



## Pre-BA assignment feedback form

(to be completed by marker)

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| <i>For completion by marker:</i><br><i>Comments:</i>                                                             |                                |
| <i>Marker's signature:</i>                                                                                       | <i>Date:</i>                   |
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# Structural analysis of <大同與小康>

Word Count: 1277

Good morning and good afternoon respected Provost, Miss Deng, Mr. Zhang and my fellow students. My name is Zhang Xinyu. Today I would like to talk about the construction of 大同與小康.

There are three parts in my presentation. The first one is introduction, which include the source and main content of the article. Next part is analysis of article structure. The last one is conclusion.

## 1. Introduction

This article is from the chapter 9 of *The Records of Rites*.

It is actually a conversation between Confucius and his disciple, Yanyan 言偃. It shows the difference of two social environments. One is in the period of the Five Emperors, which called 'Datong'. Another one is in the period of the Three Kings, which called 'Xiaokang'. Confucius also sighed for the change.

Let's move on to the next part.

## 2. Analysis of Article Structure

According to the content of the article, I divided the text into two parts for analysing the structure.

From the first sentence to 孔子曰：「大道之行也，與三代之英，丘未之逮也，而有志焉。」 is the first part of the article.

This part shows us that when and where the conversation took place and which people who were involved in it. Therefore, the text can be summarized as follows: After a commemoration, which shows reverence with utmost sincerity to ancestors,

*Confucius and Yanyan* walked to the top of the hill to have a conversation.

Moreover, the sentence, 孔子曰：「大道之行也，與三代之英，丘未之逮也，而有志焉。」 leads to the following description of '大同' and '小康'.

From ‘大道之行也，天下為公’ to ‘是謂小康’ is the second part of the article. This section is about the content of the conversation and is the main part of the text. I also divide the conversation into two parts to analyse. The first part is concerned with describing the conditions of the society that we called '大同' and the second part with describing the conditions of the society that we called '小康'.

## 2.1 The governance of ‘大同’

Firstly, at the beginning of this paragraph Confucius tells 言偃 that the overall state of the world under the rule of 大同 is that '大道' still existed and was practised'.

Secondly, Confucius told him the specific situation of The governance of ‘大同’ through a description of four areas. They are the Political System, the Relationship Among the People, the Economy and Public Security.

In terms of the political system. The Succession to the Emperor was based on the principle of '天下為公' and adopted 君主禪讓制, which means that only the person with virtue and talent could become the emperor. Moreover, in the Appointment of Officers, virtuous, worthy, wise, and capable people are chosen as leaders. In diplomacy, the people treat anyone with sincerity and friendliness.

In terms of the Relationship Among the People. All people respect and love their parents and children, as well as those of others. Men and women have distinct duties. Therefore, the aged are cared for life; adults realise their full potential and make full use of their abilities; and children are raised with care. Widows and widowers, orphans and the childless the disabled and diseased are all supported.

In terms of the Economy. The articles were not thrown away upon the ground, and not be hoarded. Furthermore, people made the best of personal abilities but not for self-interest.

In terms of Public Security. Intrigues did not arise; stealing did not occur, and doors need not be locked when one leaves home.

Finally, Confucius concluded: This is what the society of 大同 looks like.

This is the first part of the structural analysis of the body of the article

## 2.2 The governance of ‘小康’

In this paragraph, as in the previous one, Confucius begins by referring to the overall situation of the world under the rule of 小康 is that '大道 was no longer practised.'

Then, Confucius told 言偃 the specific situation of The governance of ‘小康’ through a description of five aspects. They are the Political System, the Relationship Among the People, the Economy, Public Security and Representative persons respectively.

By this time, a selfish culture had developed in society and people were doing everything for themselves, so in terms of the political system. The emperor treated the world as his own, so he only gave the throne to his own son or other immediate family members. Officers imagined that their states should descend in their own families. In diplomacy, in order to prevent the invasion of other countries, they made the walls of their cities strong and moats secure.

In terms of the Relationships Among the People. Everyone loved his own parents and cherished his own children . Moreover, the emperor had to use propriety as rules to achieve their aims. They wanted to keep ruler and minister; father and son; elder and younger; husband and wife in harmony; and other things to regulate their achievements with a view to their own advantage.

In terms of the Economy. People accumulate resources and exert their strength for their own benefit.

In terms of Public Security. Because of these selfish acts, people became more and more treacherous and distrustful of each other, so that wars often broke out.

In terms of Representative persons. 夏禹、商汤、周文王、周武王、周成王、周公 They are outstanding figures among the kings of the three generations, and they were chosen in accordance with propriety. These six outstanding figures did not govern the state without being careful to use propriety. They honoured people's righteousness, examined their credibility, showed them where their faults lay, administered punishment with benevolence, advocated mutual humility, and taught

people to follow a fixed code of propriety and righteousness. If a person did not follow the rules of propriety, he or she would be removed from power.

Finally, Confucius said that this is the period of what we call 小康.

This is the structural analysis of the full text. Next, let's move on to the final part.

### 3. Conclusion

In this part, I will summarise by contrasting the differences between 大同 and 小康。Please look at this chart, we can clearly see the differences of the two societies.

First of all, we can see that the main difference between them is the state of existence of the ‘大道’. In the period of ‘大同’, 道 is honoured by people and practised throughout the world. Therefore, the emperor only needed to be benevolent to govern the country and people. In contrast, in the society of 小康, the 道 has fallen into disuse and not be known or remembered. As a result, the emperor had to use propriety as the way of governing the state and regulating people's behaviours. This has resulted in differences between the two societies in terms of the political system, the Relationship Among the People, economics, and the condition of Public Security.

In conclusion, 大同 is a society which formed naturally on the basis of morality, while 小康 is a society which formed by compulsion, based on the distribution of propriety.

This is the end of my presentation. Thank you for listening. Any feedback and suggestions would be appreciated.