for power legitimation riding on the re-construction of a tradition. The new phase of the political struggle was giving enormous relevance to the battle against corruption and was looking at 'Confucian values' as a new, powerful and effective weapon to beat political enemies (who were with no exception to be considered enemies of the newly advocated 'harmonious socialist society' -和谐社会社会主义社会,

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**18** No matter how *naïf* the 'Han Clothing Movement' could be, as Billioud points out, the cults devoted to mythical and tutelary figures have increasingly become the object of extensive media coverage; see Billioud (2007) 59. As a matter of fact, it cannot but be regarded within the overall picture of a re-invention of the tradition, which often includes freak shows which seem to lead to a Disneyland-ization of 'traditional culture'. See Scarpari (2015) 101 and Sun (2013).

**19** <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/8520>, accessed 08.07.2018. On the specific topic of the re-emerging of dressing styles echoing the past, see also Chew (2007).

**20** The phrases 'traditional culture' (传统文化, *chuantong wenhua*) and 'cultural tradition' (文化传统, *wenhua chuantong*) are quite challenging in Chinese, due to the peculiar structure of the language and their overlapping in meaning.

**21** See Hobsbawm (1983).

**22** Billioud (2007) 53.

**23** Meissner (2006) 48.

*hexie shehuizhuyi shehui*). The concept of a ‘harmonious world’,<sup>24</sup> which echoed some Confucian values and concepts, was articulated for the first time in 2005 by the Hu Jintao, at the time the secretary general of the party and president of China.<sup>25</sup> The narrative about ‘the harmonious society’ proceeded with a constant emphasis on the ‘the overall strength of Chinese culture’ and could, of course, not forget about moral values.

The frequent reference to the fact that “The Chinese culture belongs not only to the Chinese but also to the whole world” – as Hu had already stated in the speech delivered to the federal parliament of Australia during his official visit in October 2003<sup>26</sup> – originated from a dominant concern among party leaders, who were facing a new challenge: China was experiencing an enormous increase in economic growth, but this was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in international influence.<sup>27</sup> This also involved an underestimation of the importance of Chinese culture. Hu Jintao actually put together three different issues: a) the importance of tradition; b) the need of promoting and spreading the knowledge of Chinese civilization abroad;<sup>28</sup> and c) the call on government officials to return to Confucian moral ethics as a way to counter corruption and growing inequality. In 2006, at the conclusion of the Sixth Session of the 16th Central Committee of the CCP, the *Resolution on the main aspects of the construction of a harmonious socialist society*<sup>29</sup> was approved and labelled as the *integrated plan* of the CCP for the 21st century. During the meeting, the famous list of ‘Eight Hon-

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**24** A rather interesting take on the concept of ‘harmony’ in Chinese international political discourse is carried out by Nordin (2016) 26–27: “...harmony must *by definition* be universal, but its universalization *by definition* makes harmony impossible”. Her book “makes a [...] sociological claim about the disappearance of the Chinese dream of a harmonious world” and illustrates the “mass proliferation of harmony, where everything and anything is supposed to be harmonious”.

**25** Hu (2005). The same concepts were reiterated during a speech given at the United Nations some months later (September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015); it was actually an inspiring speech which gained less interest than it deserved from the world press.

**26** <https://www.smh.com.au/national/full-text-hus-speech-20031024-gdhnfs.html>, accessed 06.11.2017.

**27** Goh (2016).

**28** In 2006 Hu Jintao also approved funding for over 100 Confucius Institutes to be established around the world to offer classes and resources about Chinese language and culture. See Stafutti (2010).

**29** The Chinese title runs as follows: *Zhong Gong zhongyang guanyu goujian shehuizhuyi hexie-shehui ruogan zhongda wentide jue ding* (中共中央关于构建社会主义和谐社会若干重大问题的决定). <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64094/4932424.html>, accessed 22.07.2018. On the topic, see also Choukroune/Garapon (2007). In this article the authors undergo a deep analysis on the relationship between the ‘new moral values’ and the call for a “a harmonious society governed by law” (和谐法治社会, *hexie fazhi shehui*) .



ors, Eight Disgraces' (*ba rong ba chi* 八榮八耻), defining a moral boundary between good and evil, was officialized.<sup>30</sup>

These moral values, listed as if they were the pivotal points in a new Table of Law, had no precise ideological background and could easily be incorporated into a vaguely defined 'traditional culture'. At the same time, huge efforts were made to bump up the figure of Confucius. In 2010, China's domestic film industry released a movie about Confucius starring the famous Chow Yun-fat.<sup>31</sup>

Some months later, on January 12, 2011, a 31-foot bronze statue of Confucius was displayed in Tian'anmen Square, in front of the Chinese National Museum and facing Mao Zedong's Mausoleum. It was a short-lived occupancy of such a prestigious place, as the statue was moved away during the night of April 20<sup>th</sup> of the same year, without any previous announcement.<sup>32</sup> This is a minor but highly symbolic accident, which probably witnesses that the process of reassessing the philosopher was not always smooth.<sup>33</sup>

Anyway, there is no doubt that Confucius during the first two decades of 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a pivotal figure within the political narrative of Chinese leaders. There was no discontinuity in this process of recovering both the philosopher and the so called 'tradition' when the new party secretary Xi Jinping (习近平) took office in 2012. On the contrary, continuity is underlined by some sym-

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**30** The list runs as follows: – Love the country; do it no harm. – Serve the people; do no disservice. – Follow science; discard ignorance. – Be diligent; not indolent. – Be united, help each other; make no gains at others' expense. – Be honest and trustworthy; do not give up morals for profits. – Be disciplined and law-abiding; not chaotic and lawless. – Live plainly, struggle hard; do not wallow in luxuries and pleasures.

