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ASTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to compare Nietzsche's three transformations of the spirit, as set forth in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, to Confucius's personal experience of self-cultivation in the *Analects*. For Nietzsche, the first stage, the camel, emphasizes the willingness to be "humble" and wanting to be "well-loaded" in the teachings of the tradition. This is reflected in Confucius's first step in self-cultivation, that is, at the age of fifteen, in which he "sets his heart-mind upon learning." Nietzsche's lion stage corresponds to Confucius's ages of thirty and forty. This is a period of reflective inquiry in which one goes beyond the boundaries of traditional values to evaluate critically what one has learned. Nietzsche's child stage is a new beginning where one is free from the burdens of inherited values and able to "recreate" the world. This is comparable to Confucius's ages of fifty and sixty when he creates the idea of *ren* and lives accordingly. Nietzsche's child stage is further developed with the formation of the ideas: *amor fati* and the eternal recurrence of the same. The former is the acceptance and appreciation of one's past whereas the latter is the ability to overcome the world's apparent meaninglessness and to summon the courage to say "yes" to the world and all its foibles. For Confucius, too, there is no other life but living in the world. His *junzi* is not beaten down by the vagaries of fate. He neither complains nor blames, but lives naturally with *tianming*. As a disciple of Confucius or Nietzsche, one has to learn from living in the everyday world.
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"On this perfect day, when everything is ripening, and not only the grapes are getting brown, a ray of sunshine has fallen on my life: I looked behind, I looked before me, and never have I seen so many good things all at once. Not in vain have I buried my forty-fourth year today; I had the right to bury it—that in it which still had life, has been saved and is immortal... How could I help being thankful to the whole of my life?" (EH I)

"[I am] the sort of man who forgets to eat when I work myself into a frenzy over some problem, who is so full of joy that I forget my worries and who does not notice the onset of old age" (A 7.20).

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ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Nietzsche:

AC    The Antichrist(ian)
BGE   Beyond Good and Evil
BT    The Birth of Tragedy
DM    Dawn of Morning
EH    Ecce Homo
GM    Toward the Genealogy of Morals
HA    Human, All Too Human
HL    On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life (Untimely Meditation 2)
JS    The Joyful Science
PG    Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks
PT    Philosophy and Truth: Nietzsche’s Notebooks for Early 1870’s
SE    Schopenhauer as Education (Untimely Meditation 3)
TI    Twilight of the Idols
WB    Richard Wagner in Bayreuth (Untimely Meditation 4)
WP    The Will to Power
Z     Thus Spoke Zarathustra

References to the aphoristic works will cite the abbreviated title followed by the aphorism number (for example: WS 59) and to the works divided into longer sections (The Birth of Tragedy and the Untimely Meditations) the section number (BT 2, HL 5). In the cases of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Toward the Genealogy of Morals, Twilight of the Idols, and Ecce Homo, references will be to the part and section numbers (Z 2.16, TI 4.1). The discussions of previous works in the Third Part of Ecce Homo, “Why I Write Such Good Books,” will be cited simply by the appropriate abbreviation followed by the section number (EH, “DM” 2). Passages in the prefaces to Nietzsche’s works (in the Prologue in the case of Zarathustra) will be referred to by “P” followed by the section number (JS, P2).

Works by Heraclitus:

D.    Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: 24-34
Cf.   The Art and Thought of Heraclitus

For the English translations of Heraclitus’s fragments, I rely on Freeman (1952) and Kahn
Works by Confucius:

A  The Analects (Lun Yu)


Works by Mencius:

M  Mencius


Works by Xunzi:

X  Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings

For the English Translations of Xunzi, I rely on Watson (1963) with minor modifications.
INTRODUCTION

Separated by time and culture, Nietzsche and Confucius seem to be worlds apart. Yet these two thinkers share the similar conviction that a person who is ready and determined can craft himself or herself and become a “full human being.” This conviction is fuelled not by any abstract theory but by insight into the personal adjustments these thinkers made to their own circumstances. For both, philosophy is essentially autobiographical.

Uninterested in any measure of success or failure that might be imagined beyond the realm of nature, they are occupied with the question of how to live to the fullest in facing anxiety and insecurity in everyday life. Exclusive of any form of divination, self-cultivation must be undertaken for its own sake, and such a transformation will be a life-long project.

In this dissertation, I place the Nietzschean and Confucian insights side by side to appreciate their concern with the human struggle to adapt to dire circumstances. The way to human becoming occupied the philosophical practice of both thinkers. They were inspired by the possibility of the emergence of exceptional human beings capable of an independence from the general engagement of the masses. Their focus is on the evaluation of human conduct in a particular context. Misinterpretation of their work remains a problem that this monograph seeks to address.

Prima facie, the worlds of a 19th century Saxon Lutheran boy and a 6th-5th century
B.C.E. orphaned child of the province of Lu seem to be vastly different contexts, likely to produce quite disparate life experiences. Born in 552 or 551 B.C., Confucius lived in an era of unrelenting and escalating violence as states in the proto-Chinese world warred for supremacy. He was once a police commissioner. Finding out that Lu failed to observe the proper *li*, Confucius left his home state. After visiting a number of other states, offering advice to the feudal lords with no success, he finally returned to Lu in 484 B.C. when he was sixty-eight. At last realizing that there was no hope of putting his ideas into practice, Confucius devoted the rest of his life to teaching. Conditions were made dire in Nietzsche's world by an intellectual and cultural crisis that pervaded the human outlook and deprived people of their usual comforts. Born in 1844, Nietzsche trained for a career in classical studies and, at the age of twenty-four, became a professor of philology at the University at Basel even before attaining his doctorate. This place in the world of academia, however, did not shelter him from the problem he saw as a crisis of disillusion—a problem he later characterized in terms of the “death of God” and the advent of “nihilism.” As if in sympathetic harmony, Nietzsche's health deteriorated drastically, and this forced him to resign from his chair at Basel in 1879. He devoted himself to writing before a total collapse both physically and mentally in 1889.

Another superficial observation often made that would seem to distance the work of these two philosophers sees Confucius committed to “restore” the tradition whereas for Nietzsche, it remains a matter of controversy whether he worked from positions held by

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2. *Li* has been translated as “ritual,” “rites,” “customs,” “propriety,” “morals,” “rules of proper behavior.” It is defined in the *Shuowen* as “to tread a path; hence, conduct, behavior,” that is, “how to serve the spirits to bring about good fortune.” Each of these English terms renders *li*, depending on the different context but in classical Chinese the character carries all of these meanings on every occasion of its use.
3. Nietzsche felt similarly as his books were unpopular and strongly criticized.
any other philosophers. Confucius once described him as follows: "I transmit but do not innovate, I am truthful in what I say and devoted to antiquity" (A 7.1). Nietzsche was harshly critical of both his contemporaries and his predecessors. Most of his writings do not have much resemblance to the rest of the genre, nor are they a systematic development of ideas. Rather, for the most part, they consist of collections of thoughts in short paragraphs or aphorisms. The language in these thoughts moves between the analytic and metaphorical, and he seldom indicates the scope of his claims, or what he means by his terms.

As a professor in philology, Nietzsche knows the classical texts well. He criticizes "dogmatic philosophy," the paradigm of which is Platonism, for being no more than "audacious generalizations from very narrow, very personal, very human all too human facts" (BGE, P). Traditionally the philosopher has to transcend his or her personal situation, rising above the contingent particulars of the everyday world to the realm of universal and impersonal ideas, and from there to proceed to discourses concerning truth and reality. In contrast, for Nietzsche, the philosopher should go down and in to the things of his or her life for deeper insights in life. In this case, when his writing expresses his experience, it is not only that his life writes itself; it is also written from other earlier experiences, from his learning and studying of the past. In Dawn of Morning, he wonders whether his entire philosophy is anything more than a "translation into reason [of] drive for gentle sunlight, bright and buoyant air, southerly vegetation, the breath of the sea, fleeting meals of flesh, fruit and eggs" (the driving forces in his life on the coast of the Mediterranean at that time), and whether all any other philosophies are "nothing other than the intellectual circuitous paths of similar personal drives" (DM 553).
A true thinker has to be personally related to his or her problems.

While Nietzsche’s idea of philosophy is uncommon in Western philosophy, it is familiar in Chinese philosophy. The *Analects* is believed to be compiled by Confucius’s disciples after his death and it is a collection of Confucius’s conversations with others in his everyday life. Confucius conceives of his teachings from an everyday perspective, integrating a practical approach with the historical wisdom of the previous generations. In the *Analects*, Confucius has far more to say about self-cultivation than any other issues. Behind Confucius’s teachings lies the unspoken and unquestioned assumption that the only purpose a person can have and also the only worthwhile thing a person can do is to become as good as a person as possible. This idea is reflected in the fact that his close students, such as Zigong and Yan Hui, are considered his disciples. To be his disciple is not simply to study classical texts with him, but to practice and live according to his teachings. This is a personal journey that has to be pursued for its own sake with indifference to success or failure.

It is in the content of the sayings, aphorisms, and thoughts of these two philosophers that there is a convergence of concern and approach. Confucius conceives the philosophy of life from the perspective of the ways it can be lived, integrating a practical approach with an appreciation of the wisdom available from past generations. It is his view that, in spite of dire circumstances, one can engage life fully if one remains dedicated to a personal excellence that recognizes the value in avoidance of harms as well as engagement in positive actions. The unreserved “Yes-saying” proposed by Nietzsche is an inclusive affirmation of the pain and suffering of life as much as the joy and
pleasure. Both their works reflect a conception of human life as laden with the possibility of value and meaning that can overcome anxiety, fear, insecurity, pessimism, and nihilism. This overcoming, they believed, can be shared, and it is to this end that they dedicated their efforts.

Most contemporary comparative studies of Nietzsche and Chinese philosophy predominantly focus on Daoism, with an emphasis on the comparison of Nietzsche’s idea of becoming and the *dao 道*. Upon closer look at the central theme of Nietzsche’s teachings, it is the personal self-transformation that distinguishes his ideas from other Western moral theories. This is akin both to the Daoists’ and Confucius’s ideas of self-cultivation. The important role of culture in both Confucius’s and Nietzsche’s teachings distinguishes them from the Daoists. Both Nietzsche and Confucius, learning from one’s tradition is an essential stage in self-cultivation. The dearth of any major comparative study of Nietzsche and Confucian philosophy in the literature is astonishing given the similarity of these two great thinkers. In this dissertation, I want to illustrate the similarities as well as the differences between Nietzsche’s self-transformation and Confucius’s self-cultivation.

The structure of this dissertation follows Nietzsche’s three transformations of the spirit as set forth in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and also Passage 2.4 in the *Analects*. It is divided into four parts.

Part one begins with an examination of Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s ideas on history. Learning or studying is indispensable in Confucius’s teaching. It is also an
essential process for Nietzsche, although this area is largely neglected in previous research. He writes a full-length book, *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, to appeal for distinctions on the use of history. Antiquarian history is the valuable wisdom and experiences of past generations and it provides a kind of linkage to one's ancestors dating to the early Zhou. It is comparable to Confucius's emphasis on the rituals of ancestral and funeral services. As time goes by, when antiquarian history becomes dogmatic, critical history is needed. One has to reflect on what one has learned and evaluate it. Confucius's revitalization of the *zhouli* 周禮 with new elements such as *ren* and *yi* can be taken as the products of a critical historian. Monumental history is formed by the great historical figures whom Nietzsche calls cultural exemplars. Their goal is the happiness of humanity. They are examples and models for later generations. In the second section, I make use of Heraclitus who is Nietzsche's important source of inspiration as an example to show that Nietzsche does learn from his tradition. The relevant similarities between Heraclitus and Confucius serve as a bridge for the comparison of Nietzsche and Confucius.

Part two examines Nietzsche's lion stage, which is a reflective inquiry into what one has learned. Nietzsche's critical attitude is compared with Confucius's revitalization of the *zhouli*. Nietzsche proposes a new way of understanding human beings and life, understanding human beings as configurations of drives and life as an experiment. Nietzsche's new look at what it means to become human is then compared to Confucius's ideas on human nature.

Part three compares Nietzsche's *last* stage of the three transformations of the spirit,
the child, with Confucius's renzhe. The process of human becoming, however, does not end with the child or the renzhe, and the one who becomes the child or the renzhe lives with a different attitude towards life. The last section gives a detailed discussion of Confucius's idea of ren with a comparison of Zarathustra's process of human becoming.

Part four begins with the insights of the two philosophers towards life. Then, Nietzsche's two most important constructive creations, *amor fati* and the eternal recurrence of the same, are compared to Confucius's ideas of fate (ming 命) and regret (hui 悔). The last section conveys the everyday wisdom of both thinkers. Chapter 10 of the *Analects* details the day-to-day life led by Confucius, and some conventional-minded readers believe his modeling should be taken literally. In my view, the descriptions merely provide a picture of Confucius's everyday life, but it does not suggest that there is only one way to live properly. In the first three chapters of *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche presents his way of living his own life, with detailed discussions of his habits and practices, nutrition, the climate, and the particular place. This description reflects a good sense of Nietzsche's manner of living well. The tasks of life are endless, and humans are faced with the task of creating a dynamic process that can make life meaningful and beautiful.
Part I  The Camel Stage of the Three Transformations of the Spirit;
"At fifteen, my heart-mind was set upon learning..." (A 2.4)

In this first part, I want to compare Nietzsche’s camel stage of the three transformations of the spirit with Confucius’s learning in self-cultivation. In section 1.1, I first analyze Nietzsche’s depiction of the hard-working camel who uses the utmost effort to learn from its tradition. Then, I explore Confucius’s notion of learning (xue 學) and draw a conceptual and motivational parallel with Nietzsche’s ideas about the importance of learning from history. In section 1.2, I examine Nietzsche’s interpretations of Heraclitus, who is one of his important sources of inspiration. Nietzsche admits that his most important ideas, the affirmation of becoming and the doctrine of eternal recurrence, “may in the end have been taught already by Heraclitus” (EH, “BT” 3). Nietzsche admits that he is influenced by Heraclitus, and if there are relevant similarities between Heraclitus and Confucius, then it can be used as a bridge to substantiate the parallel between Nietzsche and Confucius. Then, I examine ideas for which Nietzsche acknowledges a debt to Heraclitus—the affirmation of the world and of becoming—and offer a comparison to relevant ideas of Confucius. A comparison of the worldviews of the three thinkers, then, provides a solid background for the major comparison between the Nietzschean and the Confucian process of human becoming. For both Nietzsche and Confucius, learning from the past is a necessary first step in the process of human becoming. Nietzsche’s interpretations of Heraclitus’s fragments can be taken as a vivid example of how the former makes use of history: first, one must become an antiquarian historian and learn from history, then become a critical historian and reflect on what one has learned, and finally, become a monumental historian and create something new.
1.1 The Camel Stage: A Stage for All and None

In this section, I compare Nietzsche’s camel stage of the three transformations of the spirit with Confucius’s learning in self-cultivation. First, I examine the Nietzschean camel together with Confucius’s first step in self-cultivation. Second, I look into Nietzsche’s three kinds of history and offer a comparison to Confucius’s ideas on how to learn (xue) from tradition.

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the process of becoming a full human being is long and arduous. The process is open to everyone, but only a few are willing to start this humble and diligent undertaking. In his most important work, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Nietzsche illustrates how to become a “full human being” through the model of Zarathustra.4 From Zarathustra’s first speech, it is evident that there are three states of the spirit to be realized in this process, yet this speech names only two transformations (from camel to lion and from lion to child). Zarathustra is silent about the first transformation, that is, from the state prior to the camel.5 Laurence Lampert relates this silence to the lesson learned in the Prologue, which shows that the transformation to the camel cannot be taught, but instead comes about through one’s willingness and determination.6

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4 According to Lampert, Nietzsche chooses Zarathustra/Zoroaster, the ancient Persian prophet, as his mouthpiece because Zarathustra/Zoroaster is the first one to see morality, the battle of good and evil, as the wheel in the machinery of things (EH IV:3). Thus, all Western prophetic religions originated with Zarathustra/Zoroaster. See Lampert (1986): 2-3.

