1

The Textual Worlds of the *Analects* and the Letter to the Galatians

INTERTEXTUAL READING OF CLASSICS

Laozi once said to Confucius: "Those of whom you speak have all already rotted away, both the men and their bones. Only their words are here."[1] So it is that those who seek to glean wisdom from historical figures encounter the challenge that "only their words are here." Yet, behind the words is a life, and our effort here is to read the texts of Confucius and Paul in order to reconstruct something of their lives. Inevitably, we read ourselves into their texts, since interpreters read from their social locations, bringing with them presuppositions that are both limiting and creative. A faithful reading is not simply a historical recovery of what the text meant, but a creative engagement with the text that continues to speak to the later generation of readers.

Intersubjective Reading, Exegesis, and Eisegesis

Ward Gasque is a historical critic who desires an objective interpretation of Paul, and his lament at perspectival and subjective reading is quite true

1. This translation is found in Nienhauser, ed., *The Grand Scribe's Records,* Vol. VII: *The Memoirs of Pre-Han China by Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, 7:21–22; see *Shiji* 63:1.

and apt when he writes, "So often the Paul who emerges from a scholar's study is a Paul created in the scholar's own image, one limited by the scholar's own theological or ideological perspective, the issues of his own day."[2] I am honored when I can read Galatians and *Analects* as a Chinese Christian, creating a Confucius and a Paul in my image. Gasque's perspective is lopsided, since every reading process is intersubjective, and is therefore a constant shifting of images between the writer and the reader. It cannot be otherwise. I want to qualify what Gasque has said: Even the purportedly "objective" reading based on historical-critical methods is not without its own assumptions, for the presuppositions of exegetes are conditioned by their language and culture. Exegesis based on grammatical analysis is often deemed to render the most objective reading of the biblical text. Biblical scholars assume that the Greek grammar and syntax can reveal the objective meaning of the text. However, interpreters of the Bible using the same grammatical reading may offer diverse meanings of the same text. For we understand grammar and history not according to objective and abstract principles, but in relation to our subjective, partial, and changing assumptions about language and history. Thus even grammatical reading is not without subjective input. Words become archaic, their referents unknown. Some texts contain words found nowhere else, and require an educated guess as to their meaning. In times past, much has been made of the precise explication of a text (exegesis), with warnings against reading into the text what is not there (eisegesis).

The classic distinction between "exegesis" (reading objective, historical meaning out from the text) and "eisegesis" (reading subjective meaning into the text) may not be helpful once we move to a cross-cultural interpretation that seeks to honor perspectival readings. At best the "exegesis/eisegesis" concern might be a construct that assumes a scholar can transcend his culture and detach himself from his own time and place, yet be able to become immersed in the past and know it with certainty. At worst, the "exegesis/eisgesis" differentiation is a scholarly fear of living in partial knowledge, the insecurity of shared ownership of any text, or the alienation of self from the network of texts with which we all work. I am here assuming that a purely objective reading of Confucius and Paul that transcends culture is unrealizable. The language of Confucius (fifth century BCE Chinese) and Paul (first century CE Greek) is not always

2. Gasque, "Images of Paul," 8.

clear, and our knowledge of their worlds is limited. But these assumptions do not lead us to despair; we need to be all the more diligent in seeking understanding. They are, after all, "classics."

The Meanings of "Classics"

The letter of Paul to the Galatians is indisputably one of the most influential canonical texts of the Christian tradition. The *Analects* is also well regarded as one of the classics. The Chinese word "classics" (*jing)* carries the connotation of "weaving"—implying the intertextual responsibility of text, author, and reader in the discovery, transmission, and practice of wisdom, whether by way of an oral/auditory or written medium. The ancient Chinese language, the language of the *Analects*, is not so much comprised of descriptive statements of what the world is, but performative and prescriptive utterances for guiding people into action and moving them toward the world as it should be.[3] The classics are texts containing communal wisdom, have stood the test of time, and continue to empower the community to live in wholeness. In our modern (Western) world, "the classics" refer to enduring normative texts that have a revelatory, transcendental, and objective nature. The classics contain the eternal principles of the cosmic order; they are works whose ideals and precepts transcended the historical circumstances of their origins and formed the basis of the social, political, economic, and religious institutions that followed.