**31** The movie is by no means a masterpiece, but it bombed due to substantial official support; some blamed it on bad timing, since it went head-to-head with 3D *Avatar*, which was experiencing enormous success.

**32** Jacobs (2011).

**33** The Confucius Peace Prize, which originated as a response to the announcement that Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo had won the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, is to be considered among the less successful initiatives of the Government designed to turn Confucius into a global icon for culture. The Taiwanese politician Lien Chan was awarded the first prize in December 2010, for his contribution to developing positive ties between Taiwan and mainland China, but he did not attend the ceremony and the prize was claimed by an obscure 6 years old girl. Chinese authorities did not give up; in spite of the fact that the winners are often heavily questioned by Western media (Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen for 2017), the prize was welcomed by influential leaders such as Vladimir Putin (2016), and its importance could rise.

bolic events, such as the visit to the Confucius temple in Qufu,<sup>34</sup> Shandong province, where the philosopher was born (November 2013).

A few months before, on September 9, 2013, while addressing the students of Beijing Normal University, Xi Jinping unequivocally stated that “De-Sinicization is not something to celebrate. Classics should be imbedded into students’ minds and become the ‘genes’ of Chinese culture”.<sup>35</sup>

The same concepts were underlined many times and on different occasions. Xi was also imputing increasing importance to what is-called ‘Confucius’ birthday’, which has become a day officially celebrated in and outside of China,<sup>36</sup> and in which top-level leaders make public appearances. On September 24, 2014, during the 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of the International Confucian Association, organized in concurrence with the 2,565<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confucius’ birth, Xi affirmed that:

As an important component of traditional Chinese culture, the Confucian philosophy he created and the Confucian ideology established thereafter have exerted profound influences on the Chinese civilization. Along with other intellectual achievements that have been generated in the formulation and development of the Chinese nation, Confucianism recorded the Chinese nation’s spiritual activities, rational thinking and cultural achieve-

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**34** It is interesting to note that the re-discovering of the past went along different paths and involved many aspects of social life. The revival of tourism in any spot connected with Confucius himself or with the ‘Confucian tradition’ is one of the side effects of the new political narrative. The emphasis on moral values also led to a new interest in different religious forms like *qigong* 气功, Taoism, Buddhism, and even controversial ‘sects’ like Falun gong, 法轮功 [which made its official appearance in northeast China at the beginning of the 90s (1992) and was banned at the end of the decade] and, in general, towards self-cultivation practices. In the field of education, children were encouraged to read classical literature and to practice calligraphy; also the *qin* (琴), the musical instrument *literati* were supposed to play, and which culture had almost disappeared in mainland China, became fashionable again. Mass culture exhibited a true craze for historical shows on TV: the most remarkable case is the success of the series of lectures by Yu Dan, a female professor of Media Studies at Beijing Normal University, whose title was *Yu Dan insights into the Analects*. The series was broadcast for 7 days in autumn 2006 by China Central Television and, in spite the fact that many scholars argued that Yu Dan was oversimplifying the *Analects*, her interpretation of Confucian thought was ecstatically welcomed. An edited transcript of the lectures sold 10,000 copies on the day it appeared and by September 2007 the book had sold 4.2 million legal copies and over 6 million pirated ones. The websites devoted to classical culture also multiplied, and the usage of “classical” and traditional cultural values and images in advertising became effective; in everyday intercourses among those with a higher education, the exhibition of quotations from the Confucian Classics came to be considered an element of personal prestige.

**35** Zhang (2014).

**36** The date is labelled as ‘Confucius day’ (*Kongzi ri*, 孔子日), to be celebrated by Confucius Institutes all over the world through cultural events and initiatives.

ments in building their homeland, reflected spiritual pursuits of the Chinese nation, and provided a key source of nutrition for the survival and continuous growth of our nation.<sup>37</sup>

As happened with Hu Jintao, so also in Xi Jinping's political discourse the appraisal of Confucius goes together with the externalization of the highest esteem for 'cultural tradition'; once more, anyway, the difficulty in defining what 'cultural tradition' actually is does not seem to be overcome. Xi refers to an "accumulation of experiences" throughout the ages, but does not describe them at all.<sup>38</sup>

While giving publicity to the distinctive features of China (*Zhongguo tese*) we have to state clearly that Chinese culture is the result of a long-term accumulation of cultural, ideological and social achievements which are due to the deep spiritual research of the Chinese; this research also constitutes the rich and various nourishment which is endlessly feeding its development; we have to state clearly that its outstanding tradition is a prominent element of strength and prominence<sup>39</sup> and is our most effective means of soft power (*zui shenhoude wehua ruanshili*, 我们最深厚的文化软实力); we have to state clearly that socialism with Chinese characteristics is rooted in the loam of Chinese culture and mirrors the desires, the hopes and the aspiration of Chinese people, while fitting the research and the needs for development and progress of our present times.

