Roots of Ru 儒 Ethics in *shi* 士 Status Anxiety

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When originally independent pragmatic texts were included in larger early Chinese compilations, this entailed a recontextualization that potentially transformed the meaning of those texts significantly. Focusing on examples from the *Analects* and the Zengzi chapters in *Da Dai Liji*, this paper demonstrates that some didactic precepts which have come to be appreciated as general *Ru* moral and political philosophy are probably rooted in concrete and more modest applications. The texts discussed are in part based on a discourse accompanying the establishment of meritocratic administrative structures in the early to mid Warring States period. These pragmatic discourses inspired didactic texts that reflected *shi* status anxiety. Members of the *shi* class not only composed texts for the edification of their rulers and the education of their princes. They also directed admonitions at their own peers, formulating standards by which they could manifest their claim to elevated social status. The further these texts became removed over time from their original historical context, the more they came to be read as *Ru* ethics in the sense of universally applicable standards.

INTRODUCTION

Among the ethical values and maxims propagated in the *Lunyu* 論語, one point stands out as a pervasive concern: a noble man or a worthy follower of Confucius' teachings does not worry about recognition or status. The first of multiple assertions to that effect is placed in a prominent position at the very beginning of the *Lunyu*, where an unspecified Master[1] professes,

> Is it not indeed a pleasure to have learnt something and to practice it time and again? Is it not indeed a joy to have one's peers come from afar? Is it not indeed like a noble man not to resent it when others do not recognize one?
> 子曰：「學而時習之，不亦說乎？有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？」[2]

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1. In the many instances where the speaker is not mentioned by name but referred to by the generic term 'master' (*zi* 子), the most common assumption is that this master must be Confucius. There are enough instances in the text, however, in which another named master is speaking (e.g., Zengzi 曾子, Youzi 有子, or Ji Kangzi 季康子) or in which the speaker is another disciple of Confucius (e.g., Zizhang 子張, Zilu 子路, or Yanyuan 顏淵), whom the text justifiably could call a master just as well. If the title of the compilation were *Kongzi* 孔子 (Master Kong), rather than *Lunyu* (Analects), there would arguably be more reason to assume that any unnamed master has to be Confucius, but considering the circumstance that the *Lunyu* presents many different named speakers, as well as pronouncements for whom no speaker is mentioned, the speakers referred to by the generic designation of 'master' may be either Confucius or any other person who could be considered a master by the compilers of the text. For a brief discussion of the technical nature of the generic *zi yue* 子曰 incipit as a rhetorical device, see Jin Lingke 金陵客, "'Zi yue' shi yi zhong chuangzao" "子曰"是一種創造," *Wei shi* 唯實 2006.4:8–9.

2. *Lunyu* 1.1; *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋, comp. Cheng Shude 程樹德 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 1–9.

The first chapter closes with another such statement:

> The Master said, "One should not feel anxious about others' not recognizing oneself. One should feel anxious lest one fail to recognize others."
> 子曰：「不患人之不己知，患不知人也。」[3]

And in chapter four a "Master" says:

> You should not feel anxious about not having a position but rather about the means by which you position yourself. You should not feel anxious lest no one recognize you, but seek to become worth recognizing.
> 子曰：「不患無位，患所以立；不患莫己知，求為可知也。」[4]

These few passages show two things that are of importance for the present discussion: First, they indicate that anxiety (*huan* 患) about being recognized must have been a sufficiently significant phenomenon to warrant these repeated admonitions and their inclusion in the teachings that were chosen to be transmitted in the *Lunyu*. Second, these passages—like large parts of the *Lunyu* and many other early Chinese texts—are pragmatically underdetermined. They do not appear to present a general, broadly applicable moral and political philosophy, if this is what we expect of the *Lunyu*, nor do they indicate to what specific historical context they refer and what made them significant at the time when they were formulated. This is true for the most part of the *Lunyu*.

Reading the *Lunyu*—and many other texts from early China—requires a high degree of interpretive input. In the case of the *Lunyu*, such input could not be more amply provided: countless commentaries throughout the two millennia of its transmission and reception add specificity to its understanding. They convey an interpretation of this compilation as part of the canon, i.e., its scriptural reading, and thus vividly demonstrate how it has been kept productive as an element of tradition. They are not, however, a reliable source from which to understand the historical significance of the many short texts collected in the *Lunyu* at the time when they were composed. To be sure, this historical meaning is not recoverable in full, nor with a high degree of precision, but it has been shown in intertextual studies of early Chinese literature that it is to some extent possible to identify historical contexts and specific concerns that motivated these texts.[5] The present article aims to demonstrate that some of what we read today in the *Lunyu* and similar texts as general principles of self-cultivation and *Ru* ethics is most likely rooted in something more mundane, namely status anxiety of the lower strata of nobility, brought about by the increased social mobility in the Warring States period (453–221 B.C.E.). Before we can start exploring the texts pertaining to this issue, it is necessary to discuss the rationale behind such an intertextual study. The following examination is based on two crucial insights: First, most early Chinese texts are composite in nature, and second, their constituent parts are often underdetermined.

3. *Lunyu* 1.16; *Lunyu jishi*, 58–60.

4. *Lunyu* 4.14; *Lunyu jishi*, 256–57.

5. For a study of several *Lunyu* passages that follows such an approach, see Oliver Weingarten, "Confucius and Pregnant Women: An Investigation into the Intertextuality of the *Lunyu*," *JAOS* 129 (2009): 587–618. Michael Hunter's recent monograph *Confucius beyond the "Analects"* (Leiden: Brill, 2017) discusses textual parallels between the *Lunyu* and other early Chinese texts more broadly. For an earlier comprehensive collection of *Lunyu* parallels, see Yang Shuda's 楊樹達 *Lunyu shuzheng* 論語疏證, first published in 1955 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1986).

1. DEFICIENT PRAGMATIC DETERMINATION OF TEXTS AS A HERMENEUTIC PROBLEM

The *Lunyu* is a premier example of a pragmatically underdetermined text. Unlike other texts, this compilation does not even attempt to appear continuous and coherent beyond the scope of its mostly very short textual units. Most of the text opens up a vast range of possible interpretations and applications. For example, it is not intuitively clear why a maxim like "one should not converse during meals nor speak when one retires to bed" 食不語，寢不言 was considered important enough to transmit over millennia in one of the foremost texts of the Confucian canon.[6] Or why we should be reminded that it is necessary for a noble man to have a nightgown one and a half times as long as one's body (君子 . . . 必有寢衣，長一身有半).[7] The practicality of this alone has raised questions: some scholars have explained the word *qinyi* 寢衣 as referring to a blanket, while an alternative interpretation understands the length *yi shen you ban* 一身有半 as reaching down to one's knees, thus allowing us to maintain the literal understanding of *qinyi* as a nightgown.[8]

There are several ways to account for the inclusion of such apparent trivialities in the *Lunyu*: They may not be trivial at all, but could have been of greater consequence than we are able to recognize now, at a time when the specific reasons and contexts that made them significant are not visible to us anymore. Or they may indeed be mere pieces of advice concerning minor practical issues—useful maxims that happened to be gathered together with more consequential ideological or philosophical statements in a heterogeneous compilation that does not distinguish categories of content or degrees of importance. There are likewise several ways to account for the continued transmission of these pedestrian parts of the *Lunyu*: They were maintained either for the simple reason that they had become part of a highly esteemed text, and transmitters preserved the unimportant along with the important, so as not to compromise the integrity of a revered compilation. Or these parts of the text had become charged with new significance; deeper meaning had been read into them.

Both questions—what the actual meaning of the passages was at the time of their formulation and for what reasons they were transmitted—we may be unable to answer. But if we fail even to raise these questions we are more likely to treat any part of heterogeneous compilations such as the *Lunyu* indiscriminately as potentially valid, independently of historical context, and hence as universally applicable. From such a generalizing approach two problematic consequences may arise: First, we might fail to recognize the historically relevant information the texts carry. Second, we might invite ideologically charged interpretations and uses of the text that legitimatize extraneous arguments by ascribing uniformly high status as Confucian ideology to *all* statements in the *Lunyu* indiscriminately, considering them all as equally fundamental to a Chinese cultural identity.

As far as the passages cited above are concerned, not much harm is to be expected of ahistorical ideological interpretations of any of these: Surely, if anyone were eccentric enough to condemn business lunches as un-Confucian, based on the injunction against conversations during meals (*Lunyu* 10.10), we would wave this aside as irrelevant. But we might take it more seriously if someone used *Lunyu* 17.25 as an argument against gender equality:

6. *Lunyu* 10.10; *Lunyu jishi*, 699–700.

7. *Lunyu* 10.6; *Lunyu jishi*, 673–74.

8. D. C. Lau translates: "He invariably had a night shirt which came down to his knees." Lau, *Confucius: The Analects (Lun-yü)* (Hong Kong: Chinese Univ. Press, 1992), 89. The alternative, apparently dominant, interpretation as a blanket measuring one and a half times the length of the sleeper's body is based on a gloss ("寢衣今之被也") by Kong Anguo 孔安國 (d. 100 B.C.E.)—an opinion shared by Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 55–ca. 149 C.E.) in his *Shuowen* 說文 gloss of *qinyi*. See *Lunyu jishi*, 673.