5 The camel figure appears in the hymns (the Gāthās) of Zarathustra/Zoroaster as “a beast of burden.” Duchesne-Guillemin (1952): 145.

Zarathustra's silence and Nietzsche's resignation can be compared to two passages in the *Analects*. Confucius says, “I never enlighten anyone who has not been driven to distraction in his attempt to understand or who has not got into a frenzy in the attempt to put his or her ideas into words” (A 7.8), and “I have never denied instruction to anyone who, of his own accord, has given me so much as a bundle of dried meat as a present” (A 7.7). The first passage implies that Confucius expects his students to try their best to think and learn by themselves. The emphasis of the second passage is “on one's own accord,” meaning that Confucius will instruct anyone who is willing to learn from him. A bundle of dried meat does not cost much (even in Confucius's time), and this illustrates that Confucius is not after monetary reward from his students. Such a small present shows the respect and appreciation of the students for their teacher.

Both Nietzsche and Confucius understand that only a few people will choose to go through the process of human becoming. According to Nietzsche, if one “does not voluntarily assume this burden and displeasure [throughout the process of human becoming], if one continually avoids it and, as aforesaid, remains hidden quietly and proudly away in one's citadel, then one is not made, not predestined for knowledge” (*BGE* 26). When Zarathustra comes down from the mountain, he speaks to the masses in the market place, hoping that everyone can take up the task of becoming the camel. His very first speech turns out to be a complete failure (he is mocked by the crowd) and Zarathustra obtains the insight that he should not go to the crowd but to “companions” (*Z*, P9). Confucius makes a clear distinction between those who are willing to learn and those who are not. For instance, those who are determined to learn are named shi 十, the
scholar-apprentices,\(^7\) and those who have no interest in learning are named \textit{min} 民, the common people.\(^8\) The teachings of Zarathustra and Confucius are only for the few who are determined to undertake the process of human becoming.

Confucius's common people (\textit{min}) and Zarathustra's "poisonous flies of the market place" do not pay attention to the words of Confucius and Zarathustra, respectively (A 8.9, Z I.12). Zarathustra is so disgusted by the masses that he wants to stay far apart from them. Rather than persuading people in the market place, Zarathustra looks for disciples or companions who are willing to take up the burden of self-overcoming, and he is eager to share his wisdom with them (Z I.8-22). Confucius draws distinctions between different kinds of people. The lowest kind is the common people (\textit{min}) because they make no effort to study even after having been vexed by difficulties (A 16.9). Zarathustra and Confucius choose to leave alone those who are not willing to undergo the process of human becoming. Only when one attains "the strong weight-bearing spirit in which reverence dwells" (Z I.1) is one ready to learn from Zarathustra or Confucius.

Nietzsche offers no facts about the first thirty years of Zarathustra's life, except that on reaching the age of thirty, he leaves home for the mountains (Z, P1). Before the age of thirty, Zarathustra is probably in his camel stage, humbly learning from tradition. It is possible that he wishes to stay in the mountains because he needs to be in solitude to reflect on what he has learned. Zarathustra's critical attitude (at the age of thirty) toward

\(^7\) Zengzi, a disciple of Confucius says, "Scholar-apprentices (shi) must be strong and resolute for they bear a heavy charge and their way (dao) is long" (A 8.7).

\(^8\) Confucius says, "It is possible for the common people (\textit{min}) to be made to follow a policy, but it is not possible for them to be made to understand it" (A 8.9).
what he has learned marks the beginning of his lion stage. After ten years (that is, at the age of forty), he decides to go back to human society in order to share his ideas with them.

For Confucius, self-cultivation begins at the age of fifteen when his energy is set upon learning (A 2.4): this is the beginning of his “camel stage.” It does not necessarily mean that Confucius did not study or learn from tradition before the age of fifteen. It was common in Confucius’s time that children begin learning classical texts at a very early age (five or six). Since this type learning simply involved memorizing the texts instead of understanding them, Confucius had probably memorized a number of classical texts by the age of fifteen. However, this does not mean that the age of fifteen has any particular significance. The beginning of the camel stage is marked by one’s determination to move beyond rote learning and focus one’s heart and mind on a true study of tradition. If one starts learning at the age of twenty-three, then, for such a person, the enlightenment of the camel-spirit begins at the age of twenty-three.

*Analects* 2.4 continues as follows, “At thirty, I took my stand (li 钌)....” Confucius becomes the “lion” when he is thirty years old because it is then that he finds his own unique standpoint. Finding one’s standpoint (li), which means that one knows what one wants to achieve in life, is an important issue for Confucius which he mentions in many passages. For instance, he points out that one should worry, not about one’s lack of official position (fû), but about what would earn one a position (li 钌) (A 4.14). Both philosophers emphasize learning from their respective traditions, yet Confucius

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revitalizes the tradition he inherits with new elements whereas Nietzsche reflects on what he has learned, retaining what is worthy and to dismissing what is worthless.

However, it is important to note that the Nietzschean process of human becoming does not end with the formation of the creative child. The Nietzschean child is merely a beginning, or as Zarathustra put it, “a first movement” (Z I.1): in order to grow up and become a mature adult, there are lots of things for the child to learn. Each act of creation cannot be considered an ultimate goal: rather, the child has to proceed to greater acts of creation.

For both philosophers, the camel-spirit or the commitment to learning is the first stage in the process of human becoming. However, the exertion involved in working through the Nietzschean camel stage and the Confucian xue 学 (learning) makes progress so arduous that few people can persevere. For instance, though Confucius has thousands of students (A 11.3), there is but one, Yan Hui, who truly loves learning (haoxue 好學) (A 6.3). Zarathustra points out some obstacles on the way to undergo the first transformation to the camel: laziness, arrogance, conceit, and a reluctance to give up existing achievements or go through such a taxing process (Z I.1).

Learning from the record of human experience was so important for Nietzsche that he wrote a full-length book entitled, *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History in Life.*

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10 As early as in the Prologue, Zarathustra has become the child. The rest of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* describes the maturation and development of the child.

11 Other German philosophers, such as Schleiermacher and Dithey, who wanted to complete the Kantian project, were also interested in the philosophy of life. For more cf. Schleiermacher (1977), Dithey (1977).
Nietzsche says, “History belongs to the human beings in three respects” (HL 2). According to different circumstances and needs, one should become different kinds of “historian.” In the following section, I compare Nietzsche’s three kinds of history with Confucius’s ideas on how to make appropriate use of past experience for the health of an individual, community, or culture.

1.1.1 Learning from the Past

Both Nietzsche and Confucius give an in-depth analysis of the traditions they inherited, and by examining their views on history, we can see how and what they learn from the tradition. First, I examine the meaning of learning from the tradition for both philosophers. Second, I analyze the reasons for Confucius’s and Nietzsche’s emphasis on learning from the traditions they inherited. Third, I explore how their ideas on learning are different from other thinkers. For Nietzsche and Confucius, learning is not simply book-learning; it is life-learning. Hence, to learn from history is to learn from the wisdom of past generations and such learning is the first step in the process of human becoming.

Xue 学, the Chinese word for learning, is an essential idea for Confucius and it appears 65 times in the Analects. Before we can examine Confucius’s ideas on studying and learning from history, it is important to note the difficulties in translating the Chinese word xue.12 For instance, when Confucius talks about xue shi 学诗, it is natural to

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12 The natural choice in English for an equivalent is the verb “to learn,” but, as pointed out by Lau (1992): xlii-xlxi, we are forced by the demands of the English language to use “to study” instead.
render this as “to study the Shijing,” but this changes an activity with a practical application to something theoretical. Yet to render the phrase as “to learn the Shijing” suggests learning the Shijing by heart. Though this certainly is part of the meaning, it definitely is not the whole of it. Lau points out that “the main purpose of xue shi is both to improve one’s sensibility and to enable one to use lines from the Shijing to convey a meaning capable of a subtle interpretation.”13 The words of Zixia further support this point: he would call those who act and behave appropriately as schooled, even though they have never received formal education (A 1.7).

Xue in the Analects always refers to self-cultivation and the development of character in the promotion of the way (dao 道), as opposed to the way various craftsmen practice specific skills to master a trade (A 19.7). Confucius is keen to maintain a distinction between education (for self-cultivation) and training in a skill (for earning a living). He points out that one should be concerned with how to live one’s life with dao and not to be preoccupied with making a living (A 15.32).14 Confucius was once reproved by a villager for having not mastered any specialty although he was broad in learning (A 9.2).15 Confucius points out that the junzi is not a “mere vessel” (A 2.12), meaning that he or she is not a person of instrumental skills. However, most people study with an eye to fame, power, or wealth. Even Confucius himself was asked by one of his disciples about studying (xue) to achieve an official post, and his answer was that if one focused on self-cultivation, an official post would come (A 2.18). Confucius once

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14 The passage continues as follows, “Go and till the land and you will end up by being hungry as a matter of course; study, and you will end up with the salary of an official as a matter of course.”
lamented that it was difficult to find one who would study (xue) for three years without concentrating on the matter of salary (A 8.12). Yan Hui, the favorite disciple of Confucius, is greatly praised (A 6.3, 11.7) because he focuses on studying without fixing his eye on fame, wealth, or power. He enjoys himself in the process of self-cultivation and he lives with joy, even in a mean dwelling with plain rice and water (A 6.11). Throughout his short life span, Hui lives in poverty. His everyday life is a hardship most people would find intolerable, yet Hui is highly appreciated for his achievement in the process of human becoming. Confucius highly appreciates those who love learning (xue) for the sake of self-cultivation

Part of what makes the traditional heritage for Confucius—the Shijing, the Shujing, the li 禮, and music—is already a step in the process of human becoming. He points out that an apt quotation from the Shijing can stimulate the imagination, endow one with breeding, enable one to live in a community, and give expression to grievances (A 17.9). Hence, those who know how to learn from the tradition are described as “Having ascended the hall, though they may not have gained entrance to the inner chamber” (A 11.15), meaning that they have already achieved some progress in their self-cultivation.

The value of traditional heritage can further be supported by another passage in which Confucius says, “Be stimulated by the Shijing, take one’s stand through the help of the li, and be perfected by music” (A 8.8). In the conversations with his disciples, Confucius frequently quotes from the Shijing to illustrate his point. The importance of the li can also be reflected by the fact that it is mentioned seventy-five times in the Analects.

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16 Confucius himself also finds joy in the process of becoming the junzi (A 7.16, 7.19).
17 A 1.15, 8.3, 3.8, 16.13, 17.9.
Music refers both to music played in sacrificial offerings and the singing version of the *Shijing*. Another piece of evidence for Confucius's respect for tradition is that he "uses the correct pronunciation for the *Shijing*, the *Shujing* and the *li*" (A 7.18). Tradition inheritance can be taken as the foundation in Confucius's self-cultivation.

Nietzsche points out that one should be careful in making use of history, which involves our conscious relationship to the past. Though it is necessary "for the life of an individual or a people or culture, a surfeit of historical knowledge is detrimental to life as lived in the present." An indulgence in an excess of history can be damaging because it is impossible for one to live with every memory of the past. Nietzsche points out that every human being has to draw a horizon around itself for survival (*HL* 1). Yet only with a thorough understanding of history can one uncover the background for explanations of the present and become a historical person for the future. This complex approach to history is also applicable for the creation of one's own history in life. Nietzsche's discussion of history is different from that of the academic historians, who only wish to find out what actually happened in the past, or to determine the causes and consequences of a certain event in human history. First, Nietzsche rejects a "suprahistorical" standpoint, a view that dispenses with history and sees all action as inherently blind and unjust. Nietzsche names such people "suprahistorians" because they take history too literally and they want to get the answers to all of life's important questions from history alone (*HL* 1). According to Nietzsche, one should leave the suprahistorians to their "nausea" and their "wisdom." That is, one should relish one's "unwisdom" and become active and progressive people who enjoy themselves (*HL* 1).

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It is a complex and intricate matter to make appropriate use of history in respect to one's life. Nietzsche uses the metaphor of a tree and its roots to illustrate human life and the function of historical nature: the growth and health of a human being depend on history the way the growth and health of a tree depend on its roots (HL 3). The strength of these roots is characterized by the fact that one's life is constantly under the influence of its historical nature. Even though a tree must depend on its roots for survival, it also relies on its branches and leaves, and the beauty of the tree is in the branches, leaves and flowers, not in the roots. If a tree only focused on the growth of its roots, then it would not be healthy, beautiful or fruitful. One, therefore, cannot merely focus on one's historical roots but has to look for other nutrients for one's health and growth. For Nietzsche, one has to rely on history for a relationship with the past, yet one also needs the ability to forget part of the past (to draw a horizon around oneself).

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the experience of the past provides direction for the present. Though their approaches are different, their concern is to identify both the vital and the degenerative elements in history. For both philosophers, an appropriate use of history leads to growth in human life, whereas an inappropriate use leads to deterioration. In order to make use of history constructively, a certain amount of the past has to be sacrificed. According to Nietzsche, the degree to which the past has to be forgotten is determined by the "plastic power" of a person or a culture. By "plastic power," he means "the capacity to develop out of oneself in one's own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds" (HL 1). According to Graham Parkes, though the
primary image behind the “plastic power” is artistic (the meanings of the Greek root, *plassein*), “this image is conjoined with natural images having to do with growth, nourishment, and healing.”¹⁹ Nietzsche points out that a healthy historical person should have the ability to feel unhistorically and historically at the same time. That is, one has to strive for the “maximum openness by way of the appropriate kind of historical sense.”²⁰

Human beings are the only species in the world with a highly developed memory and, thus, the ability to live historically.²¹ Our advantage is that we can learn from history and our own past experience, and thus “shape” our own history. The drawback is that we have to “brace ourselves against the great and ever greater pressure from what is past” (*HL* 1). The past sometimes encumbers our progress in the present as an invisible burden. Fortunately, human beings also have the ability to forget, or, in Nietzsche’s words, “the capacity to feel unhistorically.” When the realization of the present moment is a condition of happiness, forgetting is a blessing. History can sometimes lead us astray and, thus, we may need to cast aside certain elements of history. In the most extreme case, a person who had a memory of every moment would be condemned to see everything in broken parts, and would become lost in the stream of becoming. He or she would then become the “true pupil of Heraclitus” and lose his or her “plastic power.” It is, hence, impossible to live at all without forgetting and yet, as animals demonstrate, it is possible to survive without a developed memory. To sum up,

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²¹ Here, Nietzsche is referring to the historical sense, that is, the ability to learn from historical events.
both the unhistorical\textsuperscript{22} and the historical elements are equally necessary "for the health of
an individual, people and an individual nation."

Confucius’s method of learning from the accumulated wisdom of the past is similar
to Nietzsche’s. He says: “Reviewing the old as a means of getting to know the
new—such a person can be worthy of being a teacher” (A 2.11). Confucius revitalizes
the \textit{zhouli}, a system of ritual propriety, with new elements such as \textit{ren}, \textit{yi} and
\textit{xin}. \textit{Confucius’s modification and reconstruction of his tradition can be considered a
subtle way of giving up something old}. On the one hand, both philosophers suggest one
should be a historical person, that is, one should learn from history. On the other hand,
one has to possess the “unhistorical” sense and reflect on what one has learned. After
that, one can become a “creator.”

For both philosophers, a glance into history drives us on to the future, and gives us
courage to go on living. It kindles in us the hope that justice will descend upon us and
that happiness is waiting only on the other side of the mountain we are ascending (\textit{HL 1}).
Only from the course of this historical \textit{process} “can [one] learn to understand the present
and to desire the future more vehemently.” However, it is important to note that only
when the study of history is directed by a higher purpose—that is, in the service of
life—can it be useful for the future. On the other hand, if life is under the shadow of an
excess of history, it will crumble and degenerate, and this degeneration will lead to the
ultimate degradation of history itself.