What is new during Xi Jinping's era is that the promotion of 'Confucian values' is more and more targeting common people, and these values are broadening their field of action: they are not only used in the political arena or in the cultural realm, but they are becoming landmarks to be referred to in everyday life. The populist strategy is clear and undeniable: if addressing to the public at large a call for frugality, the authoritativeness of such a call relies on the leadership's trustworthiness and legitimacy. The corruption of the leadership acquires then a strong moral significance and becomes unacceptable as it undermines the basis of a 'moral goal' shared with and by the common people. The common people have become then the strongest ally of President Xi in his battle against corruption, even if it sometimes has turned into a political battle against his opponents.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Xi (2014).

<sup>38</sup> Xi (2013).

<sup>39</sup> President Xi Jinping makes use of the expression *tuchu youshi* (突出优势), which in this context also carries an idea of 'superiority'.

<sup>40</sup> The increase of the personal power of President Xi Jinping, the recent reform of the Chinese Constitution which has abrogated the limit for presidential mandates, some features of the political propaganda which recall a sort of "cult of personality", do often cause the disapproval of Western media outlets, but Xi Jinping is by no means an unpopular leader in China. Unquestionably, some initiatives, at least on a symbolic level, do recall the Maoist era; there is, for example,

In this respect, the campaign against the waste of food and all the street-walls campaigns which are taking place in China in recent years are by no means *naïfs*. As a matter of fact, Operation Empty Plate’s call to stop food wastage is tied to Xi’s efforts to battle corruption and party officials’ penchant for lavish banquets; it is part of a highly sophisticated political strategy. These campaigns make use of a simple, reassuring, and comforting communication strategy: they are not aggressive at all and their messages are inspired by traditional culture and traditional values. During ‘Operation Empty Plate’, many web pages provided plenty of suggestions to the hotels and restaurants willing to support the campaign and offered graphic design solutions to help set up some persuasive advertising materials to support the campaign. Both the slogans and the iconography often referred back to the past and one of the most welcome quotations came from *Pitying the Peasants – Ancient Air* (*Min nong – Gu feng*, 悯农-古风) two famous quatrains by the renewed Tang poet Li Shen (李绅, 772–846). It is not by chance that the two poems are dealing with the subject of peasants working hard and dying from starvation: the poverty in the countryside is one of the bullet points in Xi Jinping’s agenda. The two poems go as follow:

Each grain of millet sown in Spring / will be Autumn harvest a myriad bring. / Across the land no fields lie vacant / peasants still found – starving, dying<sup>41</sup> (春种一粒粟, 秋收万颗子。四海无闲田, 农夫犹饿死 *Chun zhong yi li su, qiu shou wan kezi. Sihai wu xiantian, nongfu you esi*).

He heaves his hoe in the rice-field, under the noonday sun, / onto the soil of the rice-field, his streaming sweat beads run. / Ah, do you or don’t you know it? The bowl of rice we eat: / each grain, each every granule, the fruit of his labor done<sup>42</sup> (锄禾日当午, 汗滴禾下土。谁知盘中餐, 粒粒皆辛苦。 *Chu he ri dangwu, han di hexia tu. Shui zhi pan zhong can, lili jie xinku*).

The ideal of frugality (*jian*, 俭) is a crucial issue in a campaign based on images on the walls, which involved almost the entire country and started at the end of

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an App by which one can keep updated about the President’s actions. It can be downloaded for free and its name is ‘Studying Xi’s China’: *Xue Xi Zhongguo* (学习中国). Chinese language allows a tricky pun such that the App’s name could also be simply translated as ‘Studying China’ (*Xuexi Zhongguo*), being that *xi* is the second character for the word ‘study’, the same as the President’s family name.

41 English translation provided by Andrew W. F. Wong <https://chinese-poems-in-english.blogspot.com/2012/04/li-shen-two-airs-on-peasants-i.html>. Accessed 24.07.2018

42 Same translator, <https://chinese-poems-in-english.blogspot.com/2012/05/li-shen-pity-peasants-two-airs-of-old.html> Accessed 24.07.2018

2012. *Jian*, ‘frugal’, is one of the moral characteristics of Confucius<sup>43</sup> and any *junzi* (君子, noble man) is expected to be frugal.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, he is supposed to be benevolent, charitable, kind, and well-disposed, all virtues embodied by the concept of *shan*, 善, which is exemplified by the image of a small clay statue representing a boy playing his *qin* (see note 34), wearing traditional garments, and having his hair combed in the traditional way. Also, a small girl feeding her old grandpa is wearing traditional clothes while exemplifying through her behavior the ‘Way of filial piety’ (*xiao dao*, 孝道), another cardinal value in Confucianism. Grandfather and niece are set in a naturalistic environment and the sentence at their side runs as follows: “Filial piety: the lifeblood of the Chinese people” (孝道, 中国人的血脉, *Xiaodao, Zhongguorende xuemai*). The clay figures used in such ‘public service advertising’ (*Gongyi guanggao*, 公益广告) are also part of earlier folk culture, as they belong to the tradition of so called ‘Zhang Clay Figures’ (*Niren Zhang*, 泥人张), which was born in Tianjin during the Daoguang Reign (1821–1850) of the Qing Dynasty, thanks to the skill of the clay art master Zhang Mingshan (张明山, 1826–1906). Many small statues on Confucius which are easily available in the street markets haunted by tourists echo this style. In any case, the ‘Confucian stuff’ is now part of urban street *décor*. In 2012, to celebrate ‘Confucius’ birthday’, big trucks with enormous mounted TV screens appeared in the street of different cities in China. The screens projected an image of Confucius, with some quotation from his *Analects* (see picture). This propaganda belonged not only to the campaigns run or supported by the Government, both central and local, but was also a consequence of Confucius going commercial and becoming a trustful testimonial for many products (particularly for Chinese ‘wines’). Sometimes Confucius’ overall and pervasive presence seems to have moved to the commercial realm<sup>45</sup>.