The classics in the modern Western sense are concerned with truth, ancient Chinese classics with practical wisdom, a wisdom that is generative of life abundant. There is no lexical equivalent for truth in classical Chinese. In the West (especially in modernity), truth is equated with "objective reality." Modern epistemology tells us that we discover "objectivity" through the discovery of "the Eternal One," that "it is by virtue of analogy with this 'objective One' that we are able to disengage from our contexts, thereby resolving them into 'objects' independent of ourselves."[4] The suggestion here is not a dichotomous understanding between classical Chinese and modern Western languages—as though one were pre-

3. See Hansen, *Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought*, 33–52, on *dao* as linguistic communication for leading people on the way (*dao*).

4. Ames and Rosemont, *Analects*, 31.

scriptive, the other descriptive, and one about event, the other substance. I am suggesting that for me as a modern Chinese, trained in the Western mode of discourse, the *Analects* may not be discounted simply because it does not proclaim truth in the same way Paul believes he is doing in Galatians. By bringing the *Analects* into an intertextual relationship with Galatians, I am not trying to resolve the issue of which is more authoritative. Intertextuality answers that question by acknowledging the *mutually reinforcing authority* of both texts. The *Analects* and Galatians are received texts that continue to speak to their respective global communities by virtue of their founding, canonical, and commentarial functions.

Because the languages of the *Analects* and Galatians (classical Chinese and Koine Greek respectively) are alien to our modern Western experience, I have deemed it even more necessary for us to examine with care individual words, concepts, and phrases. This close interpretive process will prove helpful to us as we cross over from our cultures to that of antiquity. Furthermore, such a procedure will help us avoid letting our own cultural assumptions flatten out the otherness of the foreign culture. Most importantly, looking at the texts this way will help us personalize, perhaps even internalize, the wisdom of the classics, thus rejuvenating new life into the texts.

I will summarize the basic rhetorical argument of the *Analects* and Galatians below with the purpose of constructing the theological ethics of the two texts.

THE *ANALECTS*: TEXT, LANGUAGE, AND CONTENT

The Classic Text and Its Composition

The *Analects* (*Lunyu* in Chinese), a term coined by a Scottish Congregationalist missionary to China called James Legge (1815–1897), means "categorized conversation" or "collection of sayings."[5] The *Analects* is one of four Confucian classics, which, together with the Five Classics, were integrated into a Confucian canon in the Former Han era (201 BCE—25 CE). The Four Books were the core texts of Confucianism—the *Analects* (*Lunyu*), *Mencius* (*Mengzi*), the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*), and

5. See an excellent discussion on the Chinese title of the work and its textual history: Cheng, *Lunyu Jishi*; Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*, 3–8; and Slingerland trans., *Confucius Analects*, xiii–xxv.

the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*).[6] They became unified texts only in the Sung dynasty (960–1279 CE). They are considered classical (*jing*) texts (*wen*) because they have long been regarded as containing a comprehensive understanding of the moral, philosophical, and political worlds of human endeavor. The *Analects* has special place because it collects the teachings of China's greatest master, Confucius. Later commentators have found in the *Analects* the essence of the Sage's teaching and the master key to the classics as a whole.[7]

The composition of the *Analects* began soon after Confucius' death (in 479 BCE) by his disciples and successors for the next two centuries (probably before 220 BCE). By the time of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–200 CE), there were three versions of the *Analects* (according to *Hanshu*, *History of the Han Dynasty*), and the received text (the *Lunyu*, which we have today) is made up of these three versions, edited first by He Yan (190–249 CE). The *Analects* is a record of the Master's teaching as preserved by his earliest disciples with material added by different Confucian sects, sometimes of the same mind, sometimes of a competing spirit. Each composer or editor had his own intention in the editing process.[8] The present form of the *Analects* (containing 15,935 words altogether) is comprised of twenty books (or sections, sometimes referred to as chapters). Each book is divided into divisions (or paragraphs, and sometimes referred to as chapters, about five hundred in all) of individual

6. See Legge and Yang, trans., *The Four Books*.

7. According to the prominent Qing historian of the classics, Chen Li (1810–1882), "the essentials of classical studies are all in the *Analects*" (Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 18). Liu Fenglu remarked that "the *Analects* sums up the great meanings of the Six Classics (Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary*, 19). The *Analects* was considered a classic by Jesuit missionaries in China and Japan during the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century were also attracted to it; James Legge translated the classics into English. Among the best English translations of the *Analects* are those by James Legge, Arthur Waley, D. C. Lau, Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr., Chichung Huang, and Edward Slingerland. The four Chinese commentaries on the *Analects* I use are: He and Xing, *Lunyu Zhushu*; Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*; Qian, *Lunyu Xinjie*; Chen, *Lunyu Duxun Jiegu*; and Zhu ed., *Sishu*.

An excellent online resource on Confucianism is: http://www.confucius2000.com/.