\textsuperscript{22} That is, “the power, the art, of \textit{forgetfulness} and of drawing a limited horizon round oneself” (\textit{HL 10}).
For both Nietzsche and Confucius, learning from history is not merely attaining knowledge, but is the first step in self-cultivation. Throughout the *Analects*, Confucius shows great respect for traditional heritage, the *Shijing*, the *Shujing*, the *zhouli*, and music. Nietzsche presents a philosophical discourse on history: one has to rely on history for a connection with the past, yet an excess of history limits the growth and the nourishment of a person. For both philosophers, one has to live historically and unhistorically at the same time. In other words, one has to make use of history in an appropriate way.

### 1.1.2 Antiquarian History

Nietzsche points out that there are three kinds of history:

`History belongs to the human beings in three respects: it belongs to them in so far as they are active and striving, so far as they preserve and admire, and so far as they suffer and are in need of liberation. To this triplicity of relations correspond three kinds of history: so far as they can be distinguished, a *monumental*, an *antiquarian* and a *critical* kind of history (*HL* 2).`

Nietzsche is saying that a historical person should have the quality of becoming three different kinds of historian. He or she should become a different type of "historian" according to different needs, that is, he or she should make use of history in the appropriate way.

Examples of Nietzsche's antiquarian history include his reconstructions and

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23 Note that in *HL*, monumental history is the first to be discussed, antiquarian history is the second, and critical is the last. I start with antiquarian history because it is about learning from the past, then go to critical history, which is a reflection of whatever learned, and finally, monumental history, that is, the foundation of one's own history.
interpretations of the thoughts and values of ancient Greeks and the Renaissance\textsuperscript{24} (HL 3). Antiquarian history is essential for those “who preserve and revere—to them who look back to whence they came, to where they came into being, with love and loyalty; with this piety they, as it were, give thanks for their own existence.” Antiquarian history pertains to those who preserve and venerate their roots and origins. This explains why people tend to take up the history of their city as the history of themselves. It also explains why the ancestral household takes on a special meaning, since even the smallest antiquated thing “obtain[s] its own dignity and sanctity when the preserving and venerating soul of the antiquarian human beings take up residence in it and make itself a comfortable nest.” When antiquarian history is applied appropriately, it can foster a healthy localism that guards against dangerous impulse to adventures for mere novelty.

An equivalent to Nietzsche’s usage of antiquarian history can be found in the attention Confucius places on the ritual of ancestral and funerary services. For Confucius, the offering of sacrifice to the spirits of one’s ancestors is more important as a demonstration of respect for and historical continuity with one’s ancestors than the actual worship of the dead or their spirits. Confucius’s attitude towards sacrifice is that one must sacrifice to the spirits “as though the spirits are present,” and one has to participate in the sacrificial offerings, or it is as though one has not sacrificed at all (A 3.12). Confucius admits that he does not know whether the ancestor spirits are present or not, yet his advice is to keep our distance from the gods and spirits of the dead while showing them reverence (A 6.22). Zengzi, a disciple of Confucius, elaborates on this point when

\textsuperscript{24} For instance, Jacob Burckhardt, \textit{Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien} (HL 3). Nietzsche refers to Humanism in 13\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} century.
he says, “Be circumspect in funerary services and continue to offer sacrifices to ancestors long since gone and the common people can be trusted to behave with fullness towards their ancestors” (A 1.9). Confucius’s emphasis on attending funeral services and presenting sacrifices to the ancestors is for the purpose of providing a sense of belonging and historical continuity similar to the antiquarian sense proposed by Nietzsche.

Nevertheless, there is a slight difference between Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s attitude towards antiquarian history: the former is a concession to the past and the latter is a reliance on the past. Nietzsche accepts the undeniable influences of the past on the present and he makes good use of history for future developments, whereas Confucius shows great respect for traditional heritage. For both thinkers, we are sheltered against the terror of death by the antiquarian sense: “There were ancestors before us and there will be posterity after us” (HL 3). “Here we lived,” we can say to ourselves, “here we are living and here we shall live, for we are tough and not to be ruined overnight.” We have been here for years and “thus with the aid of this ‘we,’ we can look beyond our own individual transitory existence and feel to be the spirit of our house, our race, our city.” Only with the comfort of antiquarian history can we be rescued from feeling homeless and for doubting all concepts and customs we come across (HL 7).

Many of Confucius’s self-descriptions in the Analects reflect that he cherishes the experiences of the ancients. He says, “I transmit but do not innovate (bu zuo 不作); I am truthful in what I say and am devoted to antiquity” (A 7.1) and “I am not the kind of person who gains knowledge (zhi 知) through some natural propensity for it. Rather, loving antiquity, I am earnest in seeking it out” (A 7.20). The term, zuo 作, in the first
passage, is associated with "inventiveness" throughout the early corpus. The second passage shows that, in order to gain knowledge and wisdom, even Confucius has to study and learn from the past and from others.\textsuperscript{25} As a result, Confucius's description of himself can be regarded as an expression of modesty.\textsuperscript{26}

Since learning (\textit{xue} 学) represents one of the essential features in the process of human becoming, it is natural to ask from whom Confucius learned. Zigong, one of his disciples, characterizes Confucius's position:

\begin{quote}
The way (\textit{dao} 道) of Kings Wen and Wu has not fallen by the wayside—it lives in the people. Those of superior character have grasped what is superior, while those of lesser quality have grasped what is inferior. Everyone has something of Wen and Wu's way in them. Who then does Confucius not learn from? Again, how could he have a constant teacher? (A 19.22)
\end{quote}

From Zigong's words, we can see that Confucius finds a kind of special relation with and derives a homely comfort from the people. This recalls Nietzsche's antiquarian sense (this is our tradition, this is where we come from, and this is our root and origin) and is important because it suggests that we can be secured with a relationship to the past generations. King Wen and Wu, who are founders of the Zhou dynasty and are commonly looked upon as models of the \textit{renzhe} 仁者 and the \textit{junzi} 君子, can be taken as Nietzsche's monumental figures. In Nietzsche's words, they "implant[ed] a new habit, a new instinct" onto their "inherited, innate nature and knowledge" (\textit{HL} 3). Monumental figures influence and contribute to tradition, civilization and humanity as a whole. This

\textsuperscript{25} For instance, Confucius says that he was once lost in his thoughts and went a whole day without eating and a whole night without sleeping. He admits that he got nothing out of it, and would have done better devoting the time to learning and studying (A 15.31).

\textsuperscript{26} The humility of Confucius is further illustrated in A 5.9, 7.34. There is only one occasion on which he claims that he is better than others—there will not be anyone comparable to his \textit{haoxue} (eagerness to learn) even in a town of ten households (A 5.28).
is the reason why Zigong says that every person has something of Kings Wen and Wu because everyone inherits certain aspects of his or her tradition. More than once, Confucius admits that his knowledge is gained from observing others by following what is good in what he has heard and seen, and from reflecting on and correcting the bad points of the others in himself (A 2.18, 7.22, 7.28). This strategy is exemplified by Yan Hui, who improves himself by seeking the advice of those who are not as capable or as talented as he is (A 8.5).27 What Kings Wen and Wu propose is monumental, a new discipline, but their contributions diffuse into the tradition and influence generations after them. Nietzsche states that “the first nature also was, at some time or other, a second nature and that every victorious second nature becomes a first” (HL 3). Confucius’s contribution to the tradition is similar to that of King Wen and Wu: he reconstructs and revitalizes the culture of Zhou, and he influences every Chinese after him.

Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, admires the past generations from a different perspective, “Achieving harmony (he 和) is the most valuable function of observing ritual propriety (li 禮). In the ways of the Former Kings, this achievement of harmony was splendid, and was a guiding standard in all things large and small” (A 1.12). This is similar to Nietzsche’s appreciation of the Italians of the Renaissance and the work of Erwin von Steinbach28: the poets of the former reawake the ancient Italic genius to a “wondrous reverberation of the ancient lyre,” says Jakob Burckhardt and the latter “exerts its influence out of a strong robust German soul” (HL 3). The fruits of antiquarian history—harmony of the former Kings for the Chinese, the effects of Erwin

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27 According to traditional commentaries, the friend mentioned by Zengzi refers to Yan Hui.
28 The work was recognized by Goethe himself as representative of the German work of art (HL 3).
von Steinbach’s monumental work on Goethe for the Germans, and the effects of the Renaissance for the Italians—provide a tradition that joins the people of a common culture together. Both Confucius and Nietzsche express excitement in reviewing these historical events. When Confucius encounters the Zhou dynasty, he exclaims, “The Zhou is resplendent in culture, having before it the example of the two previous dynasties [the Xia and Shang]. I am for the Zhou” (A 3.14). Both Nietzsche and Confucius are excited to discover the antiquarian sense in their cultures.

Antiquarian history serves life to the fullest when it guards against the dangerous impulse to adventures for mere novelty. The reason that antiquarian history is valuable to the young or the immature is that living one’s life according to the wisdom of one’s ancestors is likely to keep one from making the mistakes that got the ancestors their hard-earned wisdom. In some cases, it is a “salutary” ignorance to further the interests of the community because there could be dreadful consequences from their desire for rebellion. Passage 1.11 in the Analects is sometimes criticized as over-conservative, but my interpretation is that Confucius wants to point out a similar danger, the danger of rebellion, to his disciples. He says, “Observe what one intends to do when one’s father is still alive, and then observe one’s actions when one’s father is dead. If one does not diverge from one’s father’s way (dao 道) for three years, one can be called filial (xiao 孝)” (A 1.11). The emphasis here is not on absolute obedience to the ways of the deceased father; rather, one needs time to reflect on the family tradition and plans for the future. Also, since decisions made in the mourning period may not be the best, Confucius wants one to avoid making important decisions hastily. It takes some time
for one to recover from mourning. There is always a potential danger for rebellion, especially when it seizes the entire population of a community or a nation, or when the rebellion leads to the destruction of its own origins, a community goes into an endless quest for new values and ideas.

Nietzsche again uses the metaphor of the roots of a tree to explain the relationship between antiquarian history and life. He says, “The contentment of the tree with its roots, the happiness of knowing oneself is not to be wholly accidental and arbitrary, but rather as growing out of a past as its heir, flower and fruit, and so to be exculpated, even justified, in one’s existence” (HL 3). This is what Nietzsche designates as the real sense of antiquarian history. However, if one fails to draw a limit on antiquarian history, or if the historical sense mummifies life instead of conserving it, Nietzsche’s metaphorical tree “gradually dies unnaturally from the top downwards to the roots— and in the end the roots themselves usually perish too.” Antiquarian history itself begins to decay when it is no longer inspired and supported by the new and fresh life of the present. In that case, old habits stagnate in a closed system, and self-reflection and creativity will completely be abandoned. This is why Nietzsche points out that history should only be used to the extent that it serves life.

According to Nietzsche, even if the degeneration of the foundation of antiquarian history does not take place, when antiquarian history overpowers the other two kinds of history, the monumental and the critical, then it becomes dangerous rather than beneficial.

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29 Confucius points out that the junzi during the mourning period find no relish in good food, no pleasure in good music, and no comfort in their own homes (A 17.21).
to life. He explains as follows, “For antiquarian history only knows how to preserve life, not how to engender it, it always undervalues that which is becoming because it has no instinct for divining it—as monumental history has” (*HL* 3). In this case, people would believe that all antiquity (ancient customs of the ancestors, funeral rituals, religion beliefs) is intrinsically valuable simply because of its age. If antiquity involves piety and reverence on the part of the individual and of generations consisting of individuals, then it seems arrogant to replace such an ancient practice with something novel. However, antiquarian history, no matter how great it is, is merely a human creation, and human knowledge is bound to have its limitations. Hence, antiquarian history should never become dogma.

The *Analects* shows that Confucius is also aware of this potential danger in the use of *zhouli* 周禮, which can be seen as equivalent to antiquarian history. In Confucius’s time, the *zhouli*, which was constructed by the Duke of Zhou in early Zhou dynasty, was not generally observed and even those who observed *zhouli* did not do so out of piety. For instance, the focus of those who performed sacrifices was mainly on the external forms or rituals. Such people were merely “*li*-performers”: in some cases, the offering of sacrifice to ancestors or spirits became a kind of ostentatious performance (*A* 3.1, 3.2, 3.6). The original purpose of the ancestral and funeral practices was to provide a historical linkage and an emotional support for the participants. But the primeval aspects—that is, the self-reflection and creativity of *zhouli*—were almost totally lost in Confucius’s time. Performing the external rituals of the customs is not good enough because one has to understand the underlying meaning of such forms. Confucius elaborates on this point and he says, “In referring time and again to the observance of *li*,
how could I be simply talking about gifts of jade and silk? And, in referring time and again to the performance of music, how could I be simply talking about bells and drums?” (A 17.11) Confucius is criticizing the attitude of the “li-performers.” They simply focus on the external rituals of li and music such as what kind of silk should be used or how many times a bell should be rung for the ancestral offerings. They neglect the real reason in attending ancestral sacrifices, that is, to respect and to remember their linkages with their ancestors. This example illustrates the failure of Nietzsche’s antiquarian history: the li-performers have the belief that all antiquity becomes valuable, yet the fact that the external rituals of the zhouli have grown old does not necessarily demand that they become substantial or valuable.

A further illustration of the way that Confucius appropriates li for his own use can be found in A 9.3:

The use of a hemp cap is prescribed in the observance of ritual practice. Nowadays, the use of a silk cap in its place is a matter of frugality. I would follow the majority in practice on this. A subject kowtowing on entering the hall is prescribed in their observance of ritual practice. Nowadays one kowtows only after ascending the hall. This is presumptuous. Although it goes contrary to accepted practice, I still kowtow on entering the hall (A 9.3).

The basis of traditional rituals (that is, the emotions of the ritual performers) and the external forms of the rituals are inseparable for Confucius. The most important aspect for the observance of li is personalization: one observes li because one wants to do so. Confucius demands one to observe li with honesty and sincerity, and this is the reason Confucius says that unless one participates in person in the sacrifice, it is as though one has not sacrificed at all (A 3.12). Confucius gives further elaboration: “With li, it is better to err on the side of frugality than on the side of extravagance and in mourning, it
is better to err on the side of grief than on the side of indifference” (A 3.4). Confucius’s belief that honesty and sincerity are the most important concerns in observing li is further illustrated by his response to Zaiwo’s proposal to change the three-year mourning period to one-year. Confucius points out that during the mourning period the junzi find no relish in good food, no pleasure in good music, and no comfort in their own homes, but if Zaiwo is able to enjoy them, he should do so by all means (A 17.21). Confucius explains that a child is nursed by his or her parents until he or she is three and this is the reason for one to go through a three-year mourning period when one’s parents are dead. Confucius points out that Zaiwo is unfeeling since he was given three years’ love by his parents and yet he does not return this love through mourning. However, even if Zaiwo followed the three-year mourning period simply to avoid criticism from others, Confucius would not appreciate him. The external forms of rituals and the emotions of the ritual performer are inseparable for Confucius.

Nietzsche makes a similar criticism of the German contradiction between form and content. Nietzsche suggests that form plays the role of a convention, as a vestment and disguise. It is therefore, if not disliked, at any rate, not loved. The German people of his time “ran away from the school of ‘convention’” and “they let themselves go as and where it pleased them” (HL 4). Nietzsche condemns the teaching of history at his time because it “has transformed people almost into mere abstracts and shadows” (HL 5). Confucius might apply this same condemnation to those who “perform” the external rituals of the zhouli and traditional music without ren (A 3.3). Form and content should be taken as a whole.
For both Nietzsche and Confucius, traditions and history should be employed in such a way as to make people remain truthful towards themselves and others in both word and deed. Nietzsche points out that we "should above all learn to live and employ history only in the service to the life we have learned to live" (HL 10) and that history should "encourage people to be honest—even if only honest fools" (HL 5). It is only through such truthfulness that the distress, the inner misery of human beings will come to light, and that in place of the anxious concealment. In short, historical culture should have effects "in the realm of action, of so-called life," instead of merely in the form of thinking, writing, publishing, or metaphysical philosophy.