In spite of any distrust and of the endless (but not useless!) debate on Chinese soft-power, the old Master is unquestionably a fundamental actor coming from the past “to serve the present”.

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43 Zigong said, “Our master is benign, upright, courteous, frugal and complaisant...” (子貢曰、夫子温、良、恭、俭、让、... , Zigong yue fuzi wen, liang, gong, jian, rang..., in *Analects (Lunyu 论语)*, I (Studying, Xue er, 学而), 1.10.

44 “...The noble man in his food does not seek to gratify his appetite (君子食无求饱, junzi shi wu qiu bao), in *Analects (Lunyu 论语)*, I (Studying, Xue er, 学而), 1.14.

45 There has also emerged a mass of books which make use of the Confucius way of thinking in order to guarantee personal success in wide and diverse fields. A usually reliable publishing house, the Zhongguo Renmin daxue chubanshe, People’s University of China Press, in 2016 issued a book by prof. Zhang Bodong (张博栋), whose title runs as follow: *Inviting Confucius to act as CEO. 36 lessons which good leaders cannot miss* (请孔子当CEO。好领导必上的36堂课, *Qing Kongzi dang CEO. Haolingdao bishangde 36 tang ke*).



Fig. 1: Praising shan (善), the benevolence



Fig. 2: A truck in the traffic: “The Master said: the superior men thinks of virtue, the small man thinks of comfort...”



Fig. 3: Using Tang poetry during the ‘Operation Empty Plate’





Fig. 4: *Jian* (俭), frugality: Frugality feeds Virtue





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## **E A final consideration**



Yasunari Takada (高田 康成)

# Cicero and Confucius: Similitude in Disguise

It is no doubt an exciting enterprise to put Cicero and Confucius in juxtaposition for comparative deliberations. They appear similar in their lifelong interest in politics and philosophy as well as in the ultimate failure of their respective political ambitions. Their visions of philosophy are apparently in agreement, particularly on the point of laying great emphasis upon practice and contingency. And they are alike in leaving, each in his own way, a great influence on posterity, which would eventually extend well beyond the confines of their respective birthplaces. These similarities seem indeed to invite a promising comparison; a closer look, however, reveals a number of significant dissimilarities. This is evident, for example, in the accessibility of basic textual sources: the Roman person wrote a great deal while the Chinese man spoke but left no writings behind. It is hardly possible to bridge the gap existing between the very different historico-cultural milieus in which they were situated: the Chinese can be called the founder of a great tradition whereas the Roman is sandwiched historically between the two great traditions of (prior) Athens and (later) Jerusalem, and thus perhaps cannot. In this sense, the role Cicero had to play was that of transmitter and modifier of tradition.

The purpose of the present essay, however, does not lie in proving the case for comparative incompatibility by drawing attention to dissimilarities. Rather, I wish to argue that any comparison of Cicero and Confucius needs to place them in their proper cultural contexts, which can only highlight their dissimilitude.

## 1 Biographical Background<sup>1</sup>

Confucius (552–479 BCE) was born during the so-called age of ‘Warring States’ in the state of Lu, which was then divided up and ruled by a corrupt oligarchy of three dukes. Despite his humble birth (as an illegitimate child) and local education (at a village community school), at the age of fifteen, as he recalls, he set his mind to becoming a scholar. In the course of time he would distinguish himself as a kind of independent scholar and spiritual leader, but he never went into

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<sup>1</sup> For general reference for Confucius and Cicero, see Creel (1949) and Kaizuka (1972) for the former, and Grimal (1993) for the latter.

public service. At the age of thirty-six, he left his native Lu for the first time and, out of sympathy, sought to join the former duke of Lu who was then exiled in the neighboring state of Qi. With the demise of the duke he returned to Lu after nearly seven years' absence. During the period of Yang Hu's tyranny (505–501) he was invited, but refused, to enter government service. When the tyranny had subsided and Lu became more or less united under a new duke, Confucius took a position as a local governor. He was quickly promoted and accompanied the duke's retinue for peace negotiations with Qi and received credit for his contribution. He was not successful, however, in his officially-endorsed attempts to put a stop to the persistent oligarchic influence of the 'three dukes'. One year later, now age fifty-six, Confucius once again departed Lu and set out with a few of his disciples in search of the ideal ruler. Although the quest, which lasted a full fourteen years, did not accomplish its aim, it had the effect of enriching and deepening his philosophy. After his return home at the age of sixty nine, he spent his remaining five years training and educating his disciples, in addition to which he undertook a project of editing the classics. He is said to have passed away peacefully.