> The Master said: "It is women and petty people who are difficult to support. If one allows them to get too close, they will become insubordinate; and if one keeps them at too great a distance, they will bear resentment."
> 子曰：「唯女子與小人為難養，近之則不孫，遠之則怨。」[9]

In this instance, we would surely insist that the Master's teaching is contingent on a historical reality which we do not aim to restore; we would thus not grant it validity for the present. Unlikely as it may seem that anyone would seriously discuss the above examples as valid guidance for our behavior in contemporary society, to ascribe uniform ideological validity to any part of a canonical text, independently of its historical context, opens up a potential for selective, ahistorical readings that should not be underestimated. In present-day ideological discourses in the USA such practices of reading the Bible play an astonishingly significant role. Some ideologues are notoriously fond of citing the book Leviticus as the authority legitimizing prescriptions for life in modern society.[10] Many of the injunctions compiled in this book are historically specific to a degree that seems to preclude any modern application. For example, no one, to my knowledge, demands our adherence to the ruling in Leviticus 18.21: "do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech."[11] Yet, the very next verse (18.22), "do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman," is in contemporary political discourse frequently cited in all earnestness as a prohibition whose violation is perceived as eroding the cultural identity of the country and, above all, as seriously immoral. The same ideologues are much less protective of the rule "do not . . . put tattoo marks on yourselves" (Lev. 19.28), although this phenomenon is hardly less common than male homosexuality.

Some of these ancient rules, such as not to eat rabbit meat or wear clothing woven of two kinds of material (Lev. 11.6 and 19.19), are obviously so closely dependent on the specific historical situation that they have ceased to be taken into account. Nevertheless, rules of this kind may be continued selectively, in order to stabilize a group identity (whether understood culturally or religiously), which was an important part of their function in antiquity as well. Clearly, they are not considered universal ethical standards in our times. Other rules, such as "do not let your hair become unkempt, and do not tear your clothes" (Lev. 10.6), are too general to generate group identity and too insignificant to be of any ideological use. The significance they must have had in their historical context is not obvious any more. Yet other rules have a degree of universal applicability and appeal that ensures their continued existence as recognized ethical values: "do not steal; do not lie . . . do not defraud your neighbour . . . do not hate your brother in your heart" (Lev. 19.11–17), or "Do not use dishonest standards when measuring length, weight or quantity. Use honest scales and honest weights . . ." (Lev. 19.35–36).

In the *Lunyu* we face the very same spectrum of hermeneutic problems. Some statements are historically specific to a degree that they appear to have lost all relevance for the present:

9. *Lunyu jishi*, 1244.

10. After finishing this article, I was delighted to discover that an explicit comparison between *Lunyu* and Leviticus had also been made by Ralph Weber and Garrett Barden. They conclude from rhetorical analyses of both texts that "the rhetorics of authority [of these two texts] are radically different and, if noticed, cannot but lead to assertions of different content." Weber and Barden, "Rhetorics of Authority: Leviticus and the *Analects* Compared," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 64.1 (2010): 235. This does not alter, but rather reaffirms, the commonality considered in the present article: either text can be cited selectively, disregarding its historical context, in order to legitimize a particular stance in current ideological controversies.

11. Here and in the following, the Bible is quoted from *The Holy Bible, New International Version* (New York: International Bible Society, 1978).

> When the villagers were exorcizing evil spirits, he stood in his court robes on the eastern steps [the place for a host to stand].
> 鄉人儺，朝服而立於阼階 。[12]

Such parts of the *Lunyu* tend to be largely ignored. Other, hardly less historically specific pronouncements are applicable in a broader sense:

> The Master used a fishing line but not a cable [to which a number of lines are attached]; he used a corded arrow but not to shoot at roosting birds.
> 子釣而不綱，弋不射宿 。[13]

Independently of the concrete context and technical details, it seems adequate to interpret this passage as advocating, in modern parlance, sustainable hunting and fishing. Such parts of the text lend themselves to generalizing interpretations, thus rendering them relevant for later times. For example, "when eating in the presence of one who had been bereaved, the Master never ate his fill" 子食於有喪者之側，未嘗飽也, or, "on a day when he had wept, the Master did not sing" 子於是日哭，則不歌.[14] Although it is not difficult to recognize that the many references in the *Lunyu* to mourning relate to the larger topic of the ancestral cult as a stabilizer of a social hierarchy reliant on hereditary nobility, we can easily ignore the historical specificity and read these passages as expressions of empathy and consistent regulation of one's emotions, or at least of their public display. Such a generalizing reading practice, however, entails the risk of arbitrariness and of diluting meaningful texts to mere commonplaces that have the quaint banality of fortune cookies.

This hermeneutic dilemma leaves us a choice between two entirely unsatisfactory positions and two acceptable compromises. The former two are either that of the intellectual fundamentalist, who throws up his hands and declares it entirely impossible to understand the text, because we will never have the necessary information that will grant us certainty as to how the text was meant at the time; or that of the intellectual libertine, who feels free to propose any arbitrary interpretation, either based on a literal reading of the text or on a high degree of abstraction. This will in some cases of literal reading create an exotic sense of stiff ceremony (for example, since we do not really know what the gesture of standing in court robes on the eastern steps communicated) or in cases of high abstraction leave us with a lukewarm sense of general goodness (such as, the Master showing empathy with the bereaved), but at least both the literal and the generalizing abstract readings yield clear interpretations. The two acceptable compromises are situated on a scale of hermeneutic approaches, whose opposite ends John Makeham identifies as one aiming to recover a "historical meaning" and one that follows the "scriptural meaning." The former he defines as "the meaning of a text as composed by its original author/s and/or its original audience" and the latter as "the meaning realized in the process of the subsequent historical trajectory of that text."[15] Makeham masterfully discusses the necessity of compromise between these extremes:

12. *Lunyu* 10.14, *Lunyu jishi*, 706–9. Translation by D. C. Lau, *Confucius*, 91.
13. *Lunyu* 7.27; *Lunyu jishi*, 489–90. Translation by D. C. Lau, *Confucius*, 63.
14. *Lunyu* 7.9 and 7.10; *Lunyu jishi*, 449–50. Translation by D. C. Lau, *Confucius*, 59.
15. John Makeham, "A New Hermeneutical Approach to Early Chinese Texts: The Case of the *Analects*," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 33.1 (2006): 96. The tendency of a widening hermeneutic horizon over time has been discussed not only with regard to texts from antiquity or specifically from China, but more broadly as a general phenomenon. See, for example Paul Ricoeur's *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, tr. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), in particular "The task of hermeneutics" and "Hermeneutics and the critique of ideology."

> What is needed is a strategy that will neither be overpowered by the Scylla of retrospection nor be engulfed by the Charybdis of prospection. Retrospection is concerned with a hermeneutics of recovery: an archaeology of the historical context in which the text was created. Prospection is concerned with the ongoing reception of a text by its readers, the unfolding and elaboration of its scriptural meaning. Unless one is keen to open the floodgates to potentially unlimited semiosis by placing undue emphasis on the reader as the sole determinant of textual meaning, then historical context must be addressed.[16]

He convincingly argues for the case of the *Lunyu* that

> given our poor knowledge of the historical context of the text's genesis, historical context will generally be of modest use [. . . and] greater emphasis should be given to understanding the scriptural meanings of the text, [. . . not] simply because they exist or were the fashion at some time [. . . but] to reflect on the preconditions (and preconceptions) of our own understanding.[17]

One might add, however, that the various scriptural readings provided us by the many exegetes of the text in its long history are either prospective creative interpretations or retrospective historical readings at a particular time in history, albeit possibly (not necessarily) based on better knowledge of the original contexts from which the text arose. To stay with the case of the *Lunyu* for a moment, it is certainly impossible, as Makeham argues, ever to determine when exactly a particular part of the text entered the compilation and for what reasons it was included and what exactly its meaning was at the time.[18] It is possible, however, even if only for parts of texts, to narrow down historical contexts from which the *textual material* that was to become part of the *Lunyu* probably arose and where certain ideas expressed in the *Lunyu* first developed. If we are interested in the potential of the *Lunyu* and other early Chinese texts as a source of history, rather than as a productive generator of philosophy for later ages, even an approximate historical context will help us to limit the "excess of interpretation" the texts accumulated, owing to their importance in later periods.[19] We may thus better distinguish between such later meanings and the often more mundane practical significance of the text in early China.

At this point we need to address a broader problem that sets the conditions for our study of pre-imperial China. Aside from recently discovered manuscripts, all our textual sources of that time were reconstructed, often recontextualized and therefore potentially reinterpreted in the vastly different environment of the late first century B.C.E. and even more so in later periods. The recent manuscript finds seem to confirm what we would intuitively suspect, namely that ideas about the identity of texts, textual hierarchies, written representations of texts and their uses (in particular reading practices) changed considerably during the several centuries from the Warring States period to the end of the early Han.

