

Trinity Saint David

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AI Acknowledgement

☐ I have not used AI in my assignment

I confirm that I have not used any AI tools in the research and creation of this assignment. I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated materials as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used, which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

☒ I have used AI in my assignment

I acknowledge the use of Deepseek on 5 January to asked some questions I used the prompt(s):

1. How to say '論語中記載了...' in English? (如何用英語表達「論語中記載了.....」這句話?)
2. How to express '簡單來講', '等於', '花紋, 紋理', '禮樂', '欲行禮樂, 先需有仁', '先有.....再有.....', '以.....為中心', '文質備也' in English? (如何用英語表達“簡單來講”, “等於”, “花紋, 紋理”, “禮樂”, “欲行禮樂, 先需有仁”, “先有.....再有.....”, “以.....為中心”, “文質備也”?)

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

An Analysis of the substance and refinement in *the Analects of Confucius* (*lunyu* 論語)

—— Center on the idea that ‘when one’s substance and refinement are in appropriate balance that you have the exemplary person.’

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Introduction

Confucius always emphasized that we should be an exemplary person (*junzi*君子), but what kind of person is this?

Center on the idea that ‘when one’s substance and refinement are in appropriate balance that you have the exemplary person.’ (文質彬彬，然後君子), to discuss and explore what substance (*zhí*質) and refinement(*wen*文) really are?



Contents

1. The meaning of the substance and Confucian's definition of it
2. The meaning of the refinement
3. The relationship between substance and refinement
4. The meaning of '*binbin* (彬彬)' and its expansion
5. Conclusion



1. The meaning of the substance (*zhí* 質) and Confucian's definition of it

1.1 The meaning of *zhí* (質)

The term '*zhí*' signifies the fundamental or inherent nature of something.

In the context of human character, it describes the innate nature of a person



漢典

1.2 Some Confucian's definitions of *zhí*

- Exemplary persons concentrate their efforts on the **root**, for the root having taken hold, the way (*dao*道) will grow therefrom. As for filial and fraternal responsibility, it is, I suspect, the root of authoritative conduct (*ren*仁).
「君子務本，本立而道生，孝弟也者，其爲仁之本與。」
- Those who are prominent are true in their **substance**, and seek after what is most appropriate (*yi*義).
「夫達也者，質直而好義。」
- Having a sense of appropriate conduct (*yi*義) as one's **substance**, developing it in observing ritual propriety (*li*禮).
「君子義以爲質，禮以行之。」

Substance and root :

authoritative conduct

appropriate conduct

filial and fraternal responsibility

true



2. The meaning of the refinement (*wen* 文)

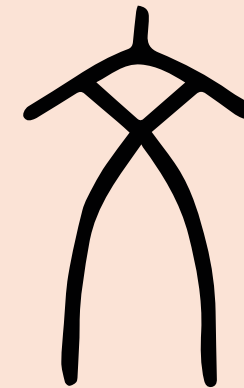
2.1 The meaning of *wen* (文)

- The explanation of *wen* in *Shuowen jiezi* (說文解字)

The original meaning of *wen* is pattern or texture (花紋/紋理)

- The explanation of *wen* in *Han dian* (漢典)

There is a meaning that the *wen* implies literary brilliance and ornamental refinement or cultural polish. And it is always discussed in complementary opposition to *zhi* (substance), which represents the foundation and root that I mentioned above



(1) 有文采，华丽。与“质”或“野”相对

2.1 The meaning of *wen* (文)

The refinement points to the superficial layer of polish and presentation that is publicly visible.

2.2 Confucian's definition of *wen*

- Having a sense of appropriate conduct (*yi*義) as one's substance, developing it in observing **ritual propriety** (*li*禮).

「君子義以為質，禮以行之。」

Refinement :

Rites and music (*li*禮 *yue*樂)



Substance is the foundation and the root, refinement is just like the ornament



Question 1 :

- **What is the relationship between substance and refinement?**



3. The relationship between substance and refinement

3.1 The relationship

- What has a person who is not authoritative (*ren*) got to do with observing ritual propriety (*li*) ? What has a person who is not authoritative got to do with the playing of music (*yue*樂)

「人而不仁，如禮何？人而不仁，如樂何？」

- Those people who are not authoritative are neither able to endure hardship for long, nor to enjoy happy circumstances for any period of time.

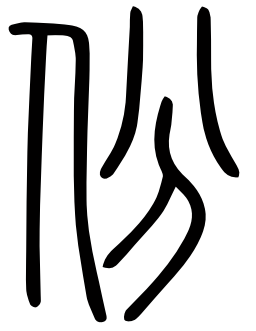
「不仁者不可以久處約，不可以長處樂。」

If someone wants to practice ritual propriety and music, he must first possess *ren* (仁) as the essential precondition.

Without the inner substance of *ren*, the practice of rituals and music becomes an empty shell.