8. On the technical study of the redaction of the *Analects*, see Norden ed., *Confucius and the Analects*, 14–18; Waley, *The Analects of Confucius*, 21–26. Following Waley, Norden sees Books 3–9 as the earliest portion, with explicit topics, yet Book 10 is irrelevant and Book 1–2 without explicit topics. Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, propose the accretion theory. They see only Book 4 is the original and dated 479 BCE, right after the death of Confucius, and the last book (20) was dated 249 BCE.

dialogues or sayings. Most of the sayings are concerned with political ethics and with the cultivation of virtue.[9]

9. The result of the redaction process is the work we have today that has titles to every book (or section). Below are the titles of the books and their component sections with a brief summary of their content in parenthesis:

Book 1–2: The sayings of Confucius and his disciples
Book 1: Xue Er—On Learning (On studying, life, language, truth, etc.)
Book 2: Weizheng—On Governing (On government, poetry, Confucius' own life of study, *junzi* [exemplary person], etc.)
Book 3–9: Core Books (Probably the earliest material with topical discussions)
Book 3: Bayi—Eight Rows of Dancers (On ritual and music)
Book 4: Liren—To Live Benevolently/Humanely (Aphorism on *ren*)
Book 5: Gongye Chang—Gongye Chang (A major disciple of Confucius, contains sayings on judgment about others)
Book 6: Yong Ye—Yong Ye (a major disciple of Confucius, also known as Ran Yong or Ran Bo-niu, a discussion on judgment and official responsibility)
Book 7: Shu Er—To Transmit (Biographical material on Confucius)
Book 8: Tai Bo—Tai Bo (The eldest son of the Zhou dynasty's first king; contains Master Zeng's analects [chap. 3–7] and a discussion on the sage kings [chap. 18–21])
Book 9: Zihan—Master Seldom (The title is based on the first two words of the book, "The Master seldom . . . " The book contains biographical material of Confucius.)
Book 10–11: Topical Discourses
Book 10: Xiang Dang—Native Place (On Confucius's behavior in his native region and maxims concerning ritual.)
Book 11: Xian Jin—Those Who First Entered (On rituals, music, and government)
Book 12–20: Dialogues between the Disciples and the Master
Book 12: Yan Yuan—The disciples ask about *ren* (humaneness), *junzi* (the exemplary person), clear-sightedness (*min*), government (*zheng*), etc.
Book 13: Zilu—The disciples ask about government, *ren* [benevolence], *junzi* [exemplary person], etc.
Book 14: Xian Wen—Xian, a disciple of Confucius, also known as Yuan Si. He asks about shame, and other disciples ask about being human, government, *junzi* [the exemplary person], etc.
Book 15: Wei Ling Gong—Duke Ling of the state of Wei, who asks about Confucius. Confucius' responses on virtue, *junzi* [exemplary person], his own teaching, *dao* [the way], etc.
Book 16: Ji Shi—Ji Kangzi, one of the ruling families in the state of Lu, asks about warfare, and Confucius' discourses on *dao* [the way], friendship, *junzi* [the excellent person], etc.
Book 17: Yang Huo—Yang Huo, a government official who asks to see Confucius, but Confucius refuses. Confucius' discourse on human nature, *ren* [humaneness], ritual, etc.

To translate the title *Analects* as "The Sayings of Confucius" is incorrect. There is not one author, there are multiple voices with the Master's as the dominant one. Eight of the sixteen chapters in Book 1 are not even the teachings of Confucius; Book 2 begins with the voice of Master You; Books 12–20 contain sayings of the disciples; and Books 14 and 18 even contain anti-Confucian stories. Of all the four canonical texts—the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *the Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Great Learning*—the *Analects* is the one that contains sayings closest to the spirit of the Master's teachings.

Language of the Analects*:* Wenyan

The *Analects* was written in the classical Chinese language called *wenyanwen*, the imperial language of ancient China in which most classics of history, philosophy, and literature were written. Classical Chinese is different from *baihuawen* ("the plain language" or modern Chinese), the vernacular written language widely used throughout the Chinese speaking world today.[10] *Wenyan* (classical Chinese) texts, such as the *Analects*, are more poetic, ambiguous, and polyvalent than *baihua* (modern Chinese) texts.[11]

Book 18: Weizi—Accounts of the viscount of Wei who left the tyrant ruler, Duke Jing of Qi, etc. This book contains few of Confucius' sayings.

Book 19: Zizhang—Sayings of Zizhang, Zixia, Ziyou, Master Zeng, Zigong. This book does not contain sayings of Confucius.