2. THE COMPOSITE NATURE OF EARLY CHINESE TEXTS AND MODES OF PRAGMATIC DETERMINATION

It has become increasingly recognized in recent years that many, if not most, early Chinese texts were composed using pre-formed textual units of different extension. These, in

16. Makeham, "A New Hermeneutical Approach to Early Chinese Texts," 101.

17. Ibid., 105.

18. For a recent, comprehensive study of the formation of the *Lunyu*, see Hunter, *Confucius beyond the "Analects."*

19. See Umberto Eco's succinct expression: "As soon as a text becomes 'sacred' for a certain culture, it becomes subject to the process of suspicious reading and therefore to what is undoubtedly an excess of interpretation." Eco et al., *Interpretation and Overinterpretation*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), 52.

William Boltz's words, "building blocks" usually come from sources that have not been transmitted to us.[20] These originally independent short textual units often show characteristics of didactic texts intended for memorization, i.e., parallelism, regular meter, rhyme. Such texts must have been used in a social setting ("Sitz im Leben") that determined their practical application and therefore specified their meaning.[21] The precise purport and application of these texts are not sufficiently indicated in the texts themselves. Either the situational context in which they were used implicitly specified how they were to be understood, or a teacher, being part of this context, explicitly provided this semantic determination. In the case of ancient Egyptian literature, Jan Assmann has compared this determining element with the determinatives in the writing system—a comparison that, by happy coincidence, works for Chinese as well. Since the form of pragmatic texts is determined by their function in the particular social setting in which they were composed and used, this form has a semantic value of its own.[22] Whenever such a text was used as a component element of a literary text, the semantic value of its form was in all likelihood at least initially still recognized. Yet, the further the text became removed from its original context, the more it became underdetermined, and the missing part of its determination needed to be supplied in other ways.[23] This could be done either within the text or outside it.

2.1 Internal determination

Intratextual determination is provided when an originally independent textual unit is used as a component element in a greater text that derives consistency from its *narrative* nature or from an *argument* that exhibits sustained logical consistency. These two types are not mutually exclusive but rather tendencies which are developed to different extents in a text. Predominantly narrative texts often contain a heavy load of politico-philosophical argument, sometimes only thinly clad in dialogue between figures acting in the narrative.[24] In turn, argumentative philosophical texts can be couched in dialogue as well and thus to some extent develop narrative qualities. While the dialogue (or monologue, if we count the simple prefaced "X曰") is the most reduced form of a narrative framing, the most reduced forms of embedding didactic texts in an argument are the titles of numbered or unnumbered catalogues of didactic items or the summarizing conclusions of such catalogues in the form of sentences like "此之謂X也" or "亦可謂X矣." The originally short didactic texts, once they have become components of an argumentative text and thus undergone a process of intratextual determination, are often so well integrated in the resulting text that they can hardly be recognized as originally independent. That they must have existed outside their

20. "The Composite Nature of Early Chinese Texts," in *Text and Ritual in Early China*, ed. Martin Kern (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 2005), 50–78.

21. The term "Sitz im Leben" comes from the context of early twentieth-century biblical scholarship and has since been widely accepted also in the study of ancient literature in general. It was coined by Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) and remained important especially in the discipline of form criticism (named after Martin Dibelius' [1883–1947] book *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums*, 1919). For a concise introduction to form criticism, see Edgar McKnight, *What Is Form Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

22. Assmann, "Kulturelle und literarische Texte," in *Ancient Egyptian Literature: History and Forms*, ed. Antonio Loprieno (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 62–63.

23. One aspect of the potential deficiency of any written text as compared with an oral one, which always provides a context, is described by David Olson as: "writing readily represents the locutionary act, leaving illocutionary force underspecified." Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 93.

24. As foremost examples of this kind of text we can certainly name *Zuozhuan* 左傳, *Guoyu* 國語, and *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策.

textual environment becomes apparent only to the analytical reader who pays close attention to formal features of texts and notices the countless parallel passages across vastly different texts from early China.[25]

2.2 External determination

External determination may lie in the mere attribution of the text to a patron or author figure, who may be legendary or historical. The semantic determination of the text is then largely based on an established emblematic value of this figure, which can either narrowly refer to a specific ideological value (e.g., Taigong 太公 or Guan Zhong 管仲 stand for meritocracy, Zengzi 曾子 for filial piety), or it can be more broadly based on historical narratives clustering around this figure—narratives that are not present in the text but known to its users. Sometimes texts even rubricate these emblematic values, for example:

> Virtuous conduct: Yan Yuan, Min Ziqian, Ran Boniu, and Zhonggong;
> speech and conversation: Zai Wo and Zigong;
> government service: Ran You and Jilu;
> culture and learning: Ziyou and Zixia.
> 德行：顏淵、閔子騫、冉伯牛、仲弓；言語：宰我、子貢；政事：冉有、季路；文學：子游、子夏。[26]

Such emblematic categorizations of historical figures can be remarkably consistent within closely related ideological traditions. In *Mengzi*, Gongsun Chou 公孫丑 distinguishes qualifications of Confucius' disciples in a pattern that is consistent with the above *Lunyu* passage: "Zai Wo and Zigong excelled in performing expository speech; Ran Niu, Minzi, and Yan Yuan excelled in speaking about virtuous conduct" 宰我子貢善為說辭，冉牛、閔子、顏淵善言德行.[27]

External determination need not narrowly lie in the attribution of a text to a legendary or historical *figure*, however. It can also be provided by integrating it, without explicit reference to a specific figure, in a *teaching tradition* that may differ from the pragmatic origin of the didactic text but is usually a more general, ideological tradition. The text then becomes part of a doctrinal context or a broader ideological discourse; either of these narrows the range of possible interpretations. These means of determination can remain entirely external. A text that was originally embedded in one particular social setting has merely moved to a different one. The appropriation by this new context, whether by attribution to a figure or by commentarial activity, need not surface in the text itself at all. It can accompany the text and—regardless of whether oral or written—remain separate from it, rather than merging with it to become part of the appropriated text. (This seems to be the case especially with texts like *Laozi* 老子 and large parts of the *Lunyu*.) Nonetheless, it frequently happens that commentarial language does become part of the text. The areas of external and internal determination are permeable and interact.

To use the *Lunyu* as an example again, most of the text is anchored in a historical setting. This is usually achieved by the shortest possible form of narrative framing, namely a

25. For an example, see Matthias Richter, "Self-Cultivation or Evaluation of Others? A Form Critical Approach to *Zengzi li shi*," *Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 56.4 (2002): 879–917.

26. *Lunyu* 11.3; *Lunyu jishi*, 742–46. Translation adapted from D. C. Lau, *Confucius*, 97.

27. *Mengzi* 2A2; *Mengzi zheng yi* 孟子正義, comp. Jiao Xun 焦循 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 213. Yang Shuda (*Lunyu shuzheng*, 248–55) provides further evidence of how these assessments of Confucius' disciples remain stable over time. Interestingly, in *Mengzi* the evaluations are made in a broader context of recognition of talents.

dialogue between Confucius and one or several of his disciples. It is here that we find by far the most instances in which Confucius is referred to as Kongzi 孔子. In the monological parts, the narrative element is even further reduced to the mere incipit "X *yue* 曰." Here, the speaker is rarely identified as Confucius. Except for the very last subchapter (20.3) of the compilation, all "Kongzi *yue*" incipits occur in chapter 16, where ten of fourteen subchapters begin with these words. Incipits naming disciples are yet rarer.[28] The vast majority of the incipits of monological utterances, well over two hundred, refer to an unnamed Master (*zi yue* 子曰), for example:

> The Master said, "At fifteen I aspired to learning; at thirty I had established myself; at forty I was free from confusion; at fifty I understood the Decree of Heaven; at sixty my ear was attuned; at seventy I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the line."
> 子曰：「吾十有五而志于學，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳順，七十而從心所欲、不踰矩。[29]

It is the one word *wu* 吾 ('I') that renders these statements descriptive and autobiographical. One might argue that there is no reason to assume that the Master who speaks these words is Confucius. But the general notion that it is none other can be justified on grounds of the parallelism with another passage only a little later in the same chapter: "The Master said, 'I can speak with Hui all day long . . .'" 子曰：「吾與回言終日 . . . 」.[30] Here the fact that the Master's interlocutor is Yan Hui and that the logic of the text suggests a teacher-disciple relationship makes it certain that the Master is indeed Confucius. Still, the general resemblance of Confucius' alleged autobiography with catalogues in other texts naming accomplishments expected of certain age groups invites the speculation that the first person pronoun and later also the incipit "the Master said" (as a rhetorical "weapon," in Jin Lingke's parlance) may simply have been added to such a generally applicable, prescriptive catalogue, to appropriate it for Confucius' followers.[31]

28. Ten refer to Zixia 子夏, nine to Zengzi 曾子, five to Zigong 子貢, three to Ziyou 子游, two to Zizhang 子張, and one to Youzi 有子. A rather special case is *Lunyu* 9.7, where an obscure person named Lao quotes an unnamed Master "牢曰子云. . ." *Lunyu jishi*, 583–85. For a concise summary of the various assumption of Lao's identity, see Li Ling 李零, *Sang jia gou: Wo du "Lunyu"* 喪家狗：我讀《論語》(Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2007), 2: 94.

