

孔子

1. Kongzi (“Confucius”)

Kongzi (551-479 B.C.E.) was the first Chinese thinker we know of to work out the rudiments of a program for moral self cultivation.¹ The tradition he began is one of the oldest schools of moral self cultivation in the world; it is also one of the most enduring and influential.² But Kongzi did not regard himself as the *founder* of a school or movement or the initiator of a tradition; quite the contrary, he saw himself as the defender of a long-established lineage.³ He once said of himself, “[I] transmit rather than create. I trust and delight in the ancients. . . .”⁴

Like almost every Chinese thinker of the early period, Kongzi believed in a past golden age, when sage kings ruled the world and all people lived in a peaceful and flourishing society. He believed that these individuals had devised a comprehensive family, social, and political system that harmoniously located individuals in a greater cosmic order.⁵ Because their *Dao* 道 “Way” reflected a deeper pattern within the universe itself, it was regarded as the most “fitting” or “proper” way to be. At the same time, because it followed these natural patterns it proved to be the most efficacious, satisfying, and meaningful way to live.⁶ Kongzi had taken it as his mission in life to preserve and propagate the records detailing the practices of these world-ordering sages.⁷ These records served as the core of his program for moral self cultivation or *xue* 學 “learning.”

There was much more to Kongzi’s educational program than the intellectual mastery of these texts and technical facility in the rituals they contained; one was to *practice* and ponder these lessons in every aspect of one’s life. Such reflective practice was thought to give rise to a synthetic understanding and intuitive sense of the Way. Kongzi believed that the process of mastering these rituals and the lessons contained in the classics was profoundly edifying and a source of great joy as well. The *Analects* opens with the line, “Is it not delightful to study and, at appropriate times, to practice what one has learned!”

As we shall see, later Confucians often argue about whether Confucian learning brings forth incipient tendencies of human nature or whether it provides a way to acquire a second, moral nature distinct from and to varying degrees in tension with one’s natural tendencies. The next two thinkers we shall consider represent two extremes in this debate. Mengzi advocates a version of the first view, what I call a *development model* of moral self cultivation. His rival Xunzi proposes a version of the second view, a *re-formation model*. It is difficult to locate Kongzi definitively along the spectrum defined by these two extremes since he

does not directly tie his method of learning to a theory about human nature, as Mengzi and Xunzi do.⁸ In his emphasis on the role of tradition and the need for prolonged and extensive study, Kongzi's original vision seems to have more in common with Xunzi's view. However, Kongzi's emphasis on the joy of moral learning, seen in the passage cited above, indicates that he saw human nature as more amenable to reform than did Xunzi. In this respect, he shows closer affinity with Mengzi's position.⁹ I will describe Kongzi's position with an appropriately neutral term: as an *acquisition model* of moral self cultivation.

For Kongzi, the goal was not simply to become adept at performing the rituals and social practices of the sage kings and knowledgeable about the classics; he was not seeking simple rote learning nor was he promoting a set repertoire of behavior. He wanted people to use this knowledge and these practices to develop certain traits of character. He didn't just want children to know about filial piety nor even simply to act filially; he wanted them *to act out of* filial love for their parents. This requires one to have a cultivated sense of the overall aims and justification for filiality as well as an enhanced level of know-how concerning the ways to practice and promote filial virtue. He once said, "Nowadays, those who provide for their parents are said to be filial. But even dogs and horses are provided for. If there is no reverence—wherein lies the difference?"¹⁰

Kongzi not only wanted people to avoid the emotionally sterile and morally stifling perfunctory performance of ritual, he further realized that the virtues he sought to inculcate had no set form of expression. In unusual situations, the virtuous person might even act in ways at odds with or even contrary to what virtue would seem to require. Even under normal circumstances, the virtuous person is always fine-tuning the expression of virtue to fit the occasion and acting from the greater perspective of the overarching goals of ritual. No simple set of prescriptions will suffice to guide or describe such a person's conduct.¹¹

In order for the system of ritual to result in the peaceful, flourishing society Kongzi envisioned, people had to use it to develop their own *de* 德 "moral charisma" or "power." This required them to reflect deeply upon the meaning of the lessons they studied and the rituals they practiced, not only to *xue* "learn" but to *si* 思 "reflect" as well. Kongzi expressed this ideal beautifully in a maxim, "Study without reflection is a waste. Reflection without study is a danger."¹²