Book 20: Yao Yue—Yao Said (On government and the mandate of heaven.)

10. The 1919 May Fourth Movement brought about the *baihuawen*, the vernacular written language widely used throughout the Chinese speaking world. It is more or less a transcription of how one speaks. The *wenyanwen* and *baihuawen* have different styles, grammars, and vocabularies. Generally speaking, *wenyanwen* is more grand and formal; it has stricter rules or patterns of expression, especially in poetic compositions. *Baihuawen* literally means "plain-saying." It has a simpler style, looser sentence structure, and therefore needs more words to express the same idea than *wenyanwen*. Because of the history, wisdom, and beauty of *wenyanwen,* most writers today use *baihua* but then draw on the rich tradition of *wenyan* in the form of "short sayings," called *chengyu* (proverbial sayings or anecdotes).

11. Ames and Rosement have published substantial studies on the philosophical and linguistic background of *wenyan* (classical Chinese). They argue that *wenyan* is probably not the exact language the people of antiquity spoke because of the high number of homonyms in the language, "with anywhere from two to seven different characters pronounced identically. Today the situation is worse. In a common five-thousand-word dictionary, for example, even when the tones are taken into account, forty semantically

It is important to note also that the Chinese language, whether *wenyan* or *baihua*, does not have moods, voices, tenses, articles, declensions, prepositions, or distinguishing features regarding parts of speech. Sometimes a word in a sentence can function as a noun, a verb, or another part of speech. This dynamic aspect of the Chinese language adds another layer of challenge to the modern mind that expects precision. These elliptical features of classical Chinese pose difficulty for interpreters of the *Analects*. F. S. C. Northrop understands this dynamic aspect of the Chinese language as the "intuitive, aesthetic, undifferentiated experience" of ancient Chinese epistemology:

> Western type of knowledge tends to be formally and doctrinally expressed in logically developed, scientific and philosophical treatises. . . . The Easterners, on the other hand, uses bits of linguistic symbolism, largely denotative, and often purely ideographic in character, to point toward a component in the nature of things which only immediate experience and continued contemplation can convey. This shows itself especially in the symbols of the Chinese language, where each solitary, immediately experienced local particular tends to have its own symbol, this symbol also often having a directly observed form like that of the immediately seen item of direct experience which it denotes. . . . Since the symbols tend to be related merely as the items in the concrete, individual aesthetic experience are associated, the rules of grammar are less definite.[12]

The language of the *Analects* is poetic. The nature of language is such that it invites "immediately introspected imagination of the reader, with a minimum of symbols, the maximum amount of rich, subtly related, immediately felt aesthetic content."[13] All the practical moral precepts are presented in the *Analects* as if they are immediately available to the readers, and the readers are expected to draw upon their experience in reading the *Analects*. For Confucius, the ethical is grounded in the aesthetic.

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dissimilar [pictographs or characters] are pronounced identically /yi/; the sounds /shi/ and /ji/ each have thirty-two lexical entries; /zhi/ has thirty-one; and so on, with almost no phoneme having only one semantic correlate." Ames and Rosemont, *Analects*, 38. See the "Introduction" and "Appendix II" in their book—very helpful material to proper understanding of Chinese language. Another valuable source on Chinese language is Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, 312–46.

12. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, 315–16, 319.

13. Ibid., 319.

Ethics is not to arrive at a doctrinal, logical formulation of behaviors. Ethics is leading people to participate in the beauty of the great order of life, as the cosmic *dao* (way or pattern) or universal principle (*tianli*) has it eternally, and as individuals fulfill the harmony (aesthetic delight) of the *dao* (the Way) in their moral life.

The Power of the Analects*:*[14] *From* Yan *(Word) to* Wen *(Culture)*

We have noted in the previous chapter that Confucius came in the tradition of teachers called *ru* who advocated a culture of studies and self-cultivation in place of physical force and domination, Confucius strengthened the teachings to become the so-called the school of Confucianism (*Rujia*). In the *Analects* we see Confucius' emphasis in the power of the word as his means to redefine the role of teachers (*ru*). In the *Analects* the rhetoric of *yan*, word or speech, is especially important. The word *yan* is used 116 times throughout, and is often linked to virtue (*Analects* 12:10). Confucius contends that "[a] person of virtue is sure to speak eloquently, but a person who speaks eloquently is not necessarily virtuous" (*Analects* 14:4). Confucianism holds the view that moral character is revealed in one's speech (*Analects* 20:3). Lu writes, "The conceptualization of *yan* is Confucius's invention and creation, and his *Analects* is the first treatise on Chinese speech and communication."[15]

Confucius approves of using speech to persuade, to learn, and to cultivate oneself, but he does not approve of using speech for immoral gain. "It is rare, indeed, for a man with cunning words and an ingratiating face to be benevolent" (*Analects* 15:27).[16] Confucius "distastes clever talkers who overturn states and noble families" (17:18).[17] The exemplary person is described as "being slow in speech" (4:24) and "eager to show respect to his audience" (5:16). The rhetorical *topoi* to avoid include "feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings" (7:20).