29. *Lunyu* 2.4; *Lunyu jishi*, 70–79. The translation of "耳順" is from D. C. Lau, *Confucius*, 11.

30. *Lunyu* 2.9; *Lunyu jishi*, 91–92.

31. Jin Lingke, "'Zi yue' shi yi zhong chuangzao," 128. If Confucius indeed made this statement, it must have been at the very end of his life. According to the traditional dates of his life (551–479), he only lived to the age of seventy-two, and according to another theory only to seventy. (Brooks and Brooks date his birth to the *gengzi* 庚子 day in the eighth month of 549 B.C.E. See E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors, 0479–0249* [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1998], 266.) For similar catalogues, see, for example, *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 49 ("Zengzi li shi" 曾子立事): "If someone between thirty and forty has not yet acquired any expertise [in anything], this is being without expertise. If someone by the age of fifty has not become known for excellence at anything, this is not having made a name for oneself. If someone has not acquired any virtue by the age of seventy, it is certainly acceptable to forgive him small transgressions. Those who do not recite and memorize in their youth, who do not practice debate and interpretation in their adulthood, who do not teach and instruct when they are old can certainly be called people of no learning. If one is found not to be deferential to one's elders, this is shameful. If one is found to be without virtue as an adult, this is a disgrace. If in old age one is found to be lacking proper behavior, this is an offense" 三十四十之閒而無藝，即無藝矣；五十而不以善聞[則無聞]矣；七十而無德，雖有微過，亦可以勉矣。其少不諷誦，其壯不論譯，其老不教誨，亦可謂無業之人矣。少稱不弟焉，恥也；壯稱無德焉，辱也；老稱無禮焉，罪也. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 大戴禮記逐字索引, comp. Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992), 27.1–5.

While passages like the above can justifiably be read as utterances of Confucius, even if the Master mentioned in them is not explicitly specified, the same interpretive practice stretches even further: many passages that do not mention a Master or any other person are usually also understood to be either utterances of Confucius or descriptive of his life. In Modern Chinese translations this does not become so obvious, since the syntax of the language does not require an explicit subject, but in English translations we invariably find a third person subject ("he"), rendering these statements descriptive of the past. For instance, D. C. Lau renders the above-cited *Lunyu* 10.10 as "He did not converse at meals; nor did he talk in bed."[32] Edward G. Slingerland puts an even stronger interpretation on these words. He understands *yu* 言 ('to converse') specifically as 'to instruct', apparently conferring instructive character on all of Confucius' conversations.[33] The underlying logic seems to be that every part of the *Lunyu* that is not explicitly marked as coming from someone else must be an utterance of Confucius.

2.3 The figure of Zengzi as a semantic determinative

As the fountainhead of the *Ru* tradition, Confucius himself has not acquired an emblematic value as narrowly defined as those of some of his disciples. The force of semantic determination exerted by the mere attribution of an utterance to a certain figure can be better demonstrated by an example involving Zengzi, whose appearance in a text regularly evokes the topic of filial piety. *Lunyu* 1.9, "曾子曰慎終追遠民德歸厚矣,"[34] is generally interpreted strongly, in exactly the sense that D. C. Lau's translation represents:

> Zengzi said, "Conduct the funeral of your parents with meticulous care and let not sacrifices to your remote ancestors be forgotten, and the virtue of the common people will incline towards fullness."[35]

While Slingerland phrases the translation as strongly as Lau ("Master Zeng said, 'Take great care in seeing off the deceased and sedulously maintain the sacrifices to your distant ancestors, and the common people will sincerely return to Virtue.'"), in Brooks and Brooks' translation Zengzi's words read: "When concern for the departed continues until they are far away, the virtue of the people will have become substantial."[36] This rendering at least *appears* to be closer to the Chinese text, but it is still strained and relies on the premise that a Zengzi utterance must, in one way or another, refer to filial piety. Although *zhong* 終 ('end') can of course narrowly refer to death, there is no indication in the text itself of this narrow meaning, let alone that of "sacrifice," other than the force that Zengzi's emblematic value as a paragon of filial piety exerts as a semantic determinative. Interestingly, Brooks and Brooks observe that the role of Zengzi as "a spokesman for filial piety" is at odds with how Zengzi is generally depicted in the *Lunyu*, especially in chapter eight, but that it accords with later Zengzi legend. That they see *Lunyu* 1.9 therefore as "a stage in his evolving myth" is based

32. Lau, *Confucius*, 91. For a discussion of this hermeneutic problem, see Weber and Barden, "Rhetorics of Authority," 221–23.

33. "He would not instruct while eating, nor continue to converse once he had retired to bed." Slingerland, *Confucius, The Essential Analects: Selected Passages with Traditional Commentary* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 29.

34. *Lunyu jishi*, 37–38.

35. Lau, *Confucius*, 5.

36. Slingerland, *Confucius, The Essential Analects*, 2; Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, 147.

on a logic that takes the reference of this text to filial piety for granted and then explains why it is untypical of the Zengzi in the *Lunyu*.[37]

Notwithstanding the long history of this interpretation, the actual text of *Lunyu* 1.9 suggests no such thing.[38] If we ignore the attribution of the statement to Zengzi, or even if we merely consider it possible that Zengzi may have talked about something other than filial piety, we arrive at the opposite conclusion: *Lunyu* 1.9 does not mention sacrifice or anything related to filial piety at all. It thus by no means marks a stage in the evolving emblematic value of Zengzi as an icon of filial piety. Rather, this emblematic value of the figure Zengzi has generated the ideologically loaded and narrow interpretation of what once must have been a much plainer, but nonetheless meaningful, maxim: "Be mindful of the end, pursue things a long way [rather than minding only what is in your immediate vicinity], and the people's virtue/power will return to bounteousness." The warning "be mindful of the end" (*shen zhong* 慎終) is indeed rather frequent in early Chinese texts, the best known instantiation of it occurring in *Laozi* 64: "Be mindful of the end as of the beginning; then you will not fail in your undertakings" 慎終如始[*lhəʔ]則無敗事[*s-rəʔ].[39] In this case, the rejection of a scriptural reading—such as interpreting *shen zhong* as "conducting the funeral of one's parents with meticulous care" or, in He Yan's 何晏 (190–249) words, "to grieve thoroughly in mourning"—is not a vain attempt at restoring a historical or even original reading.[40] It

37. Brooks and Brooks, *The Original Analects*, 147.

38. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 C.E.) points out the obvious fact that *zhong* can mean 'to die/death' and then cites several unrelated *Liji* 禮記 passages, in one of which Zengzi expresses concern about death and funeral; He Yan 何晏 (190–249) is even more specific in his interpretation of the *Lunyu* passage in the sense represented in the above translations. See *Lunyu jishi*, 37.

39. Reconstructed Old Chinese pronunciations are Axel Schuessler's (*Minimal Old Chinese and Later Han Chinese: A Companion to "Grammata Serica Recensa"* [Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2009]); See *Shuoyuan* 說苑 16 ("Tan cong" 談叢): "Be mindful of the end just like of the beginning. Let this be your constant warning" 慎終如始[*lhəʔ]常以為戒[*krə̂h] and *Shuoyuan* 10 ("Jing shen" 敬慎): "Be mindful of the end just like of the beginning. Thus you will be able to last long" 慎終如始[*lhəʔ]乃能長久[*kwəʔ]. *Shuoyuan zhuzi suoyin* 說苑逐字索引, comp. Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992), 129.25 and 84.15. A shorter form occurs in *Shangshu* 尚書 16 ("Tai jia xia" 太甲下): "Be mindful of the end [already] in the beginning" 慎終于始. *Shangshu zhuzi suoyin* 尚書逐字索引, comp. Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1995), 16.24. When *Zuozhuan* Xiang 25 cites the *Shangshu*, the order of beginning and end are evidently reversed for the sake of the rhyme: "Have respect for the end by being careful from the very beginning, and there will be no distress until the very end" 慎始而敬終[*tuŋ]終以不困[*khûns]. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhuzi suoyin* 春秋左傳逐字索引, comp. Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1995), 286.12. This latter version seems to have inspired *Liji* 32 ("Biao ji" 表記): "The master said: In serving your lord, have respect for the end by being careful from the very beginning" 子曰事君慎始而敬終 and *Liji* 8 ("Wen wang shi zi" 文王世子): "Whenever the noble men of antiquity undertook something of great import, they were mindful of its beginning and end" 古之君子舉大事必慎其終始. *Liji zhuzi suoyin* 禮記逐字索引, comp. Chinese Univ. of Hong Kong, ICS Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1992), 151.2 and 59.12. All these forms seem to go back to a short apophthegm "慎終如始" or "慎終于始." Of the several passages, the pair of verses in *Laozi* 64 has the clearest rhyme, which makes it a likely candidate for the original proverb from which the other variants derive, but there is no reason to assume that the text *Laozi*, or even a person Laozi, is the source from which other texts quote, as annotations to these other texts sometimes assert. More likely, *Laozi* merely uses a popular saying, just like the several other texts, which may or may not have been composed in an awareness of or even as a conscious allusion to the pair of verses in the *Laozi*.