There is a danger of misinterpreting Kongzi's call to engage in "reflection." For him, "reflection" is not ratiocination, in the sense of a logical process of deduction or demonstration that leads one to conclusions; *si* never means abstract, theoretical cogitation.¹³ Primarily it means to keep one's attention focused upon and engaged with¹⁴

something, often a goal or ideal which one intends to achieve.¹⁵ Of course, Kongzi employed this sense of the word to direct people's attention toward *moral* goals and ideals, but the notion of focusing one's attention upon and longing for some desired person or object may well have been derived from an older, more general, usage. In one passage from the *Analects*, Kongzi quotes from a now lost ode:

The flowers of the cherry tree,
Constantly flutter and turn.
How could I not *si* "be thinking" of you?
But your house is so far away!

Kongzi goes on to comment, "He clearly was not thinking of her, [for if he had been] what distance would there be?"¹⁶ This may represent the root sense of at least the philosophical meaning of *si*: to longingly focus one's attention on some object of desire. At the same time, *si* does appear to include relating such goals and ideals to one's attitudes and particular situation and hence includes a certain level of practical reasoning.¹⁷

In the passage just quoted, we see Kongzi drawing a *moral* lesson by unpacking the hidden meaning of an ode. This kind of interpretive exercise was an important part of his general system of education.¹⁸ According to tradition, Kongzi is credited with editing an early collection of poems to form a book that is now known as the *Odes*. While most contemporary scholars no longer ascribe the editing of this text to Kongzi, the traditional view reflects the critical importance of this text for Kongzi and his disciples.

Kongzi did seem to believe that the *Odes* contained a hidden meaning that was at the very least consistent with the goals of moral self cultivation. He once said, "The *Odes* are three hundred in number, but one line from among them can cover them all, 'Oh! They do not stray!'"¹⁹ We also have examples that appear to record Kongzi and his disciples teasing out the proper meaning of a particular ode by seeing how it applies to an issue concerning moral self cultivation.

Zigong said, "*Poor though without flattery, rich yet without arrogance*, how about that?"

The Master said, "That will do, but it is not as good as, *poor yet finding joy [in the Way], rich yet delighting in the rites*."

Zigong replied, "The *Odes* say, 'Like cutting, like filing, like grinding, like polishing.' This, I suppose, refers to what you have in mind."

The Master said, "*Si*²⁰ I can now begin to talk with you about

the *Odes*. I tell you something that has gone before and you see what is to come!"²¹

This is a particularly interesting passage, for here we seem to have an example of a disciple proposing a maxim of the kind one can find throughout the *Analects*.²² Kongzi accepts the proposed maxim but improves upon it by offering another of his own design. The disciple then realizes that he was complacent in his interpretive (and by implication moral) efforts and needed to exert himself further. He expresses this with an appropriate passage from the *Odes* that taps into part of its hidden meaning—one should be ever-seeking to improve and further refine oneself.

Study of the *Odes* was just one method that Kongzi employed to help individuals develop the traditional virtues he espoused. Perhaps of even greater importance was practicing the *li* "rites."²³ The "rites" which Kongzi advocated included not only grand religious ceremonies of state, but what we would call rules of social etiquette and standards of personal conduct as well. Practicing these rites played a central role in Kongzi's method of self cultivation: they shaped the character of those who practiced them, expressed and further refined the virtue of those who knew them well, and influenced those who participated in or observed a given ceremony.

Mastering these rites was a difficult and demanding task, and, as in the case of studying the *Odes*, as one's practice of the rites progressed, one came to have a deeper, more complex and complete understanding of their significance. The most profound truths human beings could know were embodied in these ritual practices and only one who could grasp their meaning could see these truths.

Someone asked about [the meaning of] the Great Sacrifice. The Master said, "I do not know. One who knew its meaning could govern the world as easily as looking at this!" [He pointed to his palm.]²⁴

As was mentioned earlier, the rites were not intended merely to elicit particular kinds of behavior, the goal was to instill certain sensibilities, attitudes, and dispositions in the practitioner. Kongzi believed that only the reflective practice of the rites could produce the particular set of sensibilities, attitudes, and dispositions needed for a harmonious, meaningful, and flourishing society. The rites achieved this first by restraining excessive behavior in a way that instilled an attitude of humility in the practitioner.