Cicero (106–43 BCE) was born in Arpinum, a small city belonging to the Roman Empire. The Empire in those days was run under a republican system pursuing an expansionist policy. Perhaps because of such a policy and style of governance, Rome was continuously beset with troubles both at home and abroad: e.g., the civil war between Sulla and Marius or the military encounters with Mithridates.<sup>2</sup> Born as he was into a family belonging to the knightly class, i.e., non-aristocratic, Cicero was fortunate enough to be sent to Rome by his father for an elite education and training, a requirement for those aiming at a successful career in the *cursus honorum*. While there, he distinguished himself and, according to one account, incurred the political ire of the dictator Sulla by successfully representing a plaintiff against the latter's friend. This is said to have been the cause of Cicero's departure from Rome for Athens under the pretext of studying abroad. Another account, no less convincing, tells us that the duress of the legal profession so broke his voice and health that he chose to make a virtue of necessity by going to Athens, the home of philosophy and rhetoric, to rebuild his body and refresh his mind.

Cicero and Confucius invite comparison concerning their travel abroad, one way or another: in Cicero's case, to elude Sulla's vengeance; in Confucius's case,

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<sup>2</sup> Any comparative attempt, therefore, to see similarities here with the 'Warring States' at the time of Confucius is misguided if for no other reason than that China's political framework did not constitute anything like an empire.

to join the exiled Duke. It is likely that they profited much in their intellectual development from their respective stays in Athens and Qi, both of which were superior in cultural refinement to their homelands. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Athens and Qi are by any account incomparable. With the Platonic and Aristotelian tradition behind it, Athens was regarded throughout the Hellenistic world as the center of learning, to which there is nothing comparable in Confucius's intellectual world at the time of the 'Warring States'. Furthermore, and this is crucial, Athens had an enviable language of its own, different from that of Rome, in which all educated people in the Hellenistic world were expected to be fluent. By contrast, China, not only the China of Confucius' day but throughout its whole history, was and still is immune to such wholesale cultural influence from abroad. Sinocentrism, which was symbolically manifest in the invention of its own ideographs, functioned and functions as a robust bulwark against foreign influence.

That Cicero had access to such a traditional center of high culture and learning as Athens while Confucius had no counterpart is of great consequence. This meant that whatever philosophy Cicero would construct, it could hardly be free of all anxiety over outside influence. It makes little sense to talk of 'originality', a concept peculiar to modernity; but finding himself under the cultural hegemony of such a rich and powerful tradition of Greek philosophy, Cicero must have had a sense of cultural inferiority as, indeed, his philosophical writings attest to at various points. The three major philosophical schools (Epicurean, Stoic, and Sceptic) out of which Cicero framed his own dialogical deliberations all come from Greece. Behind everything, of course, stand Plato and Aristotle. Particularly noteworthy is the negative influence of the former: Cicero went largely against the grain of Plato's metaphysical idealism in favor of his own down-to-earth pragmatism.<sup>3</sup> Things are completely different with Confucius. As a counterpart of the three Hellenistic schools, one might advance the figures of Mencius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi, but all of them came after Confucius and their thinking arose in response to his (the view that Laozi was either older than or contemporary with Confucius is now rejected). There was thus no figure of Plato's stature to or against whom Confucius might have referred in attempting to construct philosophy of his own. As the originator of Chinese philosophy, Confucius is more comparable to Plato. There was no such option for viewing Cicero.

To pick up the thread of Cicero's career, after returning from a two-year stay abroad he quickly rose up the ladder of the *cursus honorum* (from *quaestor* to *aedilis* to *praetor* to *consul*). Indeed, his rise took place in the shortest possible pe-

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. especially Woolf (2015) 95–99.

riod allowed by Roman politics, being named consul at the age of forty-three. If this moment represents the acme of Cicero's career, in the case of Confucius, the moment came when, in his early fifties, he was given a post in the dukedom of Lu and distinguished himself in peace negotiations with Qi. Still, the similarity is only skin-deep. It would have been impossible for Confucius in his small city-state monarchy to attain an honor similar to that which Cicero was accorded within a vast republican Empire.

The Catiline conspiracy, which Cicero brilliantly suppressed at the zenith of his career, turned out to be the cause of his downfall. The reason is that he had the conspirators, all of whom were Roman citizens, executed without trial, despite the fact that Roman law stipulated that no citizen be executed without trial. The illegality of his action could never have escaped the notice of his vigilant enemies, who slowly cornered Cicero and finally forced him into exile in Greece. Fortunately, the efforts of his friends succeeded in having him recalled after a year and a half. Not only was his exile overturned, his return was celebrated in triumph in the full Roman sense of the word. It is next to impossible to find anything comparable in the life of Confucius, who was no stranger to exile.

At the time of his return from exile, Cicero was forty-nine years old and had by then been a member of the Senate, a post for which every ex-consul was eligible. Six years later, another ex-officio duty required him to go to Cilicia (now in Turkey) to serve as provincial governor for two years. Remarkable in this period was the fact that, in the face of a military crisis, Cicero (perhaps contrary to our expectation) successfully demonstrated his prowess as an officer in command. As far as we know, no such instance of heroism is recorded in the life of Confucius.