40. He Yan presents this interpretation as a commentary by the second-century B.C.E. scholar Kong Anguo: "Kong [Anguo] says, 'be mindful of the end' means to exhaust one's grief in mourning, and 'pursue afar' means to exhaust one's reverence in sacrifice; if the lord is able to practice these two, the people will transform their virtue [to the better] and they will all return to bounteousness" 孔曰：「慎終者，喪盡其哀。追遠者，祭盡其敬。君能行此二者，民化其德，皆歸於厚也。」. *Lunyu jishi*, 37.

merely relieves the text of an artificial interpretive restriction, superimposed by a narrowly defined emblematic value of Zengzi that, familiar as it is from later tradition, is not even confirmed by the general portrayal of this figure elsewhere in the *Lunyu*.

3. THE TEXT "ZENGZI LI SHI" AS A MANUAL FOR DEMONSTRATING NOBLE STATUS

In addition to the great contribution that studies of newly discovered manuscripts can make toward recovering how Warring States literature may have looked before it was reconstructed centuries later in the Imperial Library,[41] it also seems desirable to revive earlier efforts to adapt to early Chinese literature the methods of form criticism and redaction criticism, which made an appearance on the stage of Sinology decades ago but have not yet had a great general impact.[42] Increased attention to the countless parallel passages and patterns across all genres of texts in early Chinese literature promises a better understanding of the complex processes of the formation and redaction of early Chinese texts. Moreover, an examination of both the textual features of such parallels *and* of the ways in which they are now embedded in the transmitted literature may allow us, at least in some cases, to glean information about their original social setting. This information in turn provides a chance to better understand the interpretive acts and ideological interests involved in the appropriation of such textual material by the larger texts that have come down to us through centuries of transmission.

The text "Zengzi li shi" 曾子立事, one of ten chapters in the compilation *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 that are attributed to Zengzi, is an interesting instance of a reinterpretation similar to the case of the alleged Zengzi dictum in *Lunyu* 1.9. "Zengzi li shi" is clearly a compilation of disjointed small textual units. Their arrangement is not entirely random, but it reflects at best a loose associative order, and a common theme throughout the chapter is not immediately apparent. To establish a connection with Zengzi is even more difficult. This chapter is by far the longest of the Zengzi chapters in *Da Dai Liji*; it comprises almost half the text of all ten chapters combined. While in the other nine chapters a strong semantic connection is established either via content (filial piety and sacrifice) or by framing the text as a dialogue in which Zengzi figures as the main interlocutor, there is no recognizable connection with Zengzi in "Zengzi li shi" beyond the attribution expressed in the title and the single instance of "Zengzi *yue*" at the very beginning of the text.

Nevertheless, the reception of the text has been so strongly dominated by the attribution to Zengzi that even the descriptive, programmatic part of the title, *li shi* 立事, was, if not entirely ignored, interpreted in a strained way to fit the attribution to Zengzi. The tone was set in the early nineteenth century by Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍, who described the text as about "matters of broad learning, penetrating investigation, careful thinking, clear discernment, and sincere conduct" and explained the title as referring to "how the gentleman establishes

41. I have recently published a study of this issue in *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

42. Among the scholars who have made explicit reference to these methods in their work on *Laozi*, *Guanzi* 管子, and the so-called Huang-Lao 黃老 texts from Mawangdui 馬王堆 are Michael LaFargue (*Tao and Method: A Reasoned Approach to the Tao Te Ching* [Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1994], Harold Roth ("Redaction Criticism and the Early History of Taoism," *Early China* 19 [1994]: 1–46; *Original Tao: Inward Training* (Nei-yeh) *and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism* [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999]), Edmund Ryden (*The Yellow Emperor's Four Canons: A Literary Study and Edition of the Text from Mawangdui* [Taibei: Guangqi, 1997]), myself ("Self-Cultivation or Evaluation of Others?" *Guan ren: Texte der altchinesischen Literatur zur Charakterkunde und Beamtenrekrutierung* [Bern: Peter Lang, 2005]), and more recently Weingarten, "Confucius and Pregnant Women."

himself and practices the Way" (*li shen xing dao* 立身行道).[43] Later scholars have repeated this explanation more or less verbatim.[44] It is easy to see that this unusual interpretation of the words *li shi* is motivated solely by the emblematic value of this text's alleged author Zengzi as a paragon of filial piety. The phrase *li shen xing dao* must have been recognizable to any scholar in Imperial China as an allusion to one of the first sentences of the *Canon of Filial Piety* (Xiaojing 孝經), another text attributed to Zengzi: "To establish oneself, practice the Way, and make one's name known to posterity in honor of one's parents is the ultimate goal of filial piety" 立身行道揚名於後世以顯父母孝之終也.[45] In keeping with this interpretation, Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) declares that "Zengzi li shi" deals exclusively with self-cultivation.[46]

At its very beginning, the text is indeed compatible with the broad rubric of self-cultivation.[47]

1	君子攻其惡	The gentleman shall tackle his faults,
2	求其過	redress his mistakes,
3	彊其所不能	fortify himself where he is incapable,
4	去私欲	discard selfishness and desires,
5	從事於義	and perform his office within the range of propriety.
6	可謂學矣	This may well be called "learning."
7	君子愛日以學	The gentleman shall be sparing of time in order to learn,
8	及時以行	and act when the time has come.
9	難者弗辟	He shall not shirk hardship,
10	易者弗從	nor shall he pursue the easy way.
11	唯義所在	It is this wherein propriety lies.
12	日旦就業	At daybreak he shall take up his work,
13	夕而自省	and at night he shall examine himself.
14	思以歿其身	Of this he shall be mindful to the end of his days.
15	亦可謂守業矣	This may indeed be called adhering to one's task.
16	君子學必由其業	The gentleman shall approach learning from the demands of his work.
17	問必以其序	He shall inquire according to his rank.
18	問而不決	If an inquiry is not answered satisfactorily,
19	承閒觀色而復之	he shall wait for an opportunity, observing [his master's] countenance, to repeat the inquiry.
20	雖不說亦不彊爭也	Even if he be not pleased he shall not force an argument.

43. "此篇言博學、審問、慎思、明辨、篤行之事。名曰立事者，君子所以立身行道也." *Da Dai Liji jiegu* 大戴禮記解詁 (1807), comp. Wang Pinzhen 王聘珍 (18th–19th c.) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), *mulu* 目錄, 3.

44. See Huang Huaixin 黃懷信, Kong Deli 孔德立, and Zhou Haisheng 周海生, *Da Dai Liji huijiao jizhu* 大戴禮記彙校集注 (Xi'an: San Qin chubanshe, 2004), *ti jie* 題解, 11–12.

45. *Shisan jing zhushu* 十三經注疏 (1816), comp. Ruan Yuan (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 2545b.

46. "此篇所言皆修身之事." *Huang Qing jingjie* 皇清經解 (1829), comp. Ruan Yuan (Shanghai: Hongbao zhai 鴻寶齋, 1891), j. 111, *mulu* 目錄.

47. To make the structure of the text more obvious, it is here presented in a verse-like pattern. The line numbers are provided to give the reader an orientation as to where in the rather extensive text of ca. 300 such lines the quoted passages are located.

21	君子既學之患其不博也	When the gentleman has learnt something, he shall be concerned whether it may not be comprehensive enough.
22	既博之患其不習也	If he has made it comprehensive, he shall be concerned whether he has not practiced it enough.
23	既習之患其無知也	If he has practiced it, he shall be concerned whether he lacks understanding of it.
24	既知之患其不能行也	If he understands it, he shall be concerned whether he may be unable to carry it out.
25	既能行之貴其能讓也	If he is able to carry it out, he shall value his ability to give way.
26	君子之學	The learning of a gentleman
27	致此五者而已矣	is indeed accomplished if it has attained these five [things].
28	君子博學而孱守之	The gentleman shall learn broadly and observe punctiliously what he has learned.
29	微言而篤行之	He shall be modest in his words and earnest in living up to them.
30	行必先人	He shall be ahead of others in his deeds,
31	言必後人	and stay behind others with his words.
32	君子終身守此悒悒	The gentleman shall forever persevere in this zealously.
33	行無求數有名	He shall act without seeking quick fame,
34	事無求數有成	in service he shall not seek quick success,
35	身言之後人揚之	What one says oneself, posterity will praise.
36	身行之後人秉之	What one does oneself, posterity will hold on to.
37	君子終身守此憚憚	The gentleman shall forever persevere in this assiduously.
38	君子不絕小不殄微也	The gentleman shall not break with those who are small ones nor annihilate the insignificant ones.
39	行自微也不微人	He shall practice self-effacement and not efface others.
40	人知之則願也	To be recognized by others is surely desirable,
41	人不知苟吾自知也	but if others do not recognize one, one will make do with recognizing oneself.
42	君子終身守此勿勿也	The gentleman shall forever persevere in this carefully.
43	君子禍之為患	The gentleman shall worry about calamities,
44	辱之為畏	but disgrace is what he shall fear.
45	見善恐不得與焉	When encountering someone excellent he fears that he may not get to be associated with them,
46	見不善者恐其及己也	when he encounters someone who is not excellent, he fears to be tainted by association.
47	是故君子疑以終身	For this reason, the gentleman shall forever be wary.[48]

48. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 24.27–25.16.