Yan Hui asked about humanity.²⁵

The Master said, "To restrain oneself and turn to the rites is humanity. If for a single day one could restrain oneself and turn to the rites, the whole world would agree that one was truly humane. Does humanity not come from the self rather than from others?"

Yan Hui said, "May I inquire as to the details?"

The Master said, "If it is contrary to humanity, do not look upon it. If it is contrary to humanity, do not listen to it. If it is contrary to humanity, do not speak it. If it is contrary to humanity, do not do it."²⁶

The notion that one must recognize that one's own desires are not preeminent, that an agreed upon and common set of rules takes precedence, is a prerequisite to participation in *any* kind of cooperative enterprise or game. Such deference to the larger enterprise is clearly needed for participation in society. The willingness to submit to mutually agreeable "rules" or forms of play is the beginning of one's sense of ritual propriety. Though Kongzi did not talk about the rites in quite this way, he did see certain gaming situations as paradigmatic examples of ritual propriety and opportunities for self cultivation. In particular, he appreciated the importance of athletic competition, perhaps because such competition required an enhanced ability to channel one's potentially violent and destructive energies in cooperative and constructive ways.

The Master said, "Cultivated individuals do not compete. [You might object by saying] don't they clearly do so in the case of archery? But before ascending [to shoot] they bow and defer to one another. And [after shooting] they descend and drink together. Such is the competition of the cultivated individual."²⁷

In addition to this basic role of curbing our negative tendencies or vices, the rites also keep our virtuous tendencies within proper bounds. Perhaps Kongzi here had in mind the need to recognize and remember that harmonious relationships between people is the ultimate aim of and justification for moral self cultivation. If one loses sight of this aspect of the rites, one can mistake the task of moral self cultivation as primarily or exclusively a private, perfectionist concern, and this can lead one to run rough-shod over the needs, interests, and feelings of others. Such an attitude may give rise to the snobbery that infects crude and clumsy observances of etiquette, self-serving displays of power or prowess (disguised as true virtue), or an overbearing moralism.²⁸

The Master said, "Respectfulness without ritual becomes a burden to others. Care without ritual becomes timidity. Courage without ritual becomes disorder. Correctness without ritual becomes intolerance. . . ."29

The detail, care, and effort dedicated to the practice of the rites may well strike many modern western readers as archaic and oppressive, but perhaps this feeling will be less pronounced as one begins to understand the goal of this concern. For while Kongzi would not sit on a mat that was not straight³⁰ and was exceedingly scrupulous in his posture and demeanor, even when alone,³¹ he was adamant in his insistence that these and related practices were not to be misconstrued as ends unto themselves. He believed that such apparently mundane details of life contributed significantly to the formation of one's character and that one must perform them in awareness of this fact.³² In certain passages, the relationship between a given practice and its contribution to character formation is more obvious than in others. For example, the relationship is evident in the case of Kongzi not eating to repletion when in the presence of someone engaged in mourning.³³ On one level this practice simply expresses one's condolence to the mourner, but it also is meant to have a profound and direct effect upon the practitioner as well. It can bring to mind her cohumanity with others in her society, even those she does not know; it can remind her of the importance of her ties to family and friends and the fragility and transitory nature of human existence. It can also affect third parties who observe her practice and lead them to an awareness of their common fate and mutual solidarity as mortal human beings facing a threatening and at best difficult world. Properly construed, even such a simple practice can be seen as an impressive manifestation of humanity.

This concern with the details of life and the effects that they can have upon the formation of character is an important aspect of Confucian moral self cultivation.³⁴ Many of the things that Kongzi saw as *morally* significant tend to be viewed by modern western people as at best matters of *taste*. For example, Kongzi believed that music had a profound influence on the formation of character, and this led him to promote certain kinds of music³⁵ and argue for the prohibition of music that failed to meet his moral standard.

Yan Hui asked about governing the state.