To be eloquent without ethical integrity does not persuade; to be virtuous is to be persuasive. As Robert Oliver has noted, "In constructing

14. On rhetoric of Confucianism, see Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China*, 154–94; Qian, *Lunyu Xinjie*, 1–3.

15. Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China*, 163.

16. Lau, trans., *Analects*, 155.

17. Ibid., 177.

a moral perspective of *yan*, Confucius proposed the following categories of speech: *deyan* (virtuous speech), *xinyan* (trustworthy speech), *weiyan* (upright speech), *shenyan* (cautious speech), and *yayan* (correct speech)."[18] All these locutions are related to the rhetor's ethos. According to Oliver, Confucius gives seven distinct reasons for persuasive discourse:

> . . . 'to communicate ideas clearly' (*Analects* 15:39); to 'captivate the will of those whose loyalty must be won' (9:24); to maintain social functions, for as he said: 'Human relations not rectified, speech would grate; speech grating, activities would not carry on' (13:3); to reform the conduct of a prince or friend, for 'how can one help . . . rectifying, through persuasion, the one to whom he is loyal?' (14:7); to win personal advancement, since experience shows that 'Unless gifted with the artful tongue of Ceremony Master T'o and the handsomeness of Prince Ts'ao of Sung, one can hardly get on these days' (6:15); to gain a truer understanding of other people, since 'he who does not know the value (force) of words will never come to understand his fellow men' (20:3); and to represent clearly and accurately the true nature of the speaker, for 'There are three facets of a gentleman. Looked at from a distance he seems stern; at close range he is pleasant; as we listen to his words, they are clear cut' (19:9).[19]

Confucius is the master of language, his metaphorical speech invites his disciples then and his readers now to join him in creating an orderly moral world. That invitational style includes using contrasts and open-ended definitions (this sounds like an oxymoron, but it has a pedagogical purpose). For instance, it would be difficult for us to determine the precise definition of the following terms: *ren*, *zhong*, *shu*, *li*, *xiao*, *junzi*. For Confucius, effective teaching requires the creative definition of concepts, leaving them open for disciples to explore their derivative and connotative paths, and thereby to internalize them. Jay G. Williams gives the examples of how Chapters (Books) I and II of the *Analects* are invitational in their discussion of the gentleman's study and practice of *ren*.

> Initially, the connection between Chapter I and Chapter II seems unclear, though one has an inkling that the filial and the fraternal are old friends revisited. II.2, however, introduces the *junzi* once more. The true aristocrat, *Lunyu*'s ideal, is said to bend his atten-

18. Lu, *Rhetoric in Ancient China*, 164. *Yayan* can be translated as "elegant speech."

19. Oliver, *Communication and Culture*, 136.

> tion to the root which, in the case of *ren* (human heartedness), are filial piety and fraternal submission. . . . Chapter III supplements II, providing an indication of where not to look for *ren. Ren,* it announces, is seldom associated with fine words and insinuating appearance. This is typical of the *Lunyu*: no definition, but a series of pointers. . . . Ideas are introduced but the definition of them is left up to the reader.[20]

Thus, the text of the *Analects* preserves the dynamic definitions of Confucius opening up the possibility for the reader to reconceptualize how to be fully human in a multitude of diverse situations.

Consistent with the Master's pedagogy, the editors of the *Analects* seek to draw forth the reader's participation as he engages the text. Jay G. Williams suggests that 1:1 sets the tone for the whole book:

> Chapter I is not meant to be read like an Aristotelian treatise, as a series of arguments terminating in a conclusion. Its rhetoric is that of the intellectual puzzle which calls upon the reader to supply, through imaginative insight, the missing links. The reader is invited, not to follow the argument, but to construct it.[21]

The life disciplined in study is an enjoyment derived from a journey of discovery, rediscovery, imagination, and internalization. This path of discovery is made possible through *yan* (word or rhetoric).