The employment of antiquarian history is bound to have its limitations. First, human experience cannot hope to be devoid of mistakes and errors. According to Nietzsche, truth is merely "a movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding" (PT 4.1). Secondly, it is always difficult to view past events in their true perspective or accord them accurate evaluation. In other words, the past can be perceived in a wrong way. Thirdly, perspectives do change with time and when an individual or a nation looks back to the past, inevitable errors of historical judgment can harden into destructive misperceptions (HL 6). When "the spring of piety" or creative respect dries up, antiquarian history becomes empty and indiscriminate in practice (HL 3).

Nietzsche again uses the metaphor of the tree to illustrate the danger of antiquarian
The tree feels its roots more than it can see them; this feeling, however, measures their size by the size and strength of its visible branches. The tree may already be in error here: but how much greater will its error be in relation to the whole forest which surrounds it of which it only knows and feels anything so far as it is hindered or helped by it—but nothing beyond that (*HL* 3).

A misuse of antiquarian history can lead to a lack of “discrimination of value and a tendency to accept everything in the past as valuable” (*HL* 3), which leads to a world in which every new and evolving thing is rejected and persecuted. Similarly, Confucius argues that a blind imitation of the past cannot solve all our problems. For instance, even though achieving harmony is valued as the way of the Former Kings, yet Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, says, “To realize harmony (*he* 和) just for its own sake without regulating the situation through observing *li* will not work,” says (*A 1.12*). For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the healthy approach is to critically review the great values of the past with a backward glance to the antiquarian nation or individual. The use of antiquarian history is important, but has to be limited if there is to be a continuing cultivation of the person or the culture.

### 1.1.3 Critical History

According to Nietzsche, critical history is necessary to overcome the drawbacks of antiquarian history. It is the time to reflect on what one has learned, which can be taken as an immediate step for the creations of monumental history in the future. Thus, critical history should be considered an intermediate stage. Nietzsche explains the

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30 It is important to note that Nietzsche is adopting a post-Kantian meaning of “critical,” which can be readily compared to similar notions in a non-Western context.
requirement of critical history as follows:

Do not believe any history that does not spring from the mind of a rare spirit... The fine historian must have the power of coining the known into a thing never heard before and proclaiming the universal so simply and profoundly that the simple is lost in the profound, and the profound in the simple. No one can be a great historian and artist, and a shallow pate at the same time (HL 6).

In order to maintain a healthy and flourishing life, we have to possess the strength to give up part of the past. Nietzsche’s critical history demands that one reflects on what one has learned, selects what is beneficial, and opens up a space for new creation. The critical mode is always lonely and frustrating. Being the critical historian, one has to rely solely on oneself. Nietzsche wants one to step aside from traditional truths and he teaches one to “flee away and remain concealed.” One has to choose solitude because only “the free, wanton, easy solitude gives you a right to remain in some sense good” (BGE 25). Such loneliness is similar to Goethe’s advice the readers of Werther: “Be an individual person and do not follow me!” (HL 8) Christianity and traditional morality are examples of a past that needs to be critically examined. A critical historian “must have the strength, and exercise from time to time, to break up and dissolve parts of the past.”

Because of the ever-present abuse of power and human weakness in the past, Nietzsche points out that any past could be worth condemning. One has to reflect on the experiences and ideas of past generations and become the judge of oneself: to condemn what is deserving of condemnation and to retain what is worthy of being retained and valued. This can be considered both a backward- and a forward-looking process.

Confucius describes this task in his own language: “One is worthy of being a teacher

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31 Here, the term “good” is used in a positive way, perhaps referring to the well-being of life.
who gets to know what is new by keeping fresh in one's mind what one is already familiar with” (A 2.11). Confucius looks back with longing to the harmonious period of the early Zhou dynasty when the system of ritual propriety (zhouli 周禮) was widely accepted. Although Confucius declares that he wants to restore the culture of the Zhou with the restoration of li 禮 that originated with the former dynasties (A 2.23, 3.14, 7.5, 15.11), he proposes a new dimension for traditional zhouli (A 3.4, 4.13, 9.3). Confucius suggests a revitalization of the old system of li, and his greatest contribution to the revitalization of the zhouli is his advocacy of relating li to notions of value such as ren 仁, yi 義 or de 德。According to Confucius, those who merely learn from others (xue 學) without thinking or reflecting (si 思) will be bewildered and those who think without learning from others will be imperiled (A 2.15). In other words, learning and reflecting are mutually enhancing for Confucius and his method is re-consideration, re-appropriation and re-examination of the old as a means to the creation of the new.

A superficial reading of passages on li would suggest that, in some places, Confucius appears to focus himself on the internalization of li, while in other places, he shows his concern for the external forms of li. When reading the Analects, it is important to remember that it is a collection of everyday conversations between Confucius and his disciples. Confucius's words have to be understood in the context in which they are used for solving specific problems in specific situations. Confucius tends to speak from different standpoints on different occasions concerning li because he

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33 This is the best illustration of the life of Confucius: "One is worthy of being a teacher who gets to know what is new by keeping fresh in one's mind what one is already familiar with." A teacher is highly regarded throughout the Chinese tradition and Confucius himself was a well-known teacher of three thousand students.

34 A 3.3, 3.4, 3.12, 3.26, 4.13, 7.36, 11.1, 11.8, 15.42, 17.11.

35 A 2.5, 2.8, 3.15, 3.17, 3.18, 9.10.
is talking about different issues. For instance, some of the passages are about those who
do not observe li (A 3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6), while some point out the reasons why Confucius
wants to retain li (A 3.17, 9.3), and still others criticize those who observe li without
understanding the underlying rationale (A 3.3, 3.4, 4.13). After Confucius’s
revitalization of the zhouli, there is no separation of the internal and the external.
Confucius expects that those who act according to li are doing so because they want to.
Honesty and sincerity are important in becoming the disciples of Confucius.

The changes and modifications Confucius proposes to traditional zhouli already
reflect his critical dimension. In addition, learning (which is similar to Nietzsche’s
antiquarian mode) and reflection (which is similar to Nietzsche’s critical mode) are
mutually enhancing for Confucius. He says, “Learning (xue 學) without reflection (si
思) leads to perplexity; reflection without learning gives rise to peril” (A 2.15).
Reflection (si), for Confucius, already involves choosing, selecting, and criticizing what
is appropriate and what is not. Confucius teaches one to improve oneself by reflection
and he says, “When you meet people better than yourself, turn your thoughts (si) to
becoming their equal. When you meet people not as good as yourself, look within and
examine your own self” (A 4.17). The Confucian notion of reflection (si) includes the
reconsideration of what has been learned and the selection of appropriate action and it
includes almost every aspect of being a person, from how to use the senses to how to
seek advice (A 16.10). Confucius’s notion of reflection is similar to Nietzsche’s
critical attitude: one should reflect on what one has learned, select what is beneficial,
and open up a space for new creations. Self-reflection, self-preference,
self-determination, self-persistence and self-resolution are essential characteristics for
Nietzsche’s critical historian and Confucius’s junzi 君子.

By following Confucius’s words in A 4.17 and 16.10, one would become the Nietzschean critical historians. According to Nietzsche, self-cultivation is a function of one’s own personal effort. He says: “No one can construct for you the bridge tailor-made for you to cross the stream of life, no one but you yourself” (SE 1). Hence, self-effort is the major driving force for enhancing life. Confucius’s point is similar to Nietzsche’s. He says: “The practice of ren depends on oneself alone and not on others” (A 12.1) and “How could ren be at all remote? No sooner do I seek it than it is here with me” (A 7.30). Being a disciple of Nietzsche or Confucius, one has to undertake the lonely path of self-cultivation.

For both philosophers, there is no ultimate answer, final destination or everlasting truth; rather, they suggest that each person become his or her own creator. This challenge is, however, more individualistic for Nietzsche and more communal for Confucius. Human beings can never have pure, perfect knowledge; all we can do is to keep on modifying and “improving” our understanding of life. From time to time, Zarathustra tells his disciples to turn away from him, because first, he may be wrong, and secondly, he wants his disciples to look for their own ways. In the Chinese tradition, a teacher is a highly respected person, yet Confucius’s advice is that one should not listen unquestioningly to what one is taught. Confucius says, “In striving to be ren, do not yield even to your teacher” (A 15.36). One cannot succeed by simply replicating the ways of one’s teachers; one must instead look for one’s own way.
According to Nietzsche, becoming the critical historian can be dangerous, like "taking the knife to the roots of the tree, cruelly trampling over every kind of piety" (HL 3). A common misreading of Nietzsche is that he rejects everything in tradition, but a more careful reading shows that he wants a balance between the "unhistorical" and historical. In Nietzsche's overlooked book, On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life, he clearly points out that a severe break with the past can be disastrous. A destruction of the past is "always a dangerous attempt, because it is so difficult to find the borderline in negating the past, and because second natures are mostly weaker than the first ones." Because human knowledge can never be pure or perfect, our destructions and negations of the past might involve mistakes and errors. A sad and dramatic example illustrating the failure of critical history is the 10-year Cultural Revolution in China (1966-76): everything that came down from the past was looked upon as poisonous and negative. The younger generation in the Cultural Revolution was lost, since values, meanings and purposes of life shifted so rapidly throughout those years. As a result, millions of people suffered from this abrupt separation from their culture.

Nietzsche's critical history demands that one reflect on what one has learned, retain what is worth retaining and dismiss what deserves to be discarded. Confucius's revitalization of li calls one to reflect on traditional zhouli by relating li to notions of human values like ren and yi. Confucius's method, which one gets to know something new by keeping fresh in mind what one is already familiar with, is similar to Nietzsche's critical history. For both philosophers, one has to rely on oneself throughout the reflection process. There is always a potential danger of making the wrong decision, yet critical history is an essential part of Nietzsche's and Confucius's self-cultivation.
1.1.4 Monumental History

Monumental history is formed by the great moments for which the monumental figures have to struggle. This monumental chain, which unites human beings through the ages like a mountain range with the monumental figures as its peaks, provides Nietzsche with his fundamental faith in humanity (HL 2). Nietzsche names monumental figures as cultural exemplars or would-be cultural exemplars. The goal of the Nietzschean monumental figure is "happiness"—probably not his or her own happiness, but that of a nation or of humanity as a whole. Nietzsche discusses monumental history more on the theoretical level, whereas Confucius illustrates his ideas by using concrete examples of historical events and historical heroes. The monumental figures quoted by Confucius can be used as further explication and clarification of Nietzsche's ideas, and Nietzsche's writings can provide a more systematic structure with which to examine the historical heroes of the Analects.

In the Analects, Confucius says something similar when he says, "The renzhe 仁者 finds joy in mountains" (A 6.23) and mountains are taken as spiritual beacons of a shared identity. The junzi 君子 is like a torch, who provides directions to the common people. Confucius says, "Governing with excellence (de 德) can be compared to being the Pole Star: the Pole Star remains in its place, and the multitude of stars pay it homage" (A 2.1) and "The excellence (de) of the exemplary person is like the wind, while that of the petty person is like the grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and the grass is sure to bend" (A 12.19). Monumental figures are guiding stars for the people of their time as well as
for future generations. Without this chain of great heroes, the people of the present will not have a solid historical basis.

For Confucius, the supreme model of monumental figure is the sage (shengren 聖人). The category of sage ranks the highest in the process of human becoming because it denotes the culmination of the whole process of achievement at its most comprehensive level. Being a sage, however, is a stage even Yao or Shun (two of the most respectable ancient kings) would find taxing (A 6.30). The other categories, such as renzhe or junzi, can be differentiated inasmuch as each of them represents a distinctive focus or emphasis contributing to the achievement of sagehood. Becoming a sage means that one's individual goals are fused with those of a nation or of humanity, and great persons constantly give up selfishness and work for the community or humanity as a whole.

Monumental heroes pay little attention to their own materialistic well-being, and find joy in their contributions to humanity. Confucius describes the everyday life of King Yu, one of the most respected ancient kings, as follows:

He ate and drank the meanest fare while making offerings to ancestral spirits and gods with the utmost devotion proper to a descendant. He wore coarse clothes while sparing no effort to enhance the splendor of his robes and caps on sacrificial occasions. He lived in lowly dwellings while devoting all his energy to the building of irrigation canals (A 8.21).

King Yu does not pay much attention to his personal rewards and comforts, but devotes himself in working for the well-being of the community. For the most part, these

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36 The indistinctness that obstructs an analysis of the renzhe and the junzi as separate categories can be accounted for by the fact that they are not only correlated, but at times even coextensive.

37 According to historical records, people suffered from the flooding of the Yellow River, and King Yu was the first one to begin the construction of irrigation canals along the Yellow River.
exemplars expect no material rewards beyond (as Nietzsche points out) the bolstering of their reputations. For instance, the favorite disciple of Confucius, Yan Hui, lived in hard circumstances that most people would find unbearable (in a mean dwelling, consuming only plain rice and water), yet he enjoyed the life he had. The everyday life of Confucius is very similar: “In the eating of coarse rice and the drinking of water, the using of one’s elbow for a pillow, joy is to be found” (A 7.16). The wishes of Confucius are similar to those of a sage, who would give generously to the people and bring peace to the multitude (A 6.30): “To bring peace to the old, to have trust in my friends, and to cherish the young” (A 5.26). Monumental figures share “the belief in the solidarity and continuity of the greatness of all ages and a protest against the passing away of generations and the transitoriness of things” (HL 2). They would win a name in history and become teachers or models for posterity.

Nietzsche argues that monumental figures “form a kind of bridge across the wild stream of becoming. These do not, as it were, continue a process but live in timeless simultaneity, thanks to history, which permits such co-operation…” (HL 9) Heroes call to the others across time and they indulge in a kind of noble dialogue. The task of history is to mediate among the monumental figures and to provide the occasion for and lend strength to the production of great persons. According to Nietzsche, the goal of humanity can only lie in “its noblest specimens.” Monumental history withstands the passage of time and interprets the past in terms of individuals who overcome the chaos of the historical process. Great persons give expansion and elaboration to the concept of “human being” by making it more beautiful. In other words, monumental figures contribute to human beings’ ongoing definition and redefinition of the self. Confucius
recognizes Guanzhong as a monumental figure because, without him, people in Confucius’s time would still be clad in a barbarous fashion (A 14.17).

However, for the majority, who are “timorous and short-lived,” the monumental sense does not come into existence. Most people want survival at any cost. They rarely seek to understand the long and difficult relay of monumental history in which greatness continues to exist. Confucius would probably agree with Nietzsche’s opinions on the common people (min 民), since he states in the Analects that “it is possible for the common people to be made to follow a policy, but it is not possible for them to be made to understand (zhi 知) it” (A 8.9). For Confucius, to understand is more than “knowing.” Understanding, zhi, implies the “realization of the way” (zhidao 知道), that is to say, one with zhi 知 fully understands dao 道 and acts accordingly. For the majority, staying alive is the major concern, and such people are either unaware of their capability of becoming monumental or afraid of the sufferings it would require.38

Yet again and again there are some awakened ones who gain strength through reflecting on past monumental greatness and are inspired by what the monumental heroes have done for them. “One thing will live,” Nietzsche says, “the monogram of their essential being, a work, an act, a piece of rare enlightenment or a creation: it will live because posterity cannot do without it” (HL 2). Monumental heroes also need models and teachers, but, in most cases, they cannot find any among their associates and

38 It is true that many of the monumental figures mentioned by Confucius suffered in their lifetime and did not die a natural death (A 16.12, 18.1, 18.8). Those who suffered under the wickedness of their king found invisible support and comfort from the experiences of Viscount Wei, Viscount Ji, Bigan, Boyi, and Shuqi. These figures lost their lives for the state, yet the common people sang their praises for them.
contemporaries. For the awakened ones of the present, the function of the monumental conception of the past is to enable them to learn from greatness of the past: if anything is shown to be possible once, it is more likely to be possible once again. Knowing that they are not desiring the impossible, they can more easily overcome the doubt and anxiety of weak moments or failures. Confucius himself could not find anywhere to put his ideas into practice after traveling abroad and visiting a number of states. From time to time, he was frustrated and disappointed (A 9.9, 9.13). Fortunately, Confucius looked back to historical figures such as Shiyu and Qu Boyu and he learned from what they did when dao fell into disuse in the state (A 15.7). Had dao prevailed in the state, Confucius would have been ready to offer his services. The dao, however, did not prevail in Confucius's time and this is the reason for his withdrawal from the government (A 7.11). Although monumental figures seem to be alone in their struggle, historically, their comrades were legion.