The Master said, "Propagate the calendar of Xia, ride in the carriage of Yin, wear the cap of Zhou. As for music, let there be the *Shao Dance* [the succession dance of the sage emperor Shun]. Banish the music of Zheng and keep clever talkers at a distance. The music of Zheng is licentious and clever talkers are dangerous."³⁶

The degree to which one finds this view objectionable, or even dangerous, might vary in light of the *kind* of music one is considering. It seems less controversial to claim that there is a standard for what is proper music on occasions like state funerals, presidential inaugurations, marriages, graduations, or college football games than for private listening. Kongzi was much more concerned with the former kinds of cases than the latter. Nevertheless, he would surely maintain, and it seems neither unreasonable nor untrue, that even in the latter cases, music has profound power to shape one's character, for good or ill. We may not choose to ban but we can and should condemn music that valorizes and delights in misogyny, racism, or gratuitous violence. At the extremes, such a view seems more like an obvious fact than reactionary raving.³⁷

We find a similar story when we consider Kongzi's concern with proper attire. Many will find it at best quaint that he shuddered to think of what might happen to society if people began "folding their robes to the left instead of the right."³⁸ But in this case, too, the difference between Kongzi and what we might call the common-sense view in contemporary western society is one of degree and not kind. First, as was the case with music, one can have greater sympathy for Kongzi's position when he is arguing for the need to have proper attire in certain ritual contexts. Clearly, people feel more confidence in the legitimacy of standards of attire in cases such as funerals or weddings than when people are at leisure. But don't we also expect bankers to present us with a certain "look?" Don't we want them to appear as "solid" and "sensible" as the buildings they inhabit?³⁹ Don't we also draw certain conclusions about character based upon the attire of our companions on a first date?⁴⁰ The point is that attire can be a way to express certain attitudes and consciously expressing attitudes by wearing certain attire can contribute significantly to the formation of character.⁴¹

The practice of the rites and the reading of the *Odes* were both pursuits with a moral dimension, integral parts of the larger project of self cultivation. The person who successfully completed this process developed an enhanced sensitivity in understanding and explaining traditional patterns and applying them to actual affairs. Such a person could and would, on occasions when the situation warrants, depart from the traditional forms in order to realize the greater goal that these patterns were designed to achieve.⁴² The practices of Confucian moral self cultivation were not designed to blindly *habituate* people to virtue, and though their full realization would, under normal circumstances, result in a variety of both material and psychological goods, they could not successfully be cultivated solely with the aim of acquiring such goods.

The pursuit ultimately must be as an *expression* of who one is, a follower of the Way.⁴³

In addition to offering a fascinating program of moral learning, the practices, attitudes, and aspirations associated with Kongzi's *acquisition model* of self cultivation provided the foundation and set the direction of one of the longest-lived and richest traditions of moral self cultivation the world has produced.

Notes

1. For an impressive anthology, representing a broad range of recent scholarship on Kongzi and his writings, see Bryan W. Van Norden, ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a dated though still helpful study of Kongzi and his thought, see Herrlee G. Creel, *Confucius: The Man and the Myth* (New York: John Day Co., 1949).

2. The primary source of information we have about Kongzi comes from the 論語 *Lunyu* "Analects," a record of his sayings and conversations and those of some of his students. The text contains material from a variety of different sources and times. I will not explore the textual issues here but have avoided using any passages that are clearly of dubious provenance. In my references to the text, I follow the numbering found in the Harvard-Yenching Institute's concordance to the *Analects*. English translations either follow or approximate this organization of the text. For a translation and study of the text that seeks to reconstruct Kongzi's original message, see Bruce E. and Taeko A. Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

3. Kongzi was and saw himself as a member of a group called the *ru* 儒 "Erudites" or "Learned," so it makes little sense to describe him as a "Confucian." However, it makes perfectly good sense to describe his later followers—who explicitly declare their allegiance to Kongzi and his way of life—as "Confucians." All of the remaining thinkers whose thought we will explore in this volume are Confucians in this sense.

4. *Analects* 7.1. The degree to which Kongzi innovated is an issue of considerable disagreement among contemporary scholars. In their recent book *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987), Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall describe Kongzi as a flexible and fluid innovator. My view is somewhere between this and the caricature of an ossified ritualist often foisted upon Kongzi and his followers. For my view, see my review of *Thinking Through Confucius* in *Philosophy East and West*, 41.2, (April, 1991), 241-54 and my analysis of the Confucian golden rule in "Reweaving the 'one thread' of the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West*, 40.1 (January, 1990): 17-33.