Another significant word in the *Analects* interrelated with *yan* is *wen*, which can mean "knowledge," "learning" (*Analects* 1:6), "culture" (3:14, 9:5), "fond of learning" (5:15), "embellishment" (6:18, 19:8), "classics" (7:25), "knowledge" (9:11), "knowledge of classics" (9:27), or "refinement" (8:24), as seen in Lau's translation. *Wen* often means "pattern" as well (1:6). *Analects* 5:13 talks about the *wenzhang* of Confucius. What is the *wenzhang* of Confucius? The history of interpretation gives different meanings:

> It could refer to Confucius' personal displays of culture. In *Analects* 5:15, Zigong asks why an official named Kong was given the posthumous name *the cultured one* (*wenzi*). But equally plausible is the idea that *wen* refers to the cultural forms of the Zhou dynasty. One finds support for this reading in *Analects* 9:5, where

20. Williams, "On Reading A Confucian Classic," 109–10; Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects*, 1–16.

21. Williams, "On Reading A Confucian Classic," 108–9.

> Confucius thought that Heaven was delegating to him the task of rebuilding the culture of Zhou.[22]

These two interpretations can be seen as mutually compatible: "Confucius was the repository of knowledge about this culture and he displayed it in his personal conduct. . . ."[23] Today we might use the words "civilized" and "cultured" to describe the meanings of *wen* in the *Analects*, while using the word "culture" anthropologically to refer to stylized ways of living. I will pick up this discussion in the section below on "culture and cultured."

The Analects *and the Scholarly Tradition of Learning to Becoming Human*

The Confucian culture is the context in which the Chinese human character has been shaped. Confucius believed that human beings are born with similar natures, but they drift apart through repeated practices caused by educational and environmental influences (*Analects* 17:2). Confucius founded the *rujia*, "the scholarly tradition" or the "Learning School,"[24] and emphasizes studying as the way to becoming fully human (cf. *Analects* 15:9). Confucius advocates wide learning in *wen* (culture), in order to become an exemplary person (*junzi*) who disciplines himself with *li* (ritual propriety). Such a person will not likely go astray (*Analects* 6:27).

The scholarly tradition of Confucianism believes that teachers are life-long learners who keep reviewing and preserving the old and acquiring the new (*Analects* 2:11). To be a great teacher, one takes the historical and prophetic task of knowing the classics well and transmitting them to the contemporary audience. *Analects* 7:1 says: "I transmitted and did not

22. For more interpretative discussion on these verses, see Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*, 104, 194; Qian, *Lunyu Xinjie*, 165, 307; Chen, *Confucian Analects*, 72, 154; Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects,* 87–88.

23. Ivanhoe, "Whose Confucius? Which *Analects*?" 131, n. 9: "Other plausible interpretations exist, as well. For example, Liu Xie (465–522) in the second chapter of his *Wenxin diaolong* says that Confucius' *wenzhang* is his "style of composition" (*wenci*). Huang Kan (488–545) in his commentary on the *Analects* identifies *wenzhang* as the six classical works (*liuji*)."

24. On *ru, rujia* and its legacy, see Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven*, 190–97; Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism*, Part 2.

describe." It means that he passed on the knowledge of the classics but did not create new rituals and music, he trusted and loved antiquity. *Analects* 7:1 means that knowledge has its foundation in past wisdom.

The great Master, Confucius himself, was an exemplary learner. He was omnivorous and described himself as a person who was fond of learning. Confucius learned from the way of the sage-kings, King Wen and King Wu, but also from the common people. He was not ashamed to ask inferiors for information,[25] he never denied anyone who came to him for learning (*Analects* 7:7).[26] Learning, he believed, was not limited to the classroom or to formal education, learning can happen in any social setting. Confucius said that when there were three persons together, he could find a teacher among them, he could learn from the good points of others; the bad points he could also learn from them and he could correct the same weak points in himself (*Analects* 7:22).[27]

The *Analects* is full of discourses on learning. Studying involves not just thinking but, foremostly, observation and listening (*Analects* 2:18).[28] Learning must be supplemented with critical reflection to be fruitful; critical reasoning must be supplemented with study to be coherent. Learning without reflection is futile; reflection without learning is perplexing (Analects 2:15). Confucius expected his students to take initiative in studying, to think hard, for "no vexation, no enlightenment; no anxiety, no illumination" (*Analects* 7:8).[29] He also expected his students to draw inferences and not just do rote memory (*Analects* 7:8).

25. When asked why the minister of Wei Kong Wenzi was called "wen" (meaning "refined") Confucius replied to his disciple Zigong that, because he was intelligent and fond of studying, he was not ashamed to ask his inferiors and learn from them, and this was the meaning of *wen* (*Analects* 5:15). See Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*, 104.