In the same year that saw Cicero back in Rome, Caesar crossed the river Rubicon to mark the beginning of an intense civil war, culminating in the Battle of Pharsalus. In this decisive battle between Caesar and Pompey, Cicero, after his accustomed hesitancy, chose the losing side of Pompey. At the age of fifty-eight Cicero found himself among the rebels. A year later, he came to a settlement with Caesar, in which the latter flaunted his generosity and demonstrated Cicero's resignation to compromise. Under the dictatorship of Caesar that followed and continued for over two years (until his assassination about two years before Cicero's own death), Cicero's remaining days in politics were spent in increasing despair, but he managed to transform his political sterility into a period of intellectual fertility, as if to endorse the hope he had expressed in his early years that he would like to devote himself to intellectual pursuits writing (*in otio*), if only political engagements (*in negotio*) would leave him the time. The chief aim of his writings lay not in the unfolding of his own ideas

but in the transmission of the Greek philosophical heritage *à la mode romaine*, flavored, of course, with his own predilections. He continued to write ferociously until, one year before the end of his life, he was forced to flee the pursuers sent by Mark Antony, a dominant power in the post-Caesarian disorder. In the end, Cicero was captured and beheaded at the age of sixty-three.

Confucius, in contrast, returned home at the age of sixty-nine after many long years of exile and seems to have spent his remaining years in politically stable circumstances. By that time, like Cicero, he had probably lost hope in the politics of the day and turned to engagements *in otio*. For one thing, as already mentioned, he undertook the scholarly project of editing the classics, which in some way resembles Cicero in retirement. But at the same time, he undertook the training of disciples, an important divergence from Cicero. In sum, Cicero's dramatic, even tragic, death stands in marked contrast with the peaceful final moments Confucius is said to have enjoyed.

## 2 Dissimilarities

All in all, our two heroes seem to share a lifelong interest in ethics as well as an aspiration to engage in Realpolitik. Regarding the former, each left behind, directly or indirectly, an influential body of thought. As for the latter, each brought his political ideals to bear on the powers that be and ended in failure. The historical periods they lived through were marked by war, social disorder, and political machinations, partly to their benefit (e.g., social mobility) and partly to their detriment. In passing, we may note another feature common to their lives: the scant presence or significance of the female sex, with the sole exception of Tullia, the hapless daughter Cicero doted upon. Their mothers scarcely made their presence felt, while their fathers loomed large. This may, however, have been a pattern typical of the age in which they lived.

As remarked above, a number of dissimilarities stand out. To begin with, the social and political conditions and systems under which each received his intellectual formation and built his career differed considerably. Cicero's republican empire had its own distinct structures of education and bureaucracy, not to mention its legendary army. Conditions in Confucius's dukedom of Lu, one of (about ten) warring states competing by force and fraud for dominance, were altogether different. Indeed, the very concept of war, or for that matter learning, belies comparison. Furthermore, in what were fundamentally different circumstances, Cicero, a conservative republican, tried to defend and maintain the traditional order and social system against its dictatorial destroyers, while Confu-



cius is often regarded in modern studies as a revolutionary in his attempt to put an end to the dominant hereditary system and feudalist monarchy.<sup>4</sup>

Still more conspicuous are the diverse circumstances under which each of them received his intellectual formation and built his own philosophical position. Cicero's thinking would not have been what it was had it not been for the Greek philosophical tradition, the superiority of which obliged him to study modes of thought that were linguistically and culturally foreign to him. The great tradition initiated by Plato and Aristotle underwent considerable change and innovation in the process of being handed down, and by Cicero's time, the Hellenistic period that had come to dominate the philosophical scene was composed of three competing schools of thought: the Epicurean, the Stoic, and the Sceptic, the last of which traced itself back to Plato, if only remotely. In *De finibus bonorum et malorum* and *De natura deorum*, therefore, we find a dialogue between three dramatis personae, each of which represents one of those three schools. Needless to say, the form of 'dialogue' itself, with its characteristic penchant for skepticism, was also of Greek, and more precisely Platonic, origin.

The nature of Plato's influence on Cicero is not immediately evident and is often difficult to identify in detail, but it can safely be said that despite the stance of Scepticism that he had learned from Carneades, a somewhat remote descendant of the Platonic academy, he maintained a characteristically critical attitude toward Plato's transcendent way of thinking, which stems essentially from the metaphysical frame of reference that elevated the status of his 'Ideas'. We see this, for instance, in the surviving fragments of Cicero's quite original renderings of Plato's *Republic*, (demonstrating Cicero's pragmatic and contingent worldview) and *Laws* (where Plato's predilection for the transcendent are duly emasculated and diluted).<sup>5</sup> But whether opposing or accommodating the Platonic heritage, Cicero could not have formed his own ideas without recourse to the tradition of Greek philosophy in general and Plato in particular.

Things are completely otherwise with Confucius. There was little previous philosophical tradition that could have served him the way that Greek philosophy served Cicero. Admittedly, there was an intellectual trend towards what we may call 'classicism', i.e., respect for and devotion to things ancient, but it would hardly have measured up to the maturity and authority the Greek tradition had come to enjoy. Confucius was free from the 'anxiety of influence' that fell upon Cicero almost as a matter of ineluctable destiny. Confucius was the founder

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4 Cf. Creel (1949), Ch. 10 and Shirakawa (1972), Ch. 3.