Like the other two kinds of history, an excessive reliance on monumental history is detrimental to the growth and health of a person. In order to highlight something exemplary, monumental history has a tendency to make legends out of individuals. Legends then tend to distort the historical truth behind these individuals. These distortions involve the overshadowing or alteration of antiquarian and critical history, which also contribute to the process of human becoming. In this case, the whole segment of history “is forgotten, despised, and flows away in an uninterrupted colorless flood, and only individual embellished facts rise out of it like islands, like the golden hip

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39 In A 9.9, Confucius laments the hopelessness of putting dao into practice in the Empire in his days and in 9.13, Confucius presents the eagerness of putting dao into practice.
which the pupils of Pythagoras supposed they saw on their master” (HL 2). Thus, although monumental history contributes to self-cultivation, it should not overshadow the other two kinds of history.

The ways in which Confucius makes use of historical heroes to illustrate monumental history show that he is aware of the idolization of any figure. In the Analects, when Confucius praises a certain person, he points out what that person did and the aspects for which he or she was worthy of being appreciated. By presenting the context of his monumental heroes, Confucius avoids the danger of making legends out of the individuals. By providing the particular circumstances of the monumental figures, Confucius avoids the overshadowing of antiquarian and critical history, and hence, paints a clearer historical picture of these individual heroes. For instance, Confucius points out that Taibo is a person of unsurpassed excellence (de 禮) because he repeatedly renounces his claim to the empire (A 8.1). Yao and Shun are majestic as they reign over the world but do not rule it (A 8.18). In addition, Zixia, one of Confucius’s disciples, elaborates Confucius’s words with an example: when Shun and Tang ruled the land, they selected Gaoyao and Yiyin respectively from the multitude and raised them to high position while the wicked were given a wide berth (A 12.22). Confucius clearly shows how one can learn from the monumental heroes by pointing out their particular actions.

Monumental figures cannot be taken as ideal models to be unquestioningly imitated; we have to put ourselves into their particular situations, grasp their thinking modes, and understand why they act in the ways they do. Confucius’s comments on Guanzhong, who has made progress towards the goal of becoming a full human being, give further
support to this point. On the one hand, Guanzhong is considered a renzhe as he enables Duke Huan to become the leader of the feudal lords without resorting to military force, and thereby unites and brings order to the empire in a peaceful way (A 14.16). People in Confucius’s time would not have become civilized without the contributions of Guanzhong (A 4.17). On the other hand, Guanzhong is criticized as lacking in capacity to understand ritual propriety (li 禮). According to Confucius, Guanzhong acted as if he was the ruler of the state in ritual propriety (A 3.22). The Confucian way of making use of monumental history (with an emphasis on the particular circumstances of a certain monumental event or person) can resolve some of the drawbacks of the monumental history that Nietzsche describes.

What Nietzsche and Confucius recommend is that one should not merely follow in the footsteps of the previous generations, no matter how grand or monumental they were. If one merely imitates their ways, one will simply become a rigid follower or an obedient, sheepish disciple. According to Nietzsche, the most valuable capacity is human creativity and if one is a “blind follower,” this magnificent ability will be overwhelmed. Nietzsche elaborates his ideas more clearly with an analogy to dancing. The best dancers, first, have to learn the basic steps. Secondly, they have to practice and acquire necessary technique. Finally, and most important of all, they have to be creative and original, so that they can become artists. Uniqueness, diversity, and beauty are qualities found in all great dancers (in fact, all artists). What Nietzsche looks for in his philosophy of life is similar to that which is looked for by dancers: first, one must learn

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40 For instance, the ruler of a state set up ornamental stone blinds before his gate and Guanzhong did the same; the ruler of a state had a stand for inverting drinking vessels, and he had the same (A 3.22).
from the experiences of the past generations, then one must reflect and criticize with “good taste,” and eventually, one must create one’s own elegant and beautiful life.

Different modes of history are like different kinds of soil. Whether a tree can grow healthily depends on whether or not it has the right type of soil and climate. Similarly, the growth of the person depends upon his or her historical context. Nietzsche elaborates on the failure with a distinctive metaphor:

Much mischief is caused through the thoughtless transplantation of these plants: the critic without need, the antiquary without piety, and the person who recognizes greatness but cannot do great things, are such plants estranged from their mother soil and are choked out by weeds (HL 2.).

One has to make use of all three types of history appropriately: according to different needs, one should become a certain kind of “historian”: for the cases to achieve something great, one should become monumental historians; when it is necessary to preserve the traditional and venerable, one should care for the past as antiquarian historians; if one is oppressed by some present misery and want to throw off the oppression, he or she has a need for criticism, for the evaluation of history (HL 2).

The fact that one inherits much from the earlier generations can never be denied, for one is “the outcome of their aberrations and passions and errors, and indeed of their crimes; it is not possible wholly to free oneself from this chain” (HL 3.). No matter how vigorously one tries to avoid and condemn these aberrations and regard oneself as free of them, it is impossible to change the fact that one originates from them. The best one can do is to confront one’s hereditary nature with one’s knowledge. Then, through a new, stern discipline, one can combat one’s inborn heritage and implant in oneself a new habit,
a new instinct, a second nature, so that one’s first nature withers away. Nevertheless, the struggle for a new discipline is always full of riddles and it oscillates backwards and forwards. In many cases, even good intentions lead to failure. One sometimes knows what is better for oneself but does what is worse. This is why it is relatively rare that a new discipline is successful. Nietzsche’s advice is that one should look ahead and set a great goal, and at the same time restrain the analytical impulse (because such an impulse would make the present into a desert, where growth and maturing is impossible). One should, rather, draw about oneself a great and comprehensive hope, a hope-filled striving (HL 6).

The formation of a new way cannot be considered a final destination. It is important to note that doing philosophy, for both Nietzsche and Confucius, is about “how to become a consummate human being.” Learning (from history and tradition) is the first step in the process of human becoming. Being the Confucian junzi or the Nietzschean camel is not like winning a medal; one does not possess a kind of status attained once and for all, in the sense that one can carry a glorious name for the rest of one’s life. Human life is an ongoing process: a new discipline will eventually become the first nature, which is already imbedded in the tradition, and become antiquarian history. As time goes by and circumstances change, critical history will be needed to make up for the limitations of antiquarian history. With adaptations, reconstruction, and even negations, there comes the formation of a new discipline, monumental history.41

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the commitment to learning is the first stage of

41 Nietzsche’s position is not a critique of historical context but implies such a notion.
the process of human becoming. Nietzsche's camel stage and Confucius's xue is an arduous process in which few people can persevere. For both philosophers, those who learn from history are considered to be making some process in self-cultivation. However, the usage of history should be limited to the degree that it serves life. One has to draw a horizon in making use of history because the health and growth of a person will be damaged by a misuse of or an excessive reliance on history.

Nietzsche points out that a historical person should integrate three types of history together and become different kinds of historian according to various needs. The purpose of antiquarian history is to preserve life: it reflects the wisdoms of the past generations. The drawback of antiquarian history is that when all antiquity becomes valuable, the development of life will be limited. Confucius's criticisms of the li-performers of his time can be taken as an example of the failure of antiquarian history. These people focus on the external rituals in the observance of li without piety. Li should be observed with honesty and sincerity. In order to resolve the drawbacks of antiquarian history, one should become the critical historian. For both philosophers, after being a humble student of tradition, one has to reflect on what one has learned so that one can retain what is worthy and dismiss what deserves to be discarded. One can be wrong throughout the critical process, but such errors arise due to the limitations of human knowledge. The third kind of history is monumental history, which unites human beings through the ages via monumental heroes. Only with the presence of this monumental chain can there be progress in humanity. Monumental heroes, the very few who are willing to undertake the great task, devote their lives to the community, the state, or culture. No matter how great a monumental figure is, one cannot simply imitate what
he or she did. The actions of monumental figures are not absolute Truth; rather, they are human creations. Thus, one has to make use of one’s creativity and look for one’s own way of living in the world. The growth and health of a person depend upon his or her historical context, that is, whether he or she can make use of history appropriately, according to different needs.

1.2 A Comparison of Nietzsche and Confucius with Heraclitus, an Important Source of Inspiration of Nietzsche

In this section, I compare Heraclitus’s teachings with those of Nietzsche and Confucius. Although Nietzsche criticizes almost every Western philosopher before him, he admits that his ideas are greatly influenced by Heraclitus. First, I present an overview of the ideas of Heraclitus and compare them to relevant ideas in Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s teachings. Second, I explore Heraclitus’s notion of the kosmos, and compare it with Nietzsche’s idea of the affirmation of this world and Confucius’s notion of tian. Third, I analyze the idea of the affirmation of becoming, where Nietzsche acknowledges his debt to Heraclitus, and offer a comparison with relevant ideas in Confucius’s philosophy. A comparison between Nietzsche and Heraclitus offers an illustration of how Nietzsche makes use of history and how he learns from the monumental figure, Heraclitus. Since it has been demonstrated that Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s ideas on history are complementary, a comparison between Heraclitus and Confucius will have identified Confucius’s point of view on the ideas which Nietzsche attributes to Heraclitus. If there is insight obtained from the comparison between the teachings of Heraclitus and of Confucius, then it can be used to build a bridge between Nietzsche and Confucius.
Nietzsche's interpretation of Heraclitus is based upon his ideas regarding the appropriate use of history. Heraclitus only leaves us his purposefully disjointed passages or fragments, and Nietzsche's understanding of Heraclitus may have certain deviations from Heraclitus's actual thinking. Nietzsche first learns from Heraclitus, then reflects on the fragments, and eventually adds new elements to these fragments and creates his own philosophy. Confucius's re-appropriation and revitalization of the Duke of Zhou's zhouli 周禮 are similar to Nietzsche's interpretations and reconstructions of the teachings of Heraclitus. Confucius takes the Da-zhuen of the I-ching as the ground of his thinking and his comprehension of the teachings of the Duke of Zhou diverge from the latter's original ideas. The Duke of Zhou does not leave us any texts and the Book of Rites (Lijing) now available is the revised version by Confucius. Nietzsche and Confucius hence can be considered practitioners of their own understandings of history. Heraclitus and the Duke of Zhou are, nevertheless, important sources of inspiration for Nietzsche's and Confucius's camel stages respectively.

As a professor of classical philology, Nietzsche spent a lot of time reading and mastering Western philosophy. Not surprisingly, his camel stage starts with the Presocratics, for whom he shows great admiration. He says, "For they [the Presocratics] discovered the typical philosopher's genius, and inventions of subsequent philosophers added nothing essential to it" (PG 1). The reason for his narration of these philosophers is that they are great human beings.

Instead of attempting to prove or disprove the theories of a philosopher, Nietzsche
evaluates each school in terms of its strength and beauty: whether it is made possible by a superabundance or a poverty of life force, and whether the teachings of the philosopher affirm or negate life in this world. For Nietzsche, a philosopher is an expression of the soil that gives him or her life, and the person who retraces the philosopher's thoughts must not do so by way of abstract or general concepts. Nietzsche asserts, "The life of the philosopher will not become mendacious" (PT 193). The particular life and thoughts of a philosopher should not be abridged as in a handbook, since this would simply transform the philosopher into an apparition. With the assistance of his own expressive and animated metaphors, Nietzsche brings the philosopher's personality to life again.

Nietzsche points out that “early Greek philosophy is the philosophy of statesmen” (PT 193). According to Tejera, Nietzsche means a statesman of ideas who “has reference to the fact that a person-of-knowledge (sophos) in the sixth century B.C. was a person of practical involvement... [He or she] is likely to have been an inventor, or master navigator, as a legislator or founder of a colony.”¹⁴² These early thinkers are a “homogenous company” (PG 2) of inspiring “self-liberators” and this distinguishes the “Presocratics” from the “Postsocratics” (PT 194). This premise has to be taken together with the claims that earlier Greek philosophy “is inspired by art,” instead of by “the negation of the other life” which “lacks the detestable pretension to happiness.” Nietzsche admires ancient Greek culture because it “pictured life in a richer and more complex way” (PT 193) and faced nature and life in a noble manner (BGE 49).

Nietzsche’s idea of culture as “harmonious manifoldness or unity in diversity” stems from his appreciation of Goethe (PT 23). According to Nietzsche, “Culture is not an artificial organic unity imposed by external constraints or ascetic self-denial, but an organic unity cultivated on the very soil of discord and difference” (PT 23). He wants culture to be an animation of living, thinking, seeming and willing, which explains why he wants to bring back the Greek concept of culture, which represents “a new and improved physis, without inner and outer, without dissimulation and convention” (HL 10). Nietzsche is disappointed by his own culture since it lacks a royal or splendid hermit of the spirit such as “a Heraclitus, a Plato, or an Empedocles” (BGE 204). Thus, the task of Nietzsche’s writing is “to find out how life, philosophy, and art can have a more profound and congenial relationship with each other in such a way that philosophy will not be superficial” (PT 193).

In Nietzsche’s eyes, no one has as much grace as Heraclitus. In Nietzsche’s first book, The Birth of Tragedy, he already relates his idea of the Dionysian to the teaching of the great Heraclitus of Ephesus (BT 19). What Nietzsche calls Dionysian, the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet, is “saying yes to life even in its most strange and intractable problems, the will to life, celebrating its own inexhaustibility by sacrificing its highest types” (TI 10.5). In his autobiography, Ecce Homo, when Nietzsche comments on his first book, he reconfirms that his philosophy is closer to Heraclitus’s than any other philosopher (EH, “BT” 3).

In addition, Nietzsche acknowledges his debt to Heraclitus for four important ideas of his own (EH, “BT” 3):
1. The affirmation of passing away and destroying, which is the decisive feature of Dionysian philosophy.

2. The saying of Yes to opposition and war

3. The idea of becoming, along with a radical repudiation of the very concept of being.

4. The doctrine of "eternal recurrence," that is, of the unconditional and infinitely repeated circular [cyclical] course of all things—this doctrine of Zarathustra might in the end have been taught already by Heraclitus. The Stoics have traces of it, and the Stoics inherited almost all of their principal notions from Heraclitus.

Besides these four doctrines, there are other reasons to conclude that Heraclitus is an important source of inspiration for Nietzsche. Nietzsche appreciates the poetic style of Heraclitus and Nietzsche's philosophy is an interpretation of the cosmogony Heraclitus might have produced, on the basis of sensory perceptions expressed in Heraclitus's rhythmic aphorisms. For Nietzsche, "All creditability, all good conscience, all evidence of truth comes only from the senses" (BGE 134), and his appreciation of Heraclitus comes from the latter's perspective that human experience is the foundation of cosmology.

1.2.1 A General Comparison of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius

In Nietzsche's early camel stage, he also shows his admiration of Schopenhauer in the assertion that "struggle" is the father of all things. He is then aware that the latter's idealist version sought to be "a proof of the internal self-dissociation of the Will-to-Live" pessimistically understood, which is completely different from the Heraclitean assertion of the struggle. Heraclitus's notion of struggle is a dramatic generalization of a will-to-live, which is the highest expression of the achievement of human self-knowledge. Although the cosmos of Nietzsche's Heraclitus is a game played by Zeus, there is a certain "law" in the "game of becoming" just as there is play in the prevalence of necessity. And if, because of this, knowledge is achievable by those who struggle to apprehend the pattern, then Schopenhauernian pessimism is not Nietzsche's way.