So far, the text is obviously a compilation of short catalogues, each of which defines a certain quality required of a *junzi* 君子—a noble person, a gentleman—by describing behavior that indicates such a quality. Such descriptions of personality types are characteristic of an important genre of pragmatic texts in the Warring States period: texts concerned with the diagnosis and evaluation of personalities for the purpose of recruiting officials. This group of texts reflects the increasing role of social mobility and meritocracy that had set in after the end of the Chunqiu period.[49] I have named this group of texts "*guan ren* texts," since its major examples have been called *guan ren* 官人 'appointing people to offices' (after their application, i.e., the recruitment of officials) or *guan ren* 觀人 'observing people' (after the applied method of evaluating candidates by a diagnosis of their personalities).[50] Alternatively, the expression *lun ren* 論人 'evaluating people' has also been used—most frequently in *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋—to refer to the same thematic complex and type of texts.

Apart from the two parallel texts "Guan ren jie" 官人解 (*Yi Zhoushu* 逸周書 58) and "Wen wang guan ren" 文王官人 (*Da Dai Liji* 72), which collect and to some extent systematize such pragmatic texts, most of the material survives only in the form of short textual units that are built into literary, mostly politico-philosophical texts in a manner that makes their origin more difficult to recognize. The surest signs of these origins are certain textual forms, e.g., catalogues that follow certain syntactic patterns, formulae that conclude and categorize short paragraphs, as well as technical terms.

Guan ren texts feature three typical textual forms: first, statements about the correspondence of the external and internal, often listing external symptoms of inner conditions; second, catalogues of instructions for examining particular qualities of a potential candidate for office; and third, descriptions of personality types, which list a number of characteristics, followed by a definitory concluding sentence. Not only does the beginning of "Zengzi li shi" closely resemble the last textual form; the other two forms occur later in the text as well. In an earlier study, I discussed the roots of "Zengzi li shi" in the context of meritocratic recruitment of officials and how this explains the title *li shi* in its literal sense of "establishing services" as a reference to the recruitment of (probably low-ranking) officials.[51]

Considering this meaning of *li shi* as the actual title of the text, since "Zengzi" functions as an umbrella title for all ten Zengzi chapters much like a modern book title, it seems reasonable to assume that the parts of the text that refer to the recruitment of officials in the most obvious and immediate manner formed the core of the compilation that we now know as "Zengzi li shi."

218	故目者心之浮也	Therefore, it is the eyes wherein the heart emerges;[52]
219	言者行之指也	and it is words that indicate deeds.

49. The broadest study to date of social mobility and the rise of meritocracy in early China is Hsu Cho-yun, *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722–222 BC* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1965). For a more recent study with a strong focus on the social stratum of *shi* 士, see Yuri Pines, "Between Merit and Pedigree: Evolution of the Concept of 'Elevating the Worthy' in Pre-imperial China," in *The East Asian Challenge for Democracy: Political Meritocracy in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Daniel Bell and Li Chenyang (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013), 161–202.

50. For a comprehensive study of this group of texts, see Richter, *Guan ren*.

51. See Richter, "Self-Cultivation or Evaluation of Others?" Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574–648) explains the phrase *li zheng li shi* 立政立事 in the *Shangshu* chapter "Li zheng" 立政 as "Our king's '*li zheng*' refers to bestowing great offices and '*li shi*' to bestowing smaller offices" 我王其與立政謂大臣也其與立事謂小臣也. *Shisan jing zhushu* 232b. Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766–1834) glosses the same as "'*Li zheng*' refers to establishing senior offices and '*li shi*' to establishing the various smaller posts" 立政謂建立長官也立事謂建立群職也. *Jingyi shuwen* 經義述聞 (1797), comp. Wang Yinzhi , *Sibu beiyao* 四部備要 edn.

52. For the various parallels of this passage, e.g., in *Han shi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳, *Guoyu*, and the so-called Huanglao texts from Mawangdui, see Richter, "Self-Cultivation or Evaluation of Others?" 890–91 n. 33.

220	作於中則播於外也	Whatever arises within makes itself known without.
221	故曰以其見者	Therefore it is said: From the visible
222	占其隱者	infer what is hidden.
223	故曰聽其言也	Therefore it is said: It is by listening to his words
224	可以知其所好矣	that you can recognize his inclinations;
225	觀說之流	and by observing his fluency in expounding problems
226	可以知其術也	you can recognize his (rhetorical) technique.
227	久而復之	By repeating [what he has said] after a long time
228	可以知其信矣	you can recognize his trustworthiness,
229	觀其所愛親	and by observing how he cares for those near him
230	可以知其人矣	you can recognize his personality.
231	臨懼之而觀其不恐也	Terrify him and observe whether he does not become afraid.
232	怒之而觀其不悖也	Infuriate him and observe whether he does not lose his countenance.
233	喜之而觀其不誣也	Delight him and observe whether he does not become insincere.
234	近諸色而觀其不踰也	Put him in reach of sensual pleasures and observe whether he does not transgress.
235	飲食之而觀其有常也	Wine and dine him and observe whether he has constancy.
236	利之而觀其能讓也	Procure him benefits and observe whether he can renounce them.
237	居哀而觀其貞也	When he suffers bereavement, observe his probity.
238	居約而觀其不營也	When he is in straits, observe whether he is not dazzled (by tempting benefits).[53]
239	勤勞之而觀其不擾人也	Let him exert himself and observe whether he does not cause disturbance to others.[54]

It would be absurd to assert that "Zengzi li shi" in its entirety and in its present form is a text about the recruitment of officials. But in consideration of the social context from which at least part of the text arose, it becomes easier to read the text with greater historical specificity. Instructions for the recruitment of officials are by definition formulated for someone who applies them to potential subordinates. They are not concerned with reflections on oneself or one's peers. Not so in "Zengzi li shi"—here, the various short catalogues with normative statements that define a certain quality are all marked as referring to the "gentleman," which is hardly how a text would refer to subordinates. However, the word *junzi* appears to be a secondary attachment to these catalogues that otherwise are exactly as those we encounter in *guan ren* texts.

Without the added "*junzi*" at the beginning, these catalogues read as descriptions of a certain quality rather than its bearer. Take the very first catalogue of the text:

1	*攻其惡	To tackle one's faults,
2	求其過	redress one's mistakes,

53. 營 is here read as *yíng* {熒}.
54. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 27.14–20.

3	彊其所不能	fortify oneself where one is incapable,
4	去私欲	discard selfishness and desires,
5	從事於義	and perform one's office within the range of propriety:
6	可謂學矣	this may well be called "learning."

The following passage demonstrates clearly that "*junzi*" is not an organic part of the language. It cannot be integrated in the syntax of the first sentences that all have exposed objects in topical position at the front of the sentences.

70	君子患難除之	The gentleman: Remove disasters and hardship;
71	財色遠之	stay away from material wealth and sensual pleasures;
72	流言滅之	eliminate rumors.
73	禍之所由生	The causes from which calamities arise
74	自孅孅也	are exceedingly small.
75	是故君子夙紹之	For this reason, the gentleman shall put an early end to all these.[55]

Without the elements that apply the short catalogue to the "*junzi,*" the text reads entirely smoothly:

70	*患難除之	Remove disasters and hardship;
71	財色遠之	stay away from material wealth and sensual pleasures;
72	流言滅之	eliminate rumors.
73	禍之所由生	The causes from which calamities arise
74	自孅孅也	are exceedingly small:
75	夙紹之	put an early end to them.

The addition of the introductory "*junzi*" lends the heterogeneous text, which consists of catalogues of different syntactic patterns, a greater internal consistency. Its primary function, however, is the semantic determination it adds to these short catalogues. The definitions of desirable qualities are now socially positioned by marking them as properties of the gentleman.