26. In his studies, Confucius started from the basic and gradually worked his way to the upper levels. If he was understood by anyone, perhaps it was heaven, so he did not complain against heaven, he did not blame any person (14:35). See Qian, *Lunyu Xinjie*, 234.

27. See Chen, *Lunyu Duxun Jiegu*, 122.

28. "When Zizhang asked how to seek an official's salary, the Master said: 'Hear much, leave out what is doubtful, discreetly speak about the rest, and you shall make few mistakes. See much, leave out what is hazardous, discreetly practice the rest, and you shall have fewer regrets. If you make fewer mistakes in speech and have fewer regrets in action, an official's salary lies therein" (Huang, *Analects,* 55–56; *Analects* 2:18). See Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*, 39.

29. Huang, *Analects,* 88.

Thinking too hard, to the extent of fasting and sleepless nights may yield nothing. Confucius believed that speculative knowledge may not be helpful, while learning moral and self-cultivation would make one wise. Study should be well rounded, for all disciplines lead one to be a person of excellence for the sake self-cultivation. And because virtue formation is a life-long process, so is learning; as the first sentence of the *Analects* reads: "What a joy it is to learn and to constantly *practice* or *cultivate* it."[30]

Confucius did not claim to be a sage or a benevolent person; but he said he was committed to learning the way of benevolence and to teaching others to do the same, that much could be said of himself (*Analects* 7:34). Is the goal of learning to establish oneself (and others) or just to boast about one's knowledge? Confucius lamented that in the old days, scholars learned for themselves whereas now scholars learn to brag about themselves (*Analects* 14:24). Confucius taught that benevolence is the goal of learning, and in this pursuit of benevolence, one need not yield precedence even to one's teacher (*Analects* 15:36).

Indeed, learning is for the sake of the Way: "The Master said: 'Those who, after three years of learning, have never contemplated an official's salary, are not easy to find.' The Master said: 'Firmly believe in it, diligently learn it, and adhere to the good Way until death. A perilous state, do not enter; a rebellious state, do not inhabit. When the empire possesses the Way, reveal yourself; when it loses the Way, conceal yourself. When the state possesses the Way and you are poor and lowly, it is a shame; when the state loses the Way and you are rich and noble, it is also a shame'" (*Analects* 8:12–13).[31] Again, "The Master said: 'What the gentleman seeks is the Way and not food. If he farms, hunger lies therein; if he learns, an official's salary lies therein. What the gentleman worries about is the Way and not poverty" (*Analects* 15:32).[32]

The scholarly tradition of Confucianism is designed for the sake of leading people to the Way (*dao*), the cosmic pattern of all things. Those who are born with *dao* (the way of humanity) are rare but superior. Most people know the *dao* through learning. Many may learn when forced, but

30. See Chen, *Lunyu Duxun Jiegu*, 1; Yang, *Lunyu Yizhu*, 3–4.

31. Huang, *Analects,* 98.

32. Ibid., 157.

it is the last group that is undesirable, for they do not even learn when forced (*Analects* 16:9).

The Dao *of "Human Becoming" and the Confucian Project of an Aesthetic Culture*

The *Analects*, a collection of anecdotal sayings of Confucius and his disciples, is challenging to summarize. I shall examine the key concepts, terms, and sayings *in their contexts* later in this book. Here I wish to note the language and metaphysical worlds of the *Analects*, and consequently, to examine the major thrust of its teaching and the thesis.

The work of Ames and Rosemont is an insightful resource for non-Chinese readers of the *Analects* who seek to understand the linguistic and philosophic world of the *Analects*. Ames and Rosemont point out that the Chinese world emphasizes the function of "correlation" and not the function of essence or substance. They describe the Confucian worldview as "intrinsic and constitutive," that is,

> The Chinese made sense of personal identity "by fitting it into the cyclical rhythms of natural and social process." . . . The early Chinese thinkers never seem to have perceived any substances that remained the *same* through time; rather in our interpretation they saw "things" relationally, and related differently, at different periods of time. *Dao*, the totality of all things *(wanwu)*, is a process that requires the language of both "change (*bian*)" and "persistence (*tong*)" to capture its dynamic disposition. This processional nature of experience is captured in *Analects* 9:17: "The Master was standing on the riverbank, and observed, "Isn't life's passing just like this, never ceasing day or night!"[33]

Unlike the Greek metaphysical and Judeo-Christian theology that possess a worldview

> where an independent and superordinate principle determines order and value in the world while remaining aloof from it, . . . ancient Chinese thinkers did not view language basically as a way of describing the world, or of communicating one's beliefs about it, but rather as a means of guiding actions in the world.[34]

33. Ames and Rosemont, *Analects*, 24–26.

34. Ibid., 30–31.

As such the text of the *Analects* is a *dao* in the sense that it is a "guiding discourse." The Chinese word *dao* means "to lead through [on foot]" "foremostly" ("head").[35] The Confucian teachings in the *Analects* are guiding discourses (*dao*) of "human *becoming*"—in the dynamic and relational process of change and persistence.