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In this section, I give an overview of Heraclitus's teachings, with special attention to the ideas on which Nietzsche bases his philosophy, and offer a comparison with relevant ideas in Nietzsche's and Confucius's respective teachings. I start with a comparison of their writing styles, which reflect their worldviews. Next, I explore their systems of epistemology. For the three philosophers, there is no Absolute Truth in the human world, and their understandings of the world are derived from their personal experience.

According to Charles H. Kahn, for Heraclitus, philosophy is not about the nature of things, but about the beauty of life and human beings in the world. For Nietzsche and Confucius, the task of philosophy is mainly human becoming, that is, becoming a consummate human being. For instance, with the Heraclitean logos and the Confucian tian, we can perceive the hidden harmony that unifies everything within the kosmos, including the human world.

The Heraclitean and Confucian teachings are presented in a metaphorical style which already reflects their worldviews: they perceive human life and the world as rich, diverse, and beautiful. Nietzsche shows an appreciation for the writing style of

45 For Confucius, the idea that tian provides a vague order for the human world can already be found in ancient texts, such as the Shujing and the Shijing. The significance and importance of these two texts can be gathered from the fact that they are frequently quoted with appreciation in the Analects. Tian functions impartially on behalf of its progeny to maximize the possibilities of emergent harmony at all levels. Tian is not transcendental. It, indeed, functions collaterally on behalf of its progeny. For instance, in the Shujing, it says “Tian hears and sees through the ears and eyes of the people” (Shujing Tai Shi.2) and in the Shijing, it says, “Tian gives birth to the multitude, for wherever there are things, there are rules governing them. People hold on to the norms because they love the beautiful de” (Shijing Da Ya 3.6).
46 Kahn proposes a number of English terms for the Heraclitean term, the logos, saying, speech, discourse, statement, report, account, explanation, reason, principle; esteem, reputation; collection, enumeration, ratio, proportion (Kahn, 1979:29).
47 A number of English terms, each expressing one of the many possible meanings, should be used to understand the idea of tian: road, sky, path, know, understand, heaven, god.
Heraclitus that would probably extend to that of Confucius:

The fact that an indemonstrable philosophy still has value—most often, even more so than a scientific proposition—stems from the aesthetic value of such philosophy, that is, from its beauty and sublimity. Philosophizing still remains as a work of art, even if it cannot be demonstrated as a philosophic construct. In other words, the aesthetic consideration is decisive, not the pure knowledge drive (PT 61).

Nietzsche’s preference for indemonstrable philosophy is shown by the fact that he presents much of his own work in the metaphorical style. As early as in 1878-9, Nietzsche moved from continuous exposition and argument to setting out a sequence of thoughts that were not necessarily presented in a discursive argument. In *Dawn of Morning*, what is often called Nietzsche’s “aphoristic style” is fully developed. The aphoristic style allows the author and the readers to approach a question from many different directions.

Confucius’s *Analects* consists of passages which are not tied to one another, and it is commonly believed to have been composed by his disciples after his death. The *Analects* consists mainly of Confucius’s daily events and his conversations with others. Most passages in the *Analects* are quite short and there is no single, connected argument offered. In that respect, the writing style of the *Analects* is similar to Nietzsche’s. The writing style of a philosopher is greatly influenced by his or her ideas about the world. Most Western philosophers write precisely, logically, critically, systematically, and rationally because this is the way they perceive the world. Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius perceive the world differently from most Western philosophers, and their

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48 *DM* is first published in 1881.
49 "Aphorism," the common description for Nietzsche’s writing style may not be the best term. It implies too strongly that the idea of a compact expression of a truth (often in the form of an exaggerated falsehood) in the style of the French writers such as la Rochefoucault and Chamfort, whom Nietzsche admired.
vocabularies are "atypical." Deliberate vagueness, randomness, and absence of logic characterize their writings.

In order to conduct research on Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, we have to look into their deliberate oracular fragments or disjointed passages. These fragments and passages reveal a command of "word order, imagery, and studied ambiguity... The content [can] be filled in by a chain of statements linked together not by logical arguments but by interlocking ideas, images, and verbal echoes." All three philosophers frequently make use of metaphors and analogies from everyday life to elaborate their ideas. Kahn's point about the pre-classical poetic structure can be used to elaborate this point: "(It) does not coincide with the logical or psychological pattern of beginning, middle and end which is typical of later Greek literature." We can, nevertheless, comprehend the poetic structure from the aesthetic point of view. What seem to be isolated and metaphorical utterances are integral parts of a "unified" whole referring to the kosmos and to the human world.

According to G.S. Kirk, "Heraclitus is renowned in antiquity for his obscurity. His pronouncements are undeniably cryptic." The mixing of image and metaphor with

51 For instance, in order to bring out his new idea about the workings of nature and the constitution of things, Heraclitus makes use of worldly symbols and comparisons: the world is like an everlasting, living fire, like a battle warfare, like a river (Cf. XXXVII, LXXXIII, L). Confucius once says that the junzi is not a mere vessel, meaning that self-cultivation is a matter of developing character, not acquiring specific skill (A 2.12). He compares the excellence (de) of the junzi (here, Confucius refers to the ruling class) to wind and that of the petty person (here, Confucius refers to the ruled class, the common people) as grass (A 12.19). In other words, if those who rule are doing so appropriately, then the governed will develop themselves accordingly.
52 Kahn (1979): 8.
seemingly literal statements, a feature noted in other early philosophers, is an apparently self-conscious attempt to express his peculiar intuition about the nature of things. Heraclitus's writing style reflects his ideas on the human understanding of the *kosmos*: the *kosmos* is rich but "human nature has no power of understanding [the *kosmos* and the *logos*]" (Cf.LV, D.78). He is not saying that we know nothing about the *logos*, but as human beings, we can grasp the *logos* only in a vague way. Heraclitus is against the ideas of Parmenides, who sets forth a universal ideal of truth rather than something based on personal experience. Attentive to the ever-changing rhythm of things, Heraclitus sees the justification of what comes-to-be. Perceiving the prevalence of *Dike* (Zeus's daughter, Justice) in the world, Heraclitus asks how this world could be "the execution-arena of everyone and everything." Heraclitus denies the duality of the two worlds and completely rejects changeless being, proclaiming "all is becoming." It is the short-sightedness of human beings that is "damnable," not the nature of things, snorts Heraclitus (Cf.II, D.34).

Dualism is absent in the Heraclitean and Confucian philosophies. For Nietzsche, who inherits the worldview of Heraclitus, there is no presupposition of the unity of Being behind the beings, or Oneness behind the many. There is no Being beyond becoming, nothing beyond multiplicity. Multiplicity and becoming are more than images, appearances or illusions. Furthermore, there are no multiple or eternal realities which would be, in turn, like essences beyond appearance. Multiplicity expresses the inseparable manifestations and essential transformations.

For all three thinkers, there is no Absolute Truth in the human world. Their
understandings of 天/the wanwu, the logos/the kosmos, and the Nietzschean world speak from their own personal views of wisdom (Cf. XXXVI, D.50). For them, it is we human beings who are able to comprehend (and interpret) the kosmos, not that the world is pre-determined for discovery (Cf.XXXI, D.116, Cf. XXIX, D.113, A 15.29, A 7.30).\textsuperscript{54} Nietzsche points out that it is we who place perspectival evaluations onto our life in the world (BGE 33). Heraclitus says, "I searched myself" (Cf. XXVIII, D.101). This is a paradoxical statement: under ordinary circumstances, one goes looking for someone else. How can I be the object of my own search? Kahn explains that this statement "make[s] sense only if my self is somehow absent, hidden, or difficult to find."\textsuperscript{55} According to Heraclitus, self-knowledge is difficult because a person is divided from himself or herself. Thus, Heraclitus presents a problem that he himself must resolve. Human knowledge (or more accurately, human creation) is a kind of human interpretation of the world.

The Confucian 天 and the Heraclitean logos are not truth or logical theory that can be taught in a direct manner or presented with clarity. Nietzsche declares that his understanding of the world is found "on the basis of perspective evaluations and appearances" (BGE 34). This is a good example to show that one cannot comprehend the teachings of Heraclitus, Confucius or Nietzsche from the causal-logical exposition, but must appreciate them from the perspective of an aesthetic order. The philosophies

\textsuperscript{54} Heraclitus says, "All human beings have the capacity of knowing themselves and acting with moderation" (Cf.XXXI, D.116) and "The thinking faculty is common to all" (Cf. XXIX, D.113). Confucius says, "It is the human who is able to broaden dao. It is not dao that is capable of broadening the human" (A 15.29) and "Is ren really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here" (A 7.30).

\textsuperscript{55} Kahn (1979): 116.
of Heraclitus, Confucius and Nietzsche are more or less like circles\textsuperscript{56}, of which Heraclitus says, “beginning and end are general in the circumference of the circle” (Cf. XCIX, D.103). Or, as Porphyry paraphrases it, “Any point you can think of is both beginning and end.” It is almost impossible to pick the best starting point that leads to the clearest order in which to present these parts. We can break into them at any point and, by following on from there, we will gradually see the complete whole.

For Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, human creativity is an essential element for knowing and understanding the world. Special attention should be paid to their sense of “creativity,” which cannot be understood in the Judeo-Christian sense of the imitation of a transcendent, creative act from nothing (\textit{creatio ex nihilo}). However, for the three thinkers, “creative actions exist \textit{ab initio} within the world of natural events and are to be assessed in terms of their contributions to the order of specific social circumstances.”\textsuperscript{57} David Hall and Roger Ames follow A.N. Whitehead in pointing out that there are two fundamental ways of understanding “order” and “creativity” in an immanent universe. The first is “rational” or “logical” order, which is received by application to a given situation of an antecedent pattern of relatedness. For instance, the Judeo-Christian tradition “emphasizes the separation of \textit{mythos}, \textit{logos} and \textit{historia} as modes of accounting, and the subsequent priority given to the notion of \textit{logos} as ‘rational account’ to provide the primary means of explaining things.”\textsuperscript{58} The second is “aesthetic” order, which “is a consequence of the contribution to a given context of a particular aspect, element, or event which both determines and is determined by the

\textsuperscript{56} This point recalls the teachings of the Daoists, such as Laozi and Zhuangzi.
\textsuperscript{57} Hall & Ames (1987): 17.
\textsuperscript{58} Hall & Ames (1995): 23.
Hall and Ames point out that the first kind of order involves the act of closure whereas the second kind is grounded in disclosure. Logical order may be realized by the imposition of principles derived from God, or the transcendent laws of nature, or from a categorical imperative resident in one’s conscience. Aesthetic order is a consequence of the contribution to a given context of a particular aspect, element, or event which both determines and is determined by the context. In order to understand the world-orders of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius (which are realized, not instantiated), we have to eschew the concept of rational order that results from the imposition of an antecedently determined pattern upon events in favor of the disclosure of novel patterns. To understand the teachings of Heraclitus and Confucius from the perspective of aesthetic order, one needs to resolve their ambiguous usage of “reason,” which is very different from the modern, analytic usage. Their notions of “reason” do not mean only abstract and calculative reasoning, but include “intuition” and “oratio.”

For Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, philosophical reflection is a meditation on human life. Their teachings are presented in a metaphorical style which reflects their worldviews that life and the world are rich and diversified. Their works are finished in the form of a work of art, rather than as a system of logical arguments. Dualism is absent in their philosophies and there is no Absolute Truth in the human world. For these three philosophers, human knowledge is a kind of interpretation of the world in

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which creativity plays an important role.

1.2.2 Affirmation of This World

For Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, this very world is the only world. According to Heraclitus and Confucius, one can grasp the hidden order of the world from the logos and tian respectively. The Heraclitean logos and the Confucian tian refer both to the world and the hidden "order" in it as simply an ad hoc summing up of beings and events. For Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, in order to perceive the world, one has to rely on observations of one's sensory perceptions.

According to Heraclitus, the kosmos is both the natural world and the order in it, and he implies it is a work of nature that is self-made and is characterized by self-growth. He explains as follows, "The kosmos, which is the same for all, was not created by any one of the gods or of humankind, but it was ever and is and shall be ever-living Fire, kindled in measure and quenched in measure" (Cf. XXXVII, D.30). Nietzsche links Heraclitus's idea of the kosmos with his image of a child playing a game. According to Nietzsche, our world is nothing but a momentary configuration of shapes in the sand. He says, "[The world is] a process quite similar to Heraclitus the Obscure's comparison of the force that shapes the world to a playing child who sets down stones here, there, and the next place, and who builds up piles of sand only to knock them down again" (BT 24). Such an understanding of the world is probably originated from Heraclitus's fragment (Cf. XCIV, D.52): "Time is a child playing a game of draughts; the kingship is in the hands of

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61 Kahn (1979): 134.
a child." Heraclitus's *kosmos* is difficult to understand from the Judeo-Christian tradition for an important question will come up: how can we have an ordered world without a power to set it in order? However, if we read Heraclitus from the perspective of classical Chinese philosophical tradition, we would find such a *kosmos* familiar and natural.

According to Confucius, *tian* 天 is both the world and its "measure" or "order," and the "myriad things" (ten thousand things, *wanwu* 萬物) are an expression for "everything" in the world. The Confucian *tian* cannot be taken to be independent of what is ordered; rather, the *wanwu* (that is, everything) in the world is constitutive of *tian*. The Confucian *wanwu* and the Heraclitean *kosmos* cannot be considered merely as the creatures of *tian* and the *logos* respectively. In addition, for both philosophers, vocabularies such as "creator" of the creatures and "fields" of the creatures are inappropriate, and there is no apparent distinction between the order itself and what is put in order. On this basis, the *logos* and *tian* can be described as an emergent order "negotiated out of the dispositioning of the particulars that are constitutive of it." Correlation among the *kosmos* or the myriad things is non-foundational, for it is merely a matter of empirical experience and conventional interpretation.

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62 The Judeo-Christian tradition believes the opposite of the Confucian: everything in the world is created by God and God is independent of what is ordered.

63 For Confucius, *tianming* is something difficult to understand: even Confucius himself can understand it only by the age of fifty (A 2.4). According to Confucius, understanding *tianming* is an attainable yet difficult task. Confucius himself takes thirty-five years of learning and reflection to attain maturity. If one is able to understand *tianming*, then one will be free from major errors (A 7.17).

64 For Heraclitus, it is a difficult and long process to find an explanation of the world because reality (nature) loves to conceal (Cf.X, D.123). Heraclitus says that the *logos* is the one which "understands the purpose which steers all things through all things (Cf.LIV, D.41), yet it does not declare but gives a sign (Cf.XXXIII, D.93).

The Heraclitean *logos* and the Confucian *tian*, however, signify more than just material "things," for they refer to both *what* our world is and *how* it is. The *logos* or *tian* 天 can be understood as a living culture present resident in the natural world and the human community. Based on the worldview of Heraclitus, Nietzsche’s world is nothing but a momentary configuration of shapes in the sand (*BT* 24), and he describes the "world-order" as "the most unexpected and exciting lucky throws of the dice played by Heraclitus’s ‘great child,’ whether that be Zeus or chance" (*GM* 16). The play of Nietzsche’s child does not, in any significant sense, follow rational principles and it has no purpose beyond itself. In order to live in the world, it seems necessary that there is an order or measure to rely on. Heraclitus, Nietzsche and Confucius acknowledge an ad hoc world order, but they are highly skeptical to freeze such an order. Their notion of order is always changing, unlike the Judeo-Christian order, which defers the creation of order to God.

Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius do not seek wisdom from the same source. Heraclitus gains his wisdom mainly by seeking it himself (Cf. XXVII, D.108). Confucius, too, appreciates the method of self-seeking but he points out that this is the method for only the most talented few (A 7.28, 16.9). Confucius admits that he does not seek his wisdom solely from solitude or self-reflection (A 15.31), because learning\(^6\) (from history and from other people) and self-reflection are mutually enhancing for his

\(^6\) However, learning and studying do not mean accepting everything from the past but already involve reflection and selection. For instance, Confucius says, "In strolling in the company of just two other persons, I am bound to find a teacher. Identifying their strengths, I follow them, and identifying their weaknesses, I reform myself accordingly" (A 7.22). In other words, when we meet someone better than ourselves, we should turn our thoughts to becoming their equals. When we meet someone not as good as we are, we should look within and examine ourselves (A 4.17).
own process of human becoming (A 2.15). Confucius’s philosophical method is closer to that of Nietzsche’s (as discussed in section 1.1): one must first learn from the past, and then reflect on what one has learned so that one can develop one’s own ideas. When Nietzsche learns from Heraclitus, he does not simply accept everything Heraclitus says. Nietzsche becomes the critical historian and he discards the Heraclitean idea that one has to rely on oneself for wisdom. Nietzsche and Confucius know that learning from history (or, in Nietzsche’s words, antiquarian history) is also essential for the health and development of a person.

For Heraclitus, Confucius, and Nietzsche, in order to understand and perceive the world, one has to rely on one’s observations and interpretations of sensory perceptions of the world. For them, wisdom is attained by personal inquiries with particular things in the world (A 17.19, Cf. IX, D.35, T/3.2). Nietzsche explains that a person has to rely on the evidence of the senses for the foundation of his or her knowledge because “all credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth” comes only from the senses (BGE 134). He points out that the more abstract the truth one wants to teach, the more one must seduce the senses to it (BGE 128). Because a human being “is a body” and “nothing beyond” (Z I.4), sensory perception is the one and only one access to knowledge and wisdom.

For Heraclitus and Confucius, careful observations and perceptions of the world enhance one’s ability to grasp the hidden message of the logos or tian. In turn, the

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67 Here, Nietzsche uses these terms (credibility, good conscience, evidence of truth) from the common language usage.
understanding of the *logos* (for Heraclitus) and of *tian* (for Confucius) guides one through the maze of particular things and understanding of this world. On the one hand, the Heraclitean *logos* and the Confucian *tian* are vague and subtle because for the former, “nature loves to conceal” (Cf. X, D.123) and for the latter, “*tian* does not speak” (A 17.19). On the other hand, Heraclitus says, “The hidden harmony is stronger (or, better) than the visible” (Cf. LXXX, D.54) and Confucius says, “What does *tian* ever say? Yet there are the four seasons going round and there are the hundred things coming into being” (A 17.19). This implies that the *logos* or *tian* is rich everywhere that the *kosmos* or the *wanwu* is found.

The Heraclitean *logos* and the Confucian *tian* reveal themselves to careful observations if one is able to read the testimony of the senses. For both Confucius and Heraclitus, one should make good use of one’s eyes and ears (Cf. XIV, D.55, A 2.18, 7.28, 16.10). Confucius points out that the *junzi* should be careful in nine aspects and two of them are on the good use of the senses (A 16.10). The importance of the senses can be shown by the fact that Confucius’s advice on the appropriate usage of the senses is placed in parallel with other behavioral and intellectual activities.

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68 This point is from T.M. Robinson, who points out that Cf.X, D.123 should probably be read in conjunction with Cf.LXXX, D.54. Cf. Robinson (1987): 161-162.
69 Confucius says, “Use your ears widely but leave out what is doubtful; repeat the rest with caution and you will make few mistakes. Use your eyes widely and leave out what is hazardous; put the rest into practice with caution and you will have few regrets” (A 2.18).
70 Heraclitus says, “Those things which comprise sight, hearing, learning: these are what I honor most” (Cf.XIV, D.55), and “Those who love wisdom must be inquirers into very many times indeed” (Cf.IX, D.35).
71 From the two following passages, hearing (wen 聽) and seeing (jian 見) are equivalent to learning (xue 學). Confucius says, “I use my ears (wen) widely and follow what is good in what I have heard; I use my eyes (jian) widely and retain what I have seen in my heart-mind” (A 7.28) and “Those who learn (xue) widely and retain what they have learnt in their heart-mind” (A 15.3).
72 A 16.10 continues as follows, “...to appearing respectful when it comes to one’s demeanor, to being conscientious when one speaks, to being reverent when one performs one’s duties, to seeking advice when
There is a slight difference between Heraclitus’s and Confucius’s making use of the senses: the former is mainly concerned with personal observations of the natural world, and the latter includes both observations of the natural world and learning from other members of the community. Nietzsche’s way is, nevertheless, like a synthesis of Heraclitus’s and Confucius’s views: both personal observations and learning from others are of equal importance.

1.2.3 Affirmation of Becoming

The world of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius is a dynamic process of becoming. It is an ever-changing process, in which each phase is constantly transformed into its “polar opposite.” The “measure” of the kosmos is a balance of “polar opposites” over time. Nietzsche’s favorite pair of “polar opposites” is creation and destruction, which originates from Heraclitus’s war and harmony. War/ destruction is not an important idea of Confucius, but he does focus on the beauty of harmony. For the three thinkers, harmony, however, is not consonance or agreement, but is composed of a balance of different elements.

All three philosophers make use of the river simile to describe the idea of becoming. Heraclitus says, “Those who step into the same river have different waters flowing ever upon them” (Cf.L, D.12). Heraclitus does not deny the continuing identity of the rivers but takes it for granted. According to Kahn, “what is emphasized is that the structure and hence the identity of a given river remains fixed, despite or even because its one is in doubt, to the consequences when he is enraged, and to what is right at the sight of gain.”
substance is constantly changing.” 73 The thought expressed by the river image can be used to grasp the structure and identity of human beings and the kosmos. This reinforces the image of Heraclitus’s fire: the kosmos “was ever and is and shall be ever-living Fire, kindled in measure and quenched in measure” (Cf. XXXVII, D.30). For Heraclitus, the structure is preserved within a process of flux, “where a unitary form is maintained while its material embodiment or ‘filing’ is constantly lost and replaced.” 74

Although the kosmos is in a process of flux, its structure (or in Heraclitus’s terminology, the everlasting fire or the logos) remains as one. Zarathustra’s use of the river simile originates from Heraclitus’s most famous idea, “all is flux” (Cf. LI, D.91; Cf. L, D.12; Cf. Appendix I, D.49a 75). He is surprised to find out that many people, including those who notice the apparent permanence of the planking transcendence over the river of flux, refute the idea of becoming (Z III.12.8). On the contrary, Zarathustra is like “a spring wind, breaking up the freezing permanence of the river formed in winter, and making evident to the wise and simple alike the sovereignty of becoming.” 76 He admires Heraclitus’s idea of becoming and perceives the world as ever-changing. In the Analects, while standing by a river, Confucius makes a point similar to Heraclitus’s and Nietzsche’s river simile: “What passes away is perhaps like this. Day and night it never lets up” (A 9.17). In the second sentence, Confucius expresses the irreversibility of time and phenomenon changes in the world. In the first sentence, Confucius refers to seasonal changes in the world and the wanwu 萬物 coming into being (A 17.19). All three thinkers understand the kosmos as a process of becoming, yet such a process of flux

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73 Kahn (1979): 168.
74 Kahn (1979): 168.
75 Kirk and Vlastos disagree on the authenticity of the three river fragments. Kirk argues that D.49a is inauthentic but Vlastos would sacrifice D.12. I will not go into detailed discussions on the authenticity of various Heraclitus fragments. For more, refer to Gregory Vlastos (1993) & Kirk (1983).
76 Lampert (1986): 205.
does not deny the continuing identity of the kosmos.

For Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, the discussion of permanence and change (which I inadequately named "Being" and "Becoming") is included in the notion of occurrence or temporal succession. Permanence is the occurrence of a succession of the like, whereas change is the occurrence of the unlike. Each of these occurrences takes place not with an interval in between, but with the realization and dis-realization, the coming and going, the "giving birth" and "passing away," touching each other immediately and incessantly. For instance, these three thinkers understand sensory perceptions as a flowing process between an invisible past and an invisible future. Furthermore, succession of the like, permanence or "Being" has as much reality as succession of unlike, change or "Becoming." What they reveal is the simultaneous prevalence of chance and order in all life. Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius do not show any preference for one or the other: they downgrade neither member of this pair, just as they do not downgrade either the visible or the hidden.

Because Heraclitus's kosmos is a process of flux in which each phase is constantly transformed into its "polar opposites," his expressions of the kosmos are constantly changing. He expresses his "pattern" of the kosmos in Cf. XXXIX, D.31: "Sea pours out [from earth], and it measures up to the same amounts [logos] as existed before it became earth." Heraclitus intends to apply this "pattern" ambiguously to both visible cyclical changes in the relationship between earth and sea and to the vaster cyclical changes of the kosmos. We can grasp the meaning of the above quotation with Heraclitus's illustration of the logos in fragment 1, in which he says, "...all things come
into being in accordance with the *logos...* (Cf.I, D.1). According to Heraclitus, the “pattern” means the *logos*, from which everything in the *kosmos* comes into being as well as rebirths to it.

Due to the fact that Heraclitus, Confucius, and Nietzsche deliberately make use of metaphorical language to grasp the world from the concrete experience of everyday life, some of their fragments seem to be contradictory or even logically unsound.\(^77\) Their words should be looked upon as a medium through which to *experience*, rather than to *understand* the world. They are not interested in the search for the *physis* or objective “nature” of things. They do not prefer the formal, static, or structural way of understanding the world. For instance, the mutual immanence of the primary elements of the Heraclitean and the Confucian worlds (for instance, the *logos/ kosmos* for the former and *tian/wanwu* for the latter) precludes the use of the language of transcendent Being. Their choices in words already reflect their worldview: there is no transcendent Being.

Heraclitus and Confucius perceive the world as an immanent *kosmos*. “The epistemological equivalent of the notion of an immanent cosmos is that of conceptual polarity. Such polarity requires that concepts which are significantly related are in fact symmetrically related, each depending on the other for adequate articulation.”\(^78\) Polarity requires correlative terms to explain the dynamic cycles and processes of

\(^77\) For instance, a literal reading of the Heraclitean fragment: “Joints: whole and not whole, connected-separate, consonant-dissonant” (Cf. CXXIV, D.10) cannot comprehend what he wants to express.

existence. Since existing things fall into a shared continuum in which they always differ in degree rather than in kind, the distinctions that obtain among them are mostly qualitative. For both philosophers, the qualitative aspect of change is inseparable from its quantitative character. There are numerous correlative pairs in the Chinese language as well as in Heraclitus's fragments. For instance, in the former: clear (qing 清)/turbid (zhuo 濁), well-balanced (zheng 正)/one-sided (pian 偏), thick (hou 厚)/thin (bo 薄), hard (gang 剛)/soft (rou 柔) and in the latter: night/day, winter/summer, cold/warm, dry/moist, health/disease, hunger/satiety, young/old. We have to remember that both Heraclitus and Confucius draw their philosophies from the concrete, natural world, which is both qualitative and quantitative.

The world of Heraclitus is a dynamic process of becoming, in which each momentary phase is continuously transformed into its “polar opposite,” that is, into a phase that is qualitatively different in nature. In his first book, Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche describes the origin of tragedy as the outcome of a struggle between two forces or drives. The first is named the Apollonian,79 which embodies the drive towards distinction and individuality, toward the drawing and respecting of boundaries. The second is named the Dionysian,80 which is the drive towards the transgression of limits, the dissolution of boundaries, the destruction of individuality and excess. Although these two drives are in some sense opposed to each other, they generally coexist in everything from human beings to institutions and art. According to Nietzsche, it is

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79 In literature, the purest and most intense expression of the Apollonian is Greek epic poetry (especially Homer).
80 The purest artistic expression of the Dionysian is quasi-orgiastic form of music, especially choral singing and dancing.
precisely the tension between the two that produces creativity. Nietzsche points out that our task is to get them into a productive relation to each other. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche synthesizes the Apollonian (logic) with the Dionysian (poetic). This happens, for instance, when the Dionysian singing and dancing of a chorus is joined with the more restrained and ordered speech and action of individual players on a stage, as in Attic tragedy. Modern art also is an integration of both the Apollonian element (rational and symmetrical features) and the Dionysian element (drunkenness and ecstasy). Using Heraclitus's idea of becoming as a basis, Nietzsche proposes his pair of "polar opposites": the Apollonian creation and the Dionysian destruction.

The philosophy of Nietzsche, however, highlights the Dionysian dimension because the Western philosophical traditions he inherited lost the Dionysian by focusing on the Apollonian. Nietzsche's elaboration of the element of destruction (the Dionysian) brings back the full picture of the Greeks: the Apollonian and the Dionysian are of equal importance. Heraclitus's situation is probably similar to Nietzsche's, since he is also born into a tradition that favors the Apollonian.\(^{81}\)

When Heraclitus presents a definition of "deity," he refers to concrete changes in this world. He says, "The god: day-night, winter-summer, war-peace, and satiety-hunger. It alters, as when mingled with perfumes it gets named according to the pleasure of each one" (Cf. CXXIII, D.67). The first sentence consists of four pairs of polarities, which are characterized by a common pattern: the alternation and interdependence of two "polar opposites." The "god," for Heraclitus, is in some sense

\(^{81}\) Heraclitus was born in the Parmenidian tradition, which emphasizes logic and rationality.
defined by or identified with any pair of opposites, but it is important to point out that these four pairs cannot be regarded as a complete account of the deity. The Heraclitean "deity" should be taken as identical only with the total pattern of "polar opposite" of which these named pairs are paradigmatic examples. For Heraclitus, the pattern of the kosmos is a balancing of "polar opposites" over time. These four pairs of "polar opposites" are neither separable entities nor alternatives to one another, and it is only between the two terms of a given pair that a change of this kind can be understood. Hence, the "it" which alters in the second sentence of Cf. CXXIII, D.67 must refer to a change between "polar opposites."

Similarly, the Confucian tian refers to the harmonious alternation of change in the world: "What does tian ever say? Yet there are the four seasons going around and there are the myriad things (wanwu) being born" (A 17.19). Although tian does not say anything and does not place any order in the world, it communicates effectively through perturbations in meteorological phenomena, and through alternations in the natural conditions of the human world. With the emphasis placed upon life in the round of death and rebirth, the logos or tian brings out the cycle of "the seasons that bear all things" (Cf. XLII, D.100).

Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius believe in a plurality of worlds succeeding one another in time. On the one hand, war is Heraclitus's favorite metaphor for the dominance of change, and on the other hand, a number of Heraclitean fragments illustrate his novel interpretation of the harmony of "opposite poles" (Cf. LXXVIII, D.51). Recall that Heraclitus does not have any preference for either war or harmony but
considers both features necessary and of equal importance. For Heraclitus, most kinds of struggle in the world (except the accretion of like to like, such as growth) are resolved into change between “opposite poles.” Just as in a battle, where there are temporary stoppages produced by the exact balance of opposing forces, there must be temporary stability (that is, harmony) here and there in the cosmic battlefield. Such harmony does not diminish the validity of the domination of war, but it allows the principle to be applied to the world of human experience, in which all things must eventually change but some things are, for the time being, obviously stable. The Heraclitean notion of war is not an important idea for Confucius; harmony (he 和), the counterpart of war, is of the highest value for the “measure” or “gauge” in the world. Confucius points out that harmony is the most valuable function of observing li 禮 and he says, “Of the things brought about by li, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small” (A 1.12). For Confucius, the ways of the Former Kings are considered “ideal,” and harmony is taken as the guiding standard for such an ideal.

*Harmonia,* for Heraclitus, Confucius, and Nietzsche is different from the Pythagorean harmony, which does not allow discordant elements to come into an

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82 The Heraclitean notion of war or strife (zhàn 戰) appears twice in the *Analects*, yet in a negative way (A 3.7, 15.22).