5 Cf. Woolf (2015) 113–116.

of a religio-philosophical sect or school, which was to loom large in the years and centuries to come. ‘Ciceronianism’, it is true, would later make its appearance in the Renaissance, but this was largely a matter of rhetoric. What is arguably more important is that Confucius left no writing of his own. Like Socrates and Jesus, he communicated entirely by word of mouth, mainly in the form of a dialogue, with disciples or those eagerly seeking advice. What came to be compiled as his sayings (the *Analects*) were to serve for a long time as the pivotal text on which not only so-called ‘Confucianism’ would be formed, but also against which various counter-schools like the Legalist were to take shape. In short, the history of China, and for that matter the entire history of East Asia, is inconceivable without Confucius. It is not necessarily the case that the history of Rome, or for that matter the entire history of Western Europe, would be inconceivable without Cicero.

### 3 Similitude in Disguise

Differences in fundamental outlook, as I believe I have shown, are so greatly in evidence as to render misleading any attempt at a simple comparison of similarities. This does not mean, however, that there are no prospects whatsoever for a productive comparison of these two philosophical magnates.

The key, it seems to me, lies in the recognition that they shared in and belonged to the same world of immanent (as opposed to transcendent) order, but while Cicero, due to his intellectual formation based on the Greek tradition, was historically positioned to attend to its nature and specificities, Confucius was not. Here the fundamental, if oversimplified, distinction between the world of immanent order and that of transcendence is significant because any intercultural analysis – particularly when it comes to cultures as different as East and West – overlooks underlining differences in ‘cultural orientation’<sup>6</sup> can only end up as irrelevance or lead to misunderstanding. Here, what eminent Western scholars of Chinese philosophy have to say about philosophical intercultural analysis deserves full treatment.

The dominant philosophical preoccupations of cultures are often a function of tacit assumptions made early in their self-narratives, and are often reflected in their languages. Greek metaphysical preoccupations melded with Judeo-Christian beliefs to produce a ‘God-model’, where an independent and superordinate principle determines order and value in the world while remaining aloof from

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Kasulis (2002), Chapter 1.

it, making human freedom, autonomy, creativity, and individuality at once problematic and of key philosophical interest. On the Chinese side, commitment to the processional, transformative, and always provisional nature of experience renders the “ten thousand things [or, perhaps better, ‘events’] (*wanwu*)” which make up the world, including the human world, at once continuous one with another and, at the same time, unique. Thus, the primary philosophical problem that emerges from these assumptions is *ars contextualis*; how do we correlate these unique particulars to achieve their most productive continuities?<sup>7</sup>

In their cultural assumptions, the Greco-Judeo-Christian worldview – that is, the general worldview of the Western world’s heritage – stands in sharp contrast to what we find in China. The former (‘God-model’) is characterized by an absolute, ‘transcendent’ principle that determines order and value in the world ‘from without’. The latter (*ars contextualis*-model) is marked by a pervasive ‘immanent’ principle that determines *from within* the entirety of correlations that make up the universe. In the Western intellectual tradition, what is at stake is the discovery and grasp of the One/Real behind the many/appearances as a means to solve the riddle of the meaning of life, a riddle that has so thoroughly permeated the Western intellectual tradition. In discovering this ‘One’, we discover ‘objectivity’ itself: a privileged position outside of the world from which objective and hence universal statements about it, unconstrained by time or context, can be made.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, what matters most in the Chinese worldview is the activity of harmonious integration into a comprehensive Way (*dao*) of universal, natural, and social processes and relations, where there is no sense of either necessity or “reason for seeking a *transcendental* answer to the question of why we are in the world”,<sup>9</sup> *i. e.*, for pursuing some underlying ultimate reality. Disciplines like epistemology or logic are alien to such an outlook, since they are the product of a ‘God-model’, at the basis of which, as Anne Cheng of Collège de France lucidly puts it, rests “la conviction que le réel peut faire l’objet d’une description théorique dans une mise en parallèle de ses structures avec celles de la raison humaine.... La démarche analytique commence par une mise à distance critique, constitutive aussi bien du sujet que de l’objet. La pensée chinoise, elle, apparaît totalement immergée dans la réalité: il n’y a pas de raison hors du monde”.<sup>10</sup>

‘Reason’ in its typical ‘Western’ philosophical sense of the word is a function of the objectification of reality/world as against subjectivity and thereby makes

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7 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 29–30.

8 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 31.

9 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 32–33.

10 Cheng (1997) 33.

theoretical analysis of it possible. This is hardly the case with the Chinese way of thinking. Even such a supreme concept as *tian*, the purposed counterpart to the English word ‘Heaven’, is not transcendent enough: “*tian* is both *what* our world is and *how* it is”.<sup>11</sup> It is immanent in both structure and disposition. By the same token, *yi* (the equivalent of justice/right) is far more down-to-earth and contingent: “one’s sense of appropriateness that enables one to act in a proper and fitting manner”.<sup>12</sup> And *zhi* (the equivalent of knowledge/wisdom) is far more pragmatic and performative or perlocutionary: “to know is to authenticate in action”.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, *ren* (the human counterpart and a foundational idea of humanity and personhood) is not easily susceptible to individualistic and individuating ways of conceiving of human beings but is rigorously conceived in relational terms based on “the Confucian assumption that one cannot become a person by oneself”.<sup>14</sup>