5. Applying the work of Jonathan Z. Smith in "The Influence of Symbols on Social Change: A Place to Stand," *Worship*, 44, (1970): 457-74, to the Confucian tradition, Lee H. Yearley describes it as a *locative religion*. See Yearley's "A Confucian Crisis: Mencius' Two Cosmogonies and Their Ethics," in Robin W. Lovin and Frank E. Reynolds, eds., *Cosmogony and Ethical Order: New Studies in Comparative Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985): 310-27.

6. The relationship between the rightness of the Way and its happy consequences is a tension that runs throughout the Confucian tradition (and many others as well). Confucians insist that one follows the Way because it is the Way and not for the benefits to be derived therefrom. At the same time, they insist, with equal conviction, that only the Way can lead to a harmonious and flourishing society. There is a tension, though not a contradiction, here. I discuss this issue briefly in *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition: The Thought of Mencius and Wang Yang-ming* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990): 5-13 and in more detail in "Character Consequentialism: An Early Confucian Contribution to Contemporary Ethical Theory," *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 19.1 (Spring, 1991): 55-70.

7. Confucius' sense of mission is an often overlooked and under appreciated aspect of his thought. But he clearly saw himself in such terms. Once, when his life was in danger in the state of Kuang, he said, "Since the death of [the sage] King Wen, has not [true] culture resided here within me? If Heaven wants to destroy this culture, then those who come after my death will be unable to encounter it. If Heaven does not want to destroy this culture, what can the men of Kuang do to me?" (*Analects* 9.5).

8. The only place in the *Analects* where Kongzi mentions the concept of *xing* 性 "human nature" is *Analects* 17.2, where he says, "By nature people are close to one another, by practice they are far apart." This, of course, is consistent with either Mengzi's or Xunzi's position or with any number of intermediary positions between these two extremes. The only other occurrence of the character *xing* in the *Analects* is 5.13, where a disciple, Zigong, tells us the master did not (or did not often) speak about this topic.

9. I explore this issue in considerable detail in "Thinking and Learning in Early Confucianism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 17 (1990): 473-93.

10. *Analects* 2.7. An example which illustrates that Kongzi's concern was with developing a kind of know-how is *Analects* 13.5, "One who can recite the three hundred *Odes* but when entrusted with an affair of government cannot carry it through, or commissioned as a representative to some distant land is unable to respond on the spot, though such a one knows much, what use is it?"

11. For example, see *Analects* 11.10 where Kongzi mourns excessively for his favorite disciple Yan Hui, or 13.18 where he insists that "upright" behavior is extremely context-sensitive. I discuss this general issue at some length in "Reweaving the 'one thread' of the *Analects*."

12. *Analects* 2.15. Notice that thinking in a vacuum is even worse than mere rote learning. It seems that, devoid of the context which tradition provides, one will not only not progress, one will go astray.

13. Arthur Waley is the first to notice this important distinction. See his discussion in *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Books, 1938): 44-46.

14. In the thought of Mengzi, the notion of *si* comes to mean the mental act of focusing on one's moral intuitions. For a discussion of this aspect of Mengzi's thought, see Bryan W. Van Norden, "Mengzi and Xunzi: Two Views of Human Agency," in T. C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds., *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000).

15. For examples, see *Analects* 4.17, 14.12, 14.26, 16.10, and 19.1.

16. *Analects* 9.30. The lines quoted are from a poem not included in the present edition of the *Odes*. The *Shi* 詩 (*Odes*, *Book of Odes*, or *Book of Songs*) is a collection of rhymed poems derived from early folk songs and ceremonial incantations. Tradition claims that Kongzi edited an earlier group of three thousand poems down to three hundred, but modern scholars regard this as myth. Kongzi regarded the *Odes* as a repository of wisdom but one that required a sophisticated sensibility and deep reflection to properly understand.

17. This seems to be the sense of the character in *Analects* 2.15, 15.31, 19.6, and perhaps 5.20 as well.

18. The *Odes* also provided a source of general knowledge and useful common allusions for the educated person of the day. D. C. Lau discusses both these aspects of the *Odes* in the preface to his translation of the *Analects*. See *The Analects* (New York: Dorset Press, 1979): 41-2. Some scholars have claimed that Kongzi intentionally twisted the meaning of the *Odes* to fit the particular occasion. See for example, Waley, *Analects*, p. 89 note #1 and p. 90 note #3. For a more developed and nuanced statement of this position, see Steven Van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

19. *Analects* 2.2. I read this line according to the earliest extant commentary, as does D. C. Lau in his translation.