4. The meaning of '*binbin* (彬彬)' and its expansion





4.1 The meaning of *binbin* (彬彬)

- The *Shuowen*'s explanation of *fen* (份)

It means when inner substance and refinement are both fully present.
(In ancient texts, the character 「彬」 was originally written with the character 「份」)

- The explanation of *binbin* in *Sishu jizhu* 四書集注

「『彬彬』，猶『班班』，物相雜而適均之貌。」

It means that there is a perfect balance of inner substance and refinement.

Substance is the foundation of refinement



Question 2 :

- **Why we should keep balance on both sides of substance and refinement?**

4.2 The reasons of we should keep balance

- Ji Zicheng inquired, ‘Exemplary person (*junzi* 君子) are determined by nothing other than the quality of their substance, what need do they have of further refinement?’

「棘成子曰：『君子質而已矣，何以文為？』」

Zigong replied, ‘refinement is not different from one’s substance, one’s substance is not different from refinement. The skin of the tiger or leopard, shorn of its hair, is not different from the dog or sheep.’

「子貢曰：『文猶質也，質猶文也，虎豹之鞣猶犬羊之鞣。』」

「*kuo*鞣」 means hide stripped of its hair (毛/毛髮)

The tiger or leopard is different from the dog or sheep, because of their hair
So we can’t distinguish exemplary person from petty person (*xiaoren* 小人) if remove the refinement and just keep substance.

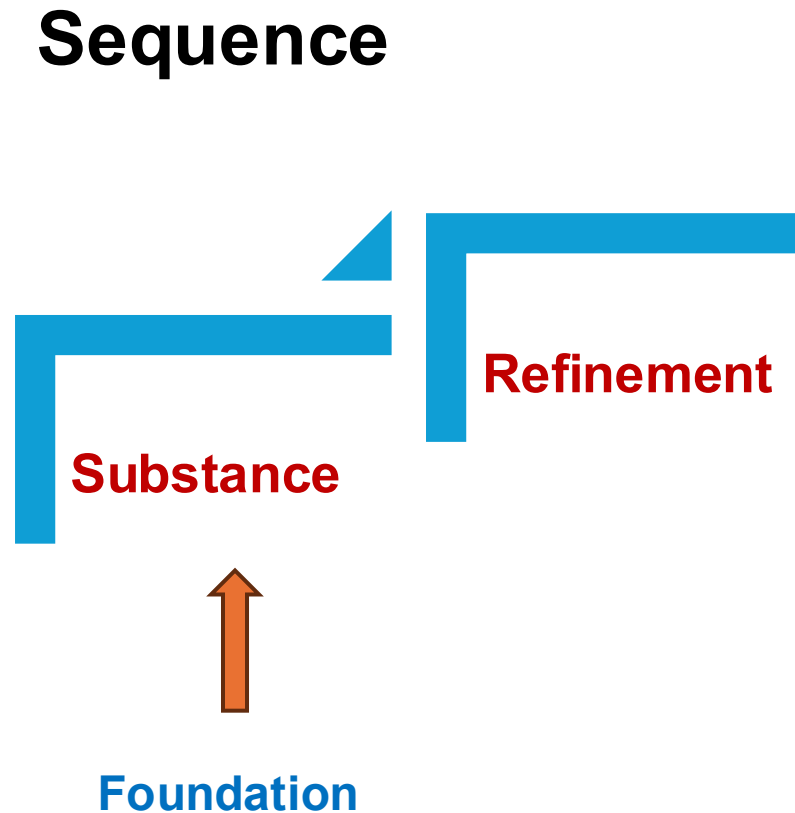
4.2 The reasons of we should keep balance

When one's substance overwhelms refinement, the person is **boorish**;
when refinement overwhelms one's substance, the person is an
officious scribe. 「質勝文則野，文勝質則史」

The 'boorish *ye* 野' here refers to the boorish people who haven't received specialized education. Maybe a person with a heart of gold but constantly offends others due to a lack of social graces.

The 'officious scribe *shi* 史' here can refer to the historical records, because when some court historians recorded history based on their personal likes and dislikes, it would lead to exaggerated accounts, just like someone who is impeccably dressed and eloquent, yet whose words lack sincerity and depth.

5. The conclusion



Content

Substance  **Refinement**

In terms of sequence, first comes substance, then comes refinement.

In terms of content, we should pay attention to both substance and refinement, because they are equally important.

5. The conclusion

Substance  **Inner sageliness (內聖)**

Refinement  **Outer kingliness (外王)**

Whether for a country or a person, the substance and refinement neither can be neglected.

And for us today, it calls for a holistic cultivation of both our moral core and our culture capacity. We should read our Chinese classics and follow the sages' saying that can enhance our self-cultivation, and we should make our behavior and words meet standard by learning.

THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING

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