Given the dramatic (or dialectic) mode of expression in which most of his philosophical works were written, Cicero’s worldview is not easy to deal with. His expression is to a great extent a reflection of his basic philosophical stance of Scepticism, not in its stronger sense of agnosticism but in its softer sense of guarding against dogmatism. In this same sense, Cicero makes a habit of pitting the other two major schools of Hellenist philosophy against each other, the Stoic against the Epicurean. It is a clear measure of his philosophical position that of the two, the Stoic is always given preferential treatment over the Epicurean, of which admittedly Cicero is said to be inordinately critical. Cicero may thus be called an ‘undogmatic Stoic’. But the Stoicism in question here is not of the old type represented by Cato, for instance, but “[t]he type of Stoicism professed by Panaetius and Posidonius”, which in J. G. F. Powell’s view “apparently laid stress not on the unattainable ideal of the wise and virtuous man, but on the nearest approach that was possible to it in real life”.<sup>15</sup> In a self-enclosed amalgam of theory and practice, the emphasis definitively falls on the latter. Thus when Powell goes on to say, “the Stoicism mediated by Cicero placed emphasis on such concepts as the divinity of Nature, the marvels of divine providence and the natural kinship of all living things”, the terms ‘divinity’ and ‘divine’ need to be taken not in a transcendent sense but in an immanent one.

It is not hard to see broad parallels between the worldviews of Cicero and Confucius in terms of their immanent constitutions. What Powell points out as

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11 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 47.

12 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 54.

13 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 55.

14 Ames/Rosemont (1998) 48.

15 Powell (1995) 24.

Cicero's emphasis on "the natural kinship of all living things", for instance, correspond nicely to what we have seen as the Confucian vision of "ten thousand things (*wanwu*) that make up the world, including the human world", grasped as "at once continuous one with another, and at the same time, unique". Cicero's view of justice as well has a far greater affinity to Confucius than to Plato in its underlying principle of *ars contextualis*, as a recent eminent student of Cicero rightly argues, "since for him, any meaningful political proposals need a basis in reality, justice and injustice cannot be analyzed before we have a concrete sense of the environments in which they occur".<sup>16</sup> The idea of 'friendship' emergent in Cicero's *De amicitia*, approaches the Confucian idea of *ren*, which is conceived on the "assumption that one cannot become a person by oneself". On the whole, what Woolf has to say as a summary of Cicero's philosophy holds true of Confucius as well: "a philosophy located in the real world, committed to scrutinizing and being scrutinized all the more intently for its refusal to stay aloof".<sup>17</sup>

Not to harp too long on the same string, such parallels and similarities only amount to similitudes in disguise. For one thing, there is no trace of the Sceptic in Confucius. For another, Stoicism itself, in its essentials, is as materialistic as Epicureanism, making it a far cry from the kind of spiritualism we find in Confucius. No less significant are the differences each of these worldviews shows in its reception by posterity, which, like everything handed down, has its share of ups and downs, shifts and changes. However much Confucius's thought appears to represent undertones to later Chinese thought, the fortunes of Cicero's thought need to be seen in a totally different light. In this connection, it is worth reminding ourselves yet again of the unique position that Cicero occupies in the history of Western philosophy. Although he is known to have played an important role as a transmitter (with significant modifications) of Greek ideas to the Roman world and thereby paved the way for intellectual developments in the Latin Christian Middle Ages, the immanent bent of Cicero's philosophical outlook and position stood little chance of fusing with the philosophical tradition of Athens with its transcendent and superordinate orientation. Still less likely was it to survive the Christianizing process and establishment of the Middle Ages, whose world was structured exactly on what we referred to as "the God-model".<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, since the revival of interest in Cicero during the Renaissance was less

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<sup>16</sup> Woolf (2015) 108.

<sup>17</sup> Woolf (2015) 124.

<sup>18</sup> A comparison of Cicero's *De amicitia* with Aelred of Riveault's *De spiritali amicitia* offers us a good instance of Christian critique of Cicero's idea of friendship. I dealt with this issue in my presentation at the Turin conference, September 2017.

due to his philosophy than to his oratorical skills, and since it is in fact only recently that Cicero has been admitted to the honorary hall of philosophy,<sup>19</sup> it would not be far off the mark to conclude that Cicero remains a kind of anomaly in Western philosophy. Granted, the anomaly does suggest a kind of affinity, or at least a kind of ‘similitude in disguise’, to the general direction of Eastern philosophy, and in this sense there is something intriguing about the juxtaposition. There may yet be new and alternative vistas open to philosophy at large by further examination of the insights and experiences of the two great ancient empires East and West, with Confucius and Cicero as their respective representatives.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, we do well to approach such ‘similitude in disguise’ with caution.

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**19** As Powell (1995) writes right at the beginning of his edited collection, “As Cicero reaches his 2,100<sup>th</sup> birthday [in January 1995], his philosophical works are being taken more seriously by scholars than they have been for generations” (Introduction, p. 1).

**20** One possible approach among others to this huge theme seems to me through the so-called “the Axial Age” controversy. For this, see Bellah (2001) and Runciman (2001). The latter, from the viewpoint of Roman civilization, takes the controversy in the negative light.



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