Keeping in mind how firmly this compilation of *Ru* ethical values under the patronage of Zengzi is rooted in the context of meritocracy, we will also notice that the values discussed in the text are not features of the *junzi* as an ideal of goodness in general. Rather, most of these normative descriptions specifically address the *junzi* in his professional function: He is exhorted to "perform his office within the range of propriety" 從事於義 (l. 5); "adhere to his task" 守業 (l. 15); "approach learning from the demands of his work" 學必由其業 (l. 16). Clearly, the qualities of a *junzi* are here not conceived as abstract and applicable to humans as such; they are related to concerns of employment and social status. The focus of the text soon shifts from the *junzi* himself to his social relations. The *junzi* is reminded "when encountering someone excellent, to fear that he may not get to be associated with them, and when encountering someone who is not excellent, that he may be tainted by association" 見善恐不得與焉見不善者恐其及己也 (ll. 45–46). The text is obviously not concerned with people on a lower rung of the social ladder and with appointing them as one's subordinates. "Zengzi li shi" is a text whose authors address their equals. This shift of focus from critical

55. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 25.25.

self-examination to examining others, especially one's peers, becomes yet clearer later in the text:

87	君子不先人以惡	The gentleman shall not place himself before others on grounds of dislike.
88	不疑人以不信	He shall not be wary of them on grounds of distrust,
89	不說人之過	he shall not discuss the mistakes of others,
90	成人之美	but rather help perfect their good qualities.
91	存往者	Let past affairs rest
92	在來者	and pay attention to what is coming.
93	朝有過夕改則與之	One who makes a mistake in the morning and corrects it by that evening—with him you may associate.
94	夕有過朝改則與之	One who makes a mistake in the evening and corrects it by the next morning—with him you may associate.[56]

More importantly, the *junzi* is warned *not* to associate with a certain type of people:

141	多知而無親	Those who know about much but lack personal experience with it,
142	博學而無方	who learn broadly but without method,
143	好多而無定者	who have multiple inclinations but lack steadiness—
144	君子弗與也	the gentleman shall not associate with those.
145	君子多知而擇焉	The gentleman shall know much but in a selective manner,
146	博學而算焉	he shall learn broadly but in a calculated manner,
147	多言而慎焉	he shall speak much but in a cautious manner.
148	博學而無行	Those who learn broadly but do not practice what they have learnt,
149	進給而不讓	who have good repartee but are also unyielding in an argument,[57]
150	好直而徑	who are inclined to be direct but also obstinate,
151	儉而好窒者	who are frugal but also inclined to be stingy—
152	君子不與也	the gentleman shall not associate with those.
153	夸而無恥	Those who are boastful and shameless,
154	彊而無憚	who are violent and reckless,
155	好勇而忍人者	who like to be bold and ruthless—
156	君子不與也	the gentleman shall not associate with those.
157	亟達而無守	Those who attain their goals quickly but cannot keep them,
158	好名而無體	who like fame but do not live up to it,
159	忿怒而為惡	who act despicably out of anger and rage,
160	足恭而口聖	who move politely and speak wisely

56. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 25.31–32.

57. I follow Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (1848–1908) in reading 进 as a graphic error for 捷. Both *jiéjǐ* < *dzap-kəp 捷給 and *jiējǐ* < *tsap-kəp 接給 are conventionally used for "good repartee." See *Da Dai Liji jiaobu* 大戴禮記斠補 (1899), comm. Sun Yirang 孫詒讓 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1988), 201 and Richter, *Guan ren*, 151–52.

161	而無常位者	but have no constant position,
162	君子弗與也	the gentleman shall not associate with those.
163	巧言令色	Clever talk and imposing countenance,
164	能小行而篤	knowing how to move humbly and deferentially,
165	難於仁矣	this ill beseems benevolence!
166	嗜酤酒	Someone who has a taste for purchased wine,
167	好謳歌巷遊	who likes to roam the streets singing songs
168	而鄉居者乎	and dwells in the country—
169	吾無望焉耳	of such a person one simply cannot expect anything.[58]

The text shows a considerable attention to specific aspects of behavior. While in the *guan ren* texts these features of a person's behavior are understood as symptoms of a certain personality type and the diagnosis of these types is geared toward the purpose of assigning offices, in "Zengzi li shi" these symptoms are in most cases enumerated as criteria by which to decide whether one should associate with the kind of person described in the text. Surely this implies also that one should not develop the same character flaws oneself. But the fact that so much attention is devoted to the question of whom one associates with shows that the primary interest does not lie in setting moral standards in a *general* way. Rather, the focus is on the public appearance of a person and on securing one's social status.

We have no means of identifying the precise social position of the people who authored such texts and the audience they address, nor are we able to date precisely either "Zengzi li shi" as a whole or the material used in its composition. The connection with the *guan ren* texts, however, allows us to narrow down the historical context to the time after these pragmatic texts had been devised in response to the needs of an emerging meritocracy, beginning with the late fifth century and probably implemented first in military circles in newly conquered areas, before meritocratic practices could also take hold in the heartland of the reform states—most notably Wei 魏, which seems to have played a major role in this process.[59]

The target group of meritocracy is by definition anyone whose social status is not irrevocably fixed. And it is precisely the people who experience social mobility who have a vested interest in propagating meritocracy. The designation *shi* seems appropriate for this group precisely because that term is never defined except with the vague literal meaning of "someone in service" or "an officer."[60] *Shi* could have risen from the ranks of commoners or could have sunk into this lowest stratum of nobility from families who had previously ruled their own territory or had served in high offices in former states. It is this group of people who were subject to the greatest social mobility and hence prone to experience status anxiety.[61] In order to be able to pursue their education, develop their skills, and propagate their

58. *Da Dai Liji zhuzi suoyin* 26.15–24.

59. See Yang Kuan 楊寬, *Zhanguo shi: Zengding ben* 戰國史：增訂本 (Taipei: Commercial Press, 1997), 191–215; Richter, "Self-Cultivation or Evaluation of Others?" 906–9; and Richter, *Guan ren*, 320–32.

60. The word *shì* < *s-rəʔ 士 is probably identical (and certainly homophonous) with the one written as 事 (*shì* < *s-rəʔ). Although almost impossible to recognize in modern character forms, 士 is the phonophoric component in 事. Orthography distinguishes between the task and the person who is to perform it: the service (事) and the servant (士), the office (事) and the officer (士).

61. For an overview of the role of *shi* in Chinese history, see Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Shi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1987); for a more recent work on the pre-imperial period, see Liu Zehua 劉澤華, *Xian Qin shi ren yu shehui* 先秦士人與社會 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2004).

competence, and hence worthiness of office, they also needed to secure their social standing as members of at least the lowest rank of nobility, and this surely required certain standards of social behavior and deportment in public. In the words of Yuri Pines:

> The rise of the *shi* was one of the most important developments of the pre-imperial period, not only socially, but also ideologically, for it brought about a reconceptualization of the nature of elite status. Intellectually active *shi*, of whom Confucius is the first known spokesman, promoted new concepts of elite membership that largely dissociated it from pedigree. Their views had a long-term revolutionary impact on the composition of the upper classes in Chinese society. Although a person's birth remained forever significant for his career, his abilities were supposed to play a far more prominent role; and this understanding influenced elite behavior enormously throughout the imperial millennia.[62]

Pines does show, of course, that the rise of meritocracy was brought about primarily by changes in the distribution of power, so the statement cited above should not be misunderstood to mean that the *shi* political thinkers were the originators of meritocracy. Rather, they helped implement and successfully organize a development connected with processes of state formation. Surely, the elevated importance of the successful members of the *shi* social stratum was a reason for pride and self-confidence, as Pines repeatedly emphasizes when he speaks of the "lofty self-image of the *shi*" or of "the strong sense of self-respect of members of the newly rising stratum, who accepted their mission to improve governance above and public mores below, and who considered themselves spiritual leaders of the society."[63] He characterizes the *shi* as "identifying themselves as 'possessors of the Way'"—the Way having become "an exclusive asset of the *shi*, enabling them not only to preserve their autonomy vis-à-vis power-holders, but even at times to claim moral superiority over the rulers."[64]

In order to play precisely this role, to advise and admonish rulers, to develop the ethical concepts with which later Chinese tradition would identify to the present day, the *shi* needed first to secure their status as members of the upper stratum of society. They needed to demonstrate convincingly their usefulness to those who would provide their sustenance by employing them. They depended on this employment to propagate their ideas. Pines recognizes the essentially weak position of the *shi*, their insecure social standing, when he points out that "*Shi*, who lacked an independent power base, were less threatening than the potentially unruly nobles, while their expertise in military and administrative issues was much needed in an age of profound sociopolitical change."[65] This lack of an independent power base and economic footing must have been reason enough for considerable insecurity and status anxiety on the part of *shi*.

The obsession with decorum, with defining ethical and more general behavioral standards, is an important part of developing a group-identity for this social class. They needed to construct a self-image within their own class and to manifest their social status to others, especially to their potential employers whom they hoped to convince of their moral and intellectual superiority. If the *shi* wanted to be accepted in the circles of power-holders on the grounds of these qualifications, it was necessary for them not only to adhere to upper-class behavioral standards in their own individual self-representation; they also could not afford to be disgraced by their equals. Hence, they needed to establish behavioral standards for their

62. Pines, Yuri, *Envisioning Eternal Empire: Chinese Political Thought of the Warring States Era* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 119.

63. Ibid., 116–21.

64. Ibid., 123.

65. Ibid., 122–23.

peers and develop a self-image as a social class. I propose to read large portions of "Zengzi li shi" and of similar texts, most notably the *Lunyu*, from this perspective.

"Zengzi li shi" gives considerable room to describing people with whom one should not associate. Among the deeds that disqualify one from membership in their circles are not just deficiencies in learning and in critical self-reflection (ll. 141–43), lack of moderation or even recklessness (ll. 153–54), and other relatively grave shortcomings, which could all be interpreted in more general moral terms. The text even names the "drinking of purchased wine and roaming the streets singing" or "living in the country" (ll. 166–68) as disqualifying behavior. Clearly, these are purely status-related requirements without any convincing claim to ethical relevance. Shame and disgrace play an important role, and the gentleman is implicitly advised to stay away from those who are "not good," lest he be tainted by association.

Among the qualifications for office that we find emphasized both in catalogues with instructions for the recruitment of officials and in narratives touching upon the same topic, the question of what company the candidate keeps, and most particularly whom he has recommended for office, plays an especially prominent role.