20. Zigong's personal name.

21. *Analects* 1.15. See 3.8 for another example of this kind of exchange.

22. For example, see *Analects* 2.2, 2.11, 4.15, etc

23. A most insightful discussion of the role of ritual in Kongzi's thought and its modern relevance can be found in Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius—the Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). For an insightful critique of Fingarette's more controversial claims, see Benjamin

I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1985). See also the review of Fingarette by Henry Rosemont, Jr., in *Philosophy East and West*, 26.4 (October, 1976): 463-77 and the response and reply in *Philosophy East and West*, 28.4 (October, 1978): 511-14 and 515-19. In addition, see the review by Chad Hansen in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 3 (1976): 197-204 and Fingarette's reply, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 7 (1980): 259-66.

24. *Analects* 3.11. The rites were the outward manifestation, the embodiment of, the *Dao*, which provided the ultimate meaning of life for Kongzi. See *Analects* 4.8.

25. Here, I translate the Chinese character *ren* 仁 as "humanity" instead of the more often used "benevolence" since for Kongzi it has the sense of the most general virtue governing interpersonal relationships and human life. While benevolence is *part* of this ideal it is not a sufficiently comprehensive notion and tends to mislead.

26. *Analects* 12.1. Many western interpreters tend to focus on the latter part of this passage and thus read it as a rather mechanistic list of prohibitions. This makes the passage seem more like a secular version of the Ten Commandments. But the first part of the passage, together with what Kongzi says in other places in the text, emphasizes the need for one freely to give oneself over to the practice of ritual.

27. *Analects* 3.7. This example illustrates both the restraining function of ritual and its ability to simultaneously engender an attitude of humility. For another example, which employs notions of good sportsmanship in hunting and fishing, see 7.28. Arthur Waley was the first to recognize this aspect of Kongzi's thought. See Waley, *Analects*, p. 55. These passages provide excellent examples of an issue over which Confucian and Daoist thinkers disagree and diverge. The former see social interrelationships as challenging but integral to human flourishing, one must develop the self to be able to meet these challenges. The latter see society and its various demands as corrupt and corrupting. Compare the view of the *Daodejing*, chapter 5, "Hunting and riding make one's mind wild with excitement" or *Zhuangzi*, chapter 4, "When men get together to pit their strength in games of skill, they start off in a light and friendly mood, but usually end up in a dark and angry one . . . When men meet at some ceremony to drink, they start off in an orderly manner, but usually end up in disorder . . ." See Burton Watson, tr., *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968): 60-1.

28. In regard to the first of these three moral failings, both a mechanical adherence to ritual or the idea that a certain behavior, for example, a particular form of greeting, is "mere etiquette" reflect a degraded conception of what such ritual was designed to encourage. At its worst, such attitudes can lead the obtuse performer to insist on certain conduct to the point of making a guest or new acquaintance uncomfortable or even severely embarrassed. This is to realize the exact opposite of what such rituals are intended to achieve.

Philippa Foot seems to imply something like this kind of disdain for “mere etiquette” in her otherwise insightful article, “Morality as a System of Hypothetical Imperatives,” in *Virtues and Vices* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978): 157-73. However, her position can be seen as providing support for the interpretation of ritual presented here. The “reason-giving force” of ritual is its contribution to a well-lived life.

Timidity and the difference between daring or machismo and the courage shown in standing up to a threat in order to realize a greater good provide good illustrations of actions that can parade as virtue but tend toward vice, the second of our three failings. And finally, in several passages in the *Analects*, we find Kongzi deeply concerned about his disciples becoming what I have elsewhere called “moral martinets.” See my “Reweaving the ‘one thread’ of the *Analects*.”

One might also see, in this passage, the kernel of Xunzi’s later objection to Mengzi’s theory that human nature is good. Kongzi seems to be saying that any tendency we have—even good ones like caring—are not really moral until they are ethicized through the rites. Xunzi insists that until a desire or inclination is transformed through ritual it is not only not good, it tends toward the bad. For the definitive work describing this aspect of Xunzi’s thought, see Eric L. Hutton, “Does Xunzi Have a Consistent Theory of Human Nature?” in Kline and Ivanhoe, *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*

29. *Analects* 8.2. Cf. 17.8.