The *Analects* does not speculate the genesis of the world, it "*does* something to the world and recommends *how it should be*."[36] Because there is no creation myth in the Chinese worldview, Confucius and his disciples believe that *tian* (Heaven) is the creative order and the field of creatures. "There is no apparent distinction between the order itself, and what orders it. . . . *Tian* is not just 'things'; it is a living culture—crafted, transmitted, and now resident in a human community."[37] The "ten thousand things" (*wanwu*) and the human world are immanent of creativity and life; they are "at once continuous one with another, and at the same time, unique."[38] A moral subjectivity, which is also the subjectivity of *tian*, distinguishes the human creature from other creatures.[39] The way of becoming human is to realize the way of *tian*, as one cultivates virtues in correlation with others.

As we turn to the letter to the Galatians, we will notice sharp contrasts between Galatians and the *Analects*. The thesis of the *Analects* concerns the cultivation of one's subjectivity, that is, one's moral mind or one's heart.[40] The *Analects* does not pursue the question of the Objective One, who is believed to provide a transcendental answer to the question "what causes the world to be here?" and consequently to provide the basis for the meaning of life. In the *Analects*, the world does not appear deceptive, and accordingly the *Analects* is not preoccupied with the *why* of the world.[41] Instead, the *Analects* as a teacher (*ru*) is concerned with "*how to get on* in the world"—"the way (*dao*) is made in the walking of it."[42] Thus, the language and the teaching are training grounds for readers and learners to walk on the path of becoming human as they are being culti-

35. Ibid., 45.
36. Ibid.; emphases mine.
37. Ibid., 47.
38. Ibid., 30.
39. Mou, *Xinti Yu Xingti*, 1:22–23.
40. Mou, *Zhongguo Zhexue De Tezhi*, 16–27.
41. Ames and Rosemont, *Analects*, 32.
42. Ibid., 33.

vated in the stylized rituals and beautiful music of the sages in the past. Slingerland correctly notes that "Confucius seems to have been the first to use the term *dao* ('the Way') in its full metaphysical sense. Referring literally to a physical path or road, *dao* also refers to a 'way' of doing things, and in the *Analects* refers to *the* Way—the unique moral path that should be walked by any true human being, endorsed by Heaven and revealed to the early sage-kings."[43]

The teaching of Confucius, as it advocates for the path of becoming human, provides a moral response to a fallen society "whose rulers have lost the Way and the common people have therefore becomes confused" (*Analects* 19:19). The Way is lost because people of Confucius' day are obsessed with mechanically fulfilling the outward forms of the rites and pursuing self-cultivation with ulterior motives.[44] According to Confucius, fallen culture is the inevitable product of such a corrupt society. Thus, to restore the way of becoming human is to restore the Way of Heaven (*tian*)—and that, for Confucius, means to build an aesthetic culture (*wen*) of Virtue (*de*) for its own sake. Confucius is convinced that the aesthetic culture was once manifested in the Western Zhou, and in his own time, he wants to make his home state of Lu to be a "second Zhou in the East" (*Analects* 17:5).

Heaven neither endows nor endorses a manipulative, artificial, and glib set of rules; Heaven gives "natural, spontaneous, unselfconscious harmony"[45] as Virtue (*de*) to all people. Heaven governs the natural world "effortlessly" (*wuwei*), without even speaking, yet all living things grow (*Analects* 17:18).[46] Confucius believes that the political and the social world should function in the same effortless manner as the natural world—without resort to force. The stylized ritual and the harmonious music are not about the external forms, they are the fields of an aesthetic culture in which one immerses and consequently, one's being is cultivated into a mature moral self (*junzi*).

We will return to this discussion below as we deal with Confucian ethics in relation to Pauline theology. Let us turn now to the letter to the Galatians written by Paul.

43. Slingerland, trans., *Confucius Analects*, xxiii–xxii.

44. Ibid., xxiii–xxiv.

45. Ibid., xxiii–xxi.

46. *Analects* 17:18: "The Master said: 'What does Heaven say? Yet the four seasons revolved and a hundred things grow. What does Heaven say?'" (Huang, *Analects,* 170).