CONCLUSION

Revisiting from this perspective the conspicuous repeated assertions that a gentleman is not anxious about his position or about not being recognized, these parts of the text leave the ahistorical area of nebulous idealism and gain historical relevance. We can also understand some of the terms used in these passages in a more narrowly defined manner. The ubiquitous phrase *zhi ren* 知人, for example, does not just mean "knowing someone" in the most general sense of "understanding others." It specifically means "recognizing someone" in the sense of appreciating a person's qualities, skills, or at least his potential of developing useful qualities.[66] Since the recognition of one's qualities determined one's chances of employment and consequently the social status dependent on such employment, the repeated warnings against anxiety about one's *recognition by others* probably indicate that, in the circles which *Lunyu* passages like 1.1, 1.16, and 4.14 address, such anxieties had a negative impact on other, more desirable qualities, one of which, the quoted passages suggest, is the ability to *recognize others*.

Early Chinese texts concerned with meritocratic principles for the recruitment of officials repeatedly mention someone's ability to recommend worthy persons as one of the most powerful indicators of his eligibility for an office. Hence, the admonitions in *Lunyu* could as well be read as useful advice on how to find employment.[67] In this light, I read *Lunyu* 1.16—"one should not feel anxious about others' not recognizing oneself but about failing to recognize others"—not as a purely altruistic principle but at the same time as useful advice for those anxious to secure their status. The text obviously addresses members of the *shi* class, warning them against an unhealthy preoccupation with seeking recognition—an attitude that

66. Eric Henry defines the meaning of *zhi* in such contexts as "to perceive, to recognize, to appreciate, to discern, to grasp, to pierce through disguises." He adds that this verb "may have begun to acquire the peculiar significance and emotional weight . . . at the end of the Spring and Autumn period or shortly thereafter, and that by the middle of the Warring States period . . . it was widely and regularly used in that sense." Henry, "The Motif of Recognition in Early China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.1 (1987): 8 and 14.

67. This is consistent with Dorothee Schaab-Hanke's discussion of the content of Confucius's teachings as reflected in various early Chinese texts, including the *Lunyu*. She argues convincingly that placement in administrative positions was an important goal in the training that Confucius offered his disciples. Schaab-Hanke, "Die 'Manager-Schmiede' in Lu: Zum Praxisbezug der Lehre des Meisters Kong," *Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung* 30 (2006): 233–45.

might lead to blind injudicious behavior and be a disruptive influence for the circles in which the *Lunyu*'s teachings were used. Rather, the addressee of *Lunyu* 1.14 is advised, one should direct one's energies toward recognizing others, which in the end will also be more helpful to secure an office for oneself. *Lunyu* 4.14 seems to say exactly this in yet more direct language: "You should not feel anxious about not having a position but rather about the means by which you position yourself. You should not feel anxious lest no one recognize you, but seek to become worth recognizing."

Even the three oddly disconnected statements at the very beginning of the *Lunyu* gain more consistency, if we consider the anxiety about securing one's social status as a major concern among those for whose benefit the teachings in the *Lunyu* were intended. The crucial word *peng* < *bə̂ŋ 朋 in the second sentence (有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎) is most frequently translated with the noncommittal word "friend." But the word is socially more specific; it originally refers to things lined up side by side and connected in some way; most narrowly it denotes strands of cowries, which is incidentally clearly visible in the old forms of the character. *Peng* can stand for a unit of currency, for 'someone's equal' (e.g., in the Mao ode no. 117 "Jiao liao" 椒聊),[68] 'to bond with someone' (potentially in a negative sense), and, of course, someone with whom one bonds, most likely someone of a similar social standing, a peer.[69] In the *Lunyu*, the word *peng* occurs alone only this once; in all other instances it is paired with the other word that is most frequently rendered as "friend," i.e., *yǒu* < *wəʔ 友. This other word for "friend" derives its meaning from the related word *yòu* < *wəh 佑 "to help, assist." It is used in the *Lunyu* much more frequently than *peng*. The use of the words *peng* and *you* in the *Lunyu* and the different notions of friendship involved deserve a study of their own.[70] What we can confidently say at this point is that the idea of "someone of the same kind" or "peer" is clearly the one that underlies the use in *Lunyu* 1.1.

This narrower and more socially specific understanding of *peng* in *Lunyu* 1.1 gives this prominent first Master's statement of the book sharper contours and some consistency: professional training,[71] bonding with one's peers, and recognition are surely the three most decisive components for securing one's career:

> Is it not indeed a pleasure to have learnt something and to practice it time and again? Is it not indeed a joy to have one's peers come from afar? Is it not indeed like a noble man not to resent it when others do not recognize one?
> 學而時習之，不亦說乎？有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？[72]

68. James Legge's translation of "彼其之子碩大無朋" as "That hero there / Is large and peerless" brings this out very well. See Legge, *The Chinese Classics*. Vol. IV: *The She King* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1871; rpt. Taipei: SMC, 1994), 179.

69. Axel Schuessler points out the cognate *bēng* < *prə̂ŋ 繃 'to bind round' and notes that Bodman related this Chinese word family to Tibetan words for a "string on which things are filed, strung" and "to love, be fond of, greatly attached to." Schuessler, *ABC Etymological Dictionary of Old Chinese* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 410. Zhu Fenghan 朱鳳瀚 explains that in Western Zhou inscriptions the term *you* 友 (also in the collocation *peng you* 朋友) refers to male blood relations within a lineage, and that the word *peng* here denotes belonging to the same "kind" in the sense of generation or social group. Zhu Fenghan, *Shang Zhou jiazu xingtai yanjiu* 商周家族形態研究 (Tianjin: Guji chubanshe, 1990), 292–97.

70. Aat Vervoorn describes the semantic difference between *you* and *peng* in a very similar way. His study of friendship as reflected in early Chinese literature, however, emphasizes the participation of these words in a shared discourse about this broader concept of friendship, rather than exploring the ways in which these concepts were differentiated. See Vervoorn, "Friendship in Ancient China," *East Asian History* 27 (2004): 1–32.

71. The text names both aspects of this training: the acquisition of knowledge and competence (*xue* 學) in a process of instruction and the consolidation of the acquired skills through practice (*xi* 習).

72. *Lunyu jishi*, 1–9.

But it is not only the importance of recognition and associating with the right people that *Lunyu* shares with "Zengzi li shi"; both texts abound with instructions about how to demonstrate one's noble status. The reservations against purchased wine occur in both texts ("Zengzi li shi" l. 166; *Lunyu* 10.8), but in combination with different injunctions. "Zengzi li shi" (ll. 167–68) disqualifies someone who roams the streets singing or who lives in the country; *Lunyu* 10.8 advises not to eat spoilt or improperly prepared food, nor food that is not properly cut up or not adequately seasoned (食饐而餲，魚餒而肉敗，不食。色惡，不食。臭惡，不食。失飪，不食。不時，不食。割不正，不食。不得其醬，不食 . . . 沽酒市脯，不食。不撤薑食，不多食).[73] Oliver Weingarten has shown in an intertextual study that in a number of other early Chinese texts the latter injunction is regularly paired with *Lunyu* 10.12 "if the mat is not straight, do not sit on it."[74] He understands these as prescriptions of ritual behavior, and identifies the two injunctions against improperly placed mats or improperly cut food in particular as rooted in the tradition of fetal instruction. I am inclined to consider these instructions, just like the warnings against singing in the streets or conversing during meals (*Lunyu* 10.10) and numerous similar instructions, especially in book ten of the *Lunyu*, as not necessarily related to ritual but more broadly as elements of decorum that distinguished members of nobility from commoners. (Fetal instruction is of course an especially relevant and elevated case of such noble behavior.) The *shi*, forming the lowest stratum of nobility, had the most reason to constantly demonstrate that they met these behavioral standards, in order to secure their social status.

Most probably, many of the teachings of the self-cultivation and ethical standards in other *Ru* texts (whether with Confucius lore, as in *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, or without, as often in *Liji* or *Da Dai Liji*) were likewise generated by the need of the *shi* to secure their social status. Such precepts formulated with a view to creating standards for a group of people who needed to reposition themselves in a changing social order do have the potential to be made more broadly applicable. Once the original concern with manifesting one's noble status had become a matter of the past, the same standards were transmitted in later history as general ethical standards independently of their original pragmatic function.

The dichotomy of historical vs. scriptural reading that Makeham discusses does not need to be understood as a choice between mutually exclusive alternatives. To identify an original pragmatic purpose behind a text does not invalidate later scriptural readings that interpret the text in more abstract ethical terms. Rather, how we read the same text will depend on our purpose in reading it. Surely, a translation of a text like the *Lunyu* should adequately reflect the existence of this *canonical* text in the Chinese tradition. For this purpose, a scriptural reading will be more appropriate. But whenever we are using early Chinese texts as sources for the history of the period, we would do well to try to rediscover to what ends these texts were applied and for what reasons they were considered important before they were elevated to a level of general applicability that is largely independent of specific historical contexts.

73. *Lunyu* 10.8; *Lunyu jishi*, 690–98.
74. Weingarten, "Confucius and Pregnant Women."