30. *Analects* 10.12.

31. *Analects* 7.4, 10.5

32. For an insightful review of the best and most influential contemporary interpretations of Kongzi’s conception of ritual, along with a sensitive, powerful, and new interpretation of its significance, see Stephen H. Wilson, “Conformity, Individuality, and the Nature of Virtue,” in Van Norden, *Confucius and the Analects*.

33. *Analects* 7.9 See also 9.10.

34. In regard to human character, Kongzi had a very broad conception of the good. In contrast, contemporary western accounts of virtue and character—unlike for example Aristotle’s—tend to focus on a narrow range of clearly moral traits. For an insightful and wise exception to this trend, see Joel J. Kupperman, *Character* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

35. Music, for Kongzi, meant primarily the music and accompanying dances performed at court. Here he was particularly concerned with the effects such performances had upon the ruling elite. However, his point would seem to have equal force in more general application. Kongzi himself played the lute (*Analects* 17.20) and whenever he heard someone sing a song that he liked, he would wait until they had finished, ask them to repeat it, and sing along in harmony with them (*Analects* 7.32). For an interesting study of the

roles music can play in the good human life, see Kathleen Higgins, *The Music of Our Lives* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1991). For an article that focuses on the role of music in the Confucian tradition, see her "Music in Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 20 4 (December, 1980): 433-51.

36. *Analects* 15.10. See 8.8 for music's contribution to self cultivation. For Kongzi's praise of the *Shao*, see 7.14. See 3.25 where he compares this with martial music that is "perfectly good but not perfectly beautiful." Finally, see 3.23 for music as a general metaphor for measured and harmonious action.

37. It is illuminating to note both the similarities and differences between Kongzi's view of music and that proffered by Plato in the *Republic*. For both, music plays an important role in the formation of character. But for Plato it is part of the general "musical" education that the young must undergo if they are to be molded into virtuous individuals. Music makes the *young* soul receptive to order and reason so that dialectic can then work effectively upon it. For Plato, such an education is the only way to bring the recalcitrant passionate nature into accord with reasoned judgments. For Kongzi, the reshaping of the self is accomplished largely through ritual practice and internalization of the lessons contained in the *Odes*. Dialectic plays no central role in this process and the young need not first be tamed by music. Music is very important for Kongzi, and equally important at the final stages of self cultivation. For a discussion of Plato's views see Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates. Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991): 88-9.

38. *Analects* 14 17. For other examples dealing with attire, see 10 6, 10.19.

39. Metaphors like "solid" and "sensible" move easily across both people and certain institutions. Both embody particular qualities and each can invoke the feelings (in this case security and trust) that are commonly associated with these qualities. For a revealing analysis of how metaphors operate in these ways, see Kendall L. Walton, "Projectivism, Empathy and Musical Tension" in *Philosophical Topics* (Forthcoming).

40. I am not arguing that there is some absolute "dress code" to which people must all adhere, only that we often make judgments about how much a person *cares* by how much attention they devote to their personal appearance, particularly on special occasions. Such judgments are neither irrational nor unwarranted. Moreover, they presuppose some shared sense of what is appropriate for a given occasion; they make sense only in a *social* setting.

41. For an at times amusing, at times disturbing, analysis of attire as an indicator of social class in American society, see Paul Fussell, *Class* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1983).

42. This aspect of the role of moral education and the relationship between received rules and developed intuitions is most evident in Kongzi's form of the golden rule. For a study of this aspect of Kongzi's thought, see my "Reweaving the 'one thread' of the *Analects*."

43. In this regard pursuing them represents an *expressive* rather than an *acquisitive* desire. For this distinction, see Terence Irwin, *Plato's Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977): 239-41. The ideal for Kongzi was to embody the virtues so thoroughly that their performance flowed forth spontaneously. For an insightful exploration of the role of spontaneity in Kongzi's philosophy, see Joel Kupperman, "Naturalness Revisited: Why Western Philosophers Should Read Confucius" in Van Norden, *Confucius and the Analects*.