83 An example of the Pythagorean harmonia can be illustrated in Plato’s *Symposium*, where the physician Eryximachus puts forward the current view of his craft as that of reconciling the opposites in the body (186d) and with the musical example. Eryximachus is taught by a Pythagorean (such as Alcmaeon) and his idea of health belonged to the Western school of modern medicine. He opposes Heraclitus’s ideas on unity, which agrees with itself by being at variance, such as in the stringing of a bow or lyre (fr.51). Eryximachus says, “Naturally, it is patently absurd to claim that an attunement or a harmony is in itself discordant or that its elements are still in discord with one another. Heraclitus probably means that an expert musician creates a harmony by resolving the prior discord between high and low notes. For surely there can be no harmony so long as high and low are still discordant; harmony, after all, is consonance, and consonance is a species of agreement” (187a-b). This point originates from Guthrie (1962): 436.
agreement. Harmony, for Pythagoras, is consonance, and consonance is a species of agreement, whereas for Heraclitus, any harmony “between contrasting elements necessarily and always involves a tension or war between the opposites of which it is composed.” For instance, in the Heraclitean world of becoming, “Immortals are mortal, mortals are immortal, each living the death of the other, and dying their deaths” (Cf. XCI, D.62). According to Kahn, Heraclitus is saying that “mortals live the death of immortals. Immortals are dead in the life of mortals.” For Confucius, harmony is localized and temporalized self-sufficiency which enables one to achieve the most appropriate or the optimal in any situation. The Confucian sense of harmony is not the combining of separate things, but the cultivation of relations among things so that each element ensures the whole in a unique and productive way. In other words, Confucius’s harmony is arranging things, which are already related, in such a way that the optimal outcome can be attained.

Discussions on the Heraclitean harmonia and the Confucian harmony (he 誠) further support the claim that their harmony is markedly different from that of the Pythagoreans. For instance, in the Nichomachean Ethics, Aristotle gives an exposition of Heraclitean harmony by paraphrasing several fragments of Heraclitus:

Heraclitus says that what is opposed is helpful, that the finest harmony is composed of differing elements, and that everything comes into being by way of strife and war (1155b4).

85 Also see Cf. LXXIX, D. 48, “The name of the bow is life; its work is death” and Cf. XCIII, D.88, “The same... living and dead, and the waking and the sleeping, and young and old. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these.”
86 Kahn (1979): 218.
87 Cf. LXXVIII, D.51; LXXXII, D.80; CXXXIV, D.10.
Confucius describes social and political participation in terms of pursuing a harmony among differences, "The exemplary person (junzi 君子) pursues harmony (he) without being an echo (tong 同); the petty person is the opposite" (A 13.23). The commentator, Yang Bojun, in explaining this passage, refers us to the Yanzi Chunqiu:

Is there a difference between ‘harmony’ (he) and ‘unison’ (tong)?" asked the Marquis. Yanzi replied, “There is. Harmony is like making broth. One uses water, fire, vinegar, sauce, salt, and plum to cook his fish and meat, and burns firewood and stalks as fuel for the cooking process. The cook blends these ingredients harmoniously to achieve the appropriate flavor. Where it is too bland, he adds flavoring, and where it is too concentrated, he dilutes it with water. When you partake of this broth, you feel most content. The relationship between ruler and minister is the same.

When the ruler considers something workable and positive (ke 革) and yet there are negatives (fou 負) involved, the minister should indicate what the negatives are, and carry out what is workable with zeal. When the ruler considers something negative and yet there are workable and positives involved, the minister should indicate what the positives are and shunt aside what are negatives. Accordingly, political affairs will function harmoniously without disturbance, and the common people will not be rebellious (Yanzi Chunqiu 7.5).

Harmony (he), for Confucius, is obtaining the most appropriate blend out of the available ingredients. It is important to note that Confucian harmony is not sameness. There are two kinds of features in harmony, the workable or the positive (ke), and the negative (fou). The ke and the fou may not necessarily be opposing elements but they are, at least, two qualitatively different features. Only with the appropriate mixture of both features can a good result be achieved.

The Nietzschean Dionysian quality (EH, "Z" 6), the Confucian and the Heraclitean
harmony can be understood as “attuning.”88 “Attuning” is the combining and blending of two or more ingredients in a harmonious, enhanced whole, in which the separate and particular identities of the individual ingredients will not be sacrificed. The Pythagorean harmony can be taken as “tuning.” “Tuning” is finding agreement by bringing the ingredients into conformity and concurrence with a certain standard so that an ingredient is enhanced possibly at the expense of something else. An example of the Confucian pursuit of “attuning” (he), rather than “tuning” (tong, the formal agreement) can be shown in A 13.15:

There is a saying amongst people: “I do not at all enjoy being a ruler, except for the fact that there is no one to go against what I say.” If what he says is good and no one goes against him, there is no problem. But if what he says is not good and no one goes against him, then his work might ruin the state if put into practice.

In this passage, Confucius is advocating a social and political harmony in which the disparate opinions of its participants are taken into account. Confucius’s idea of good ruling is “attuning,” since he wants a harmonious community in which different good opinions can be accommodated, rather than a strict society of uniform rules or standards.

The earlier passage from Yanzi Chunqiu can be shown to be a fair elaboration of the Confucian notion of harmony when we examine a passage from the Analects in which Confucius condemns factionalism in political service. Confucius says, “The junzi 君子 enters into associations (zhou 周) but not cliques (bu bi 不比); the petty person enters into cliques but not associations” (A 2.14) and “The junzi are conscious of their own superiority (jin 矣) without being contentious (bu zheng 不爭), and come together (qun 群) with other junzi without forming cliques (bu dang 不黨)” (A 15.22). In the Analects, the

88 The ideas of “attuning” and “tuning” originates from Hall & Ames (1987): 166.
only information on these terms is that *zhou* 周, *jin* 矜, and *qun* 群 are the qualities of the *junzi* and *bei* 比, *zheng* 爭, and *dang* 黨 are the qualities of petty person. It is not easy to distinguish the difference between *zhou* 周 and *bei* 比, *jin* 矜 and *zheng* 爭, *qun* 群 and *dang* 黨. However, in the *Guoyu*, another pre-Qin text, there is further information on these terms:

The Duke of Zhao says, “I have heard that those who serve the lord are *bi* 比 but not *dang*. *Bi* 比 is the group which is formed by those who are *zhou* 周(doing their best and trustworthy) and they recommend others according to *yi* 義. *Dang* is the group which is formed by those who recommend others according to their own interest” (*Guoyu* 4.54).

Jiyan asked, “Are *junzi* *bi* 比?” Shuxiang says, “*Junzi* are *bi* but not biased (*bu bie* 但別). *Bi* 比 is the way *junzi* make use of *de* 德 when they work together for the lord. *Bie* 別 is the way for those who form cliques (*dang* 黨) to strengthen themselves and these people care for their own interest rather than that of their lord (*Guoyu* 4.95).

The first point to be noted is that the Chinese character, *bi* 比, means something different in the *Guoyu* and in the *Analects*. If we read A 2.14 and *Guoyu* 4.95 together, we find out that *bi* is taken as a positive term in the *Guoyu* and its meaning is quite close to the character, *zhou* 周, in the *Analects*. The meaning of *bie* 別 in the *Guoyan* is close to the character, *bi*, in the *Analects*. This is why in Lau’s translation of the *Analects*, both *bi* and *dang* are translated as “forming cliques.” The quoted passages of the *Guoyu* tell us more about the difference between the *junzi* and the petty person: the *junzi* serves his or her lord in accordance with *ren* 仁, *yi* 義 and *li* 礼; the petty persons serves his or her lord so as to strengthen his or her power and take care of his or her own interests. There is no rigid way for the *junzi* to serve his or her lord, but since he or she behaves according to *li* and *yi*, he or she works together in a harmonious way for the interest of society as a whole. The petty person enters into cliques and shares the same objective of
strengthening their own interests. He or she is well-versed in only that which is profitable for himself or herself, and this purpose is against the social interest.

Like Heraclitus and Nietzsche, Confucius, too, prizes “difference” above “sameness” and “harmony” above “unison.” Only with the appropriate proportion of various elements can beauty and richness be produced. In Yanzi Chunqiu, Yanzi further tells us of the defects of “sameness” or “unison”: “If you add water to flavor water, who will drink it? If you keep playing the same note on the lute, who will listen to it?” (Yanzi Chunqiu 7.5) This point is close to Heraclitus’s function of war: if war (the action and reaction between opposed substances), were to cease, then the victor in every contest of extremes would establish a permanent domination, and the world as such would be destroyed. Nietzsche’s disappointment with the post-Socratic culture is due to the fact that these traditions merely focus on the Apollonian element, ignoring or even condemning the Dionysian. Despite of the fact that there are differences in the worlds of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius, there is a search for an appropriate balance with the proper proportion of various elements in their worlds.

This part begins with a comparison of Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s philosophies of becoming fully human by examining the camel stage in Nietzsche’s three transformations of the spirit and the first part of Confucius’s account of self-cultivation. Despite some differences due to the particular context of each philosopher, there are important similarities between them in terms of the importance of tradition for both. A comparison of their views about what constitutes tradition, how one can make use of
one's tradition, the difficulty of that complex and intricate task, allows each to illuminate
the other's philosophy of transformation.

A detour via Heraclitus, who is an important source of inspiration for Nietzsche,
gives more depth to reflect on inheriting the past by showing a specific example of
Nietzsche’s learning from tradition. Broad similarities between Heraclitus and Confucius
also increase the resonance between the content and approach of Nietzsche’s and
Confucius’s philosophy from a slightly oblique but important additional perspective.

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, tradition is inseparable from life in the present.
After one has learned from the tradition, it is time to reflect on what one has inherited.
That is, one is ready to transform to the next stage, the lion.
Part II  The Lion Stage of the Three Transformations of the Spirit;

"... At thirty, I took my stance; at forty I was no longer in doubt..." (A 2.4)

In this part, I compare Nietzsche's lion stage of the three transformations of the spirit to Confucius's critical analysis of tradition. I have divided this part into five sections. In the first, 2.1, I examine Nietzsche's lion stage as a method for the systematic rejection of the worthless aspects of tradition. In section 2.2, I show that although Confucius lacks the nihilism of the lion stage, he is nonetheless critical of the tradition he inherits. In section 2.3, I discuss Nietzsche's and Confucius's methods of self-cultivation as experiments in life. In section 2.4, I analyze Nietzsche's notion of the human psyche as a totality of drives, and compare this idea with Confucius's concept of the proper management of drives and desires. Although the lion stage is necessary for self-cultivation, it is only an intermediate stage on the path of human becoming. For both Nietzsche and Confucius, in order to be a cultivated human being, one must not only appropriate one's tradition but also criticize it and reject those values that have become obsolete or ineffectual in a changed context. Only then can one truly shape oneself as an authentic human being.

2.1 Nietzsche's Lion Stage: A Negation

According to Zarathustra's "three transformations of the spirit," when the camel flees to the desert it is transformed into the lion. This is the time at which one reflects on traditional values and removes some of the clutter of habit to make room for new values.

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89 This is why this chapter is relatively short.
The camel is a beast of burden and exemplifies the unquestioned acceptance of the expectations of tradition. Its humility resides in its obedient labor. The lion, on the other hand, is a beast of prey. It needs all the courage and resolution it can muster to conquer powerfully entrenched values. The lion relies on itself for the negation of the "sacred" rules inculcated by tradition: it is a lonely hunter because it has to deal with the rejection of its own culture and tradition, as well as the consequent alienation. The lion must then be unconcerned with acceptance and the comforts of fitting in. Only by winning the final battle against the great dragon—the "Thou shalt,"

90 For Nietzsche, "Thou shalt" refers primarily to the Ten Commandments, though it also extends to other moralities (Z I.1).

The targets of the lion are the tradition and culture inherited from the past, which emphasize confidence in the guidance afforded by metaphysical, religious, moral, and rational truths. The lion stage is intermediate, yet it is essential so that one might advance to the child stage. It consists of a series of "battles" fought against traditional cultures and values. The use of the term "stage" for each transformation can be misleading because the three transformations of the spirit are continuous and correlated, rather than separated or independent of each other.

The immediate consequence of Nietzsche's lion stage is the destruction of the metaphysical and religious realms. Metaphysical and religious ideals, such as the Platonic Idea, the Ten Commandments of Christianity, and the Kantian categorical imperative, were answers to the question of how one should live in the world. However,
these principles only apply to the old world; the “new” world is no longer grounded in the Universal, the Eternal, the Perfect, or the Unchanging.

2.2 Confucius’s Reconstruction of the Zhouli

As Nietzsche rejects the metaphysical and religious issues, Confucius also does not reflect on these realms. Although Nietzsche’s lion stage is commonly interpreted as a negation, a more accurate understanding of the lion stage is a criticism of tradition. Though Confucius claims that he “does not innovate (bu zuo 不作) but transmits” (A.7.1) and he is “devoted to antiquity (hao gu 好古)” (A.7.1), his teaching does criticize the past and he does add new elements to tradition. Confucius does not merely inherit everything from tradition, he introduces new elements (human created values such as ren 仁 and yi 義) to the tradition and revitalizes the zhouli. His reflection on the zhouli can be understood as the lion stage.

Confucius regards the traditional body of “rites and customs” (that is, the zhouli) as highly respectable. He once says, “The Zhou dynasty looked back to the two previous dynasties, the Xia and Shang. What a wealth of culture did they have at their command! I, nevertheless, follow the Zhou” (A.3.14). Almost every aspect of life was governed by these rules which were originally established by the Duke of Zhou. Li 禮 are “those meaning- invested roles, relationships, and institutions which facilitate


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91 “Hao gu” probably means that Confucius “follows the culture of the Zhou” rather than previous cultures (A.3.14).
92 Details of practicing the zhouli can be found in the Liji 禮記.
communication"^{93} by fostering a sense of community. The compass of *zhouli* is broad: from table manners to patterns of greeting, from weddings to funerals (including even gestures of deference at ancestral sacrifices). *Li* are forms of life transmitted from generation to generation as the repository of past human experiences concerning appropriate behavior. *Li* can be considered a social grammar that provides each member of society with a particular niche of his or her own within the family, the community, and the nation. It is therefore important for one to observe *li*, except when there are strong reasons to the contrary.

As discussed in section 1.1.1, in Confucius's time the traditional system of *zhouli* was not generally observed, and those few who did observe the *zhouli* did so without the necessary, underlying piety. For instance, the most important purpose of ancestral and funeral prescriptions in the *zhouli* is to provide a historical linkage and an emotional grief period for the participants. However, reflective and creative aspects of the *zhouli* had been largely lost by Confucius's time. This is the reason why Confucius criticizes those who observe *li*. He says:

Surely when one says 'The *li*, the *li*,' it is not enough merely to mean presents of jade and silk. Surely when one says 'Music, music,' it is not enough merely to mean bells and drums (A 17.11).

The basis of *li* is a noble question for Confucius and the most important aspect of the observance of *li* is honesty and sincerity. He says "With *li*, it is better to err on the side of frugality than on the side of extravagance; in mourning, it is better to err on the side of grief than on the side of indifference" (A 3.4). The basis of traditional rituals and customs (that is, the emotions and feelings of the ritual performers) and their external

It is important to point out that the *zhouli* is a traditional body of rituals created by human beings, instead of an everlasting "Truth." If we make use of the language of Nietzsche, the *zhouli* can be considered a body of prescription that has come down to us over a long period of time (antiquarian history). Antiquarian history has to be renewed from time to time, or it will "undermine the continuing and especially the higher life" (*HL* 3). In Confucius's time, the underlying values of the *zhouli* have been mostly forgotten. From the perspective of Nietzsche, the observance of the *zhouli* develops into "a habit of scholarliness," which "continues without the piety" (*HL* 3). The *zhouli* becomes the commanding tradition, which, to use Nietzsche's words, is:

A higher authority which one obeys, not because it commands what is *useful* to us, but simply because it *commands*—What distinguishes this feeling in the presence of tradition from the feeling of fear in general? It is fear in the presence of a higher intellect in which here commands, of an incomprehensible, indefinite power, of something more than personal—there is *superstition* in this fear (*DM* 9).

Some of the ritual-performers observe the *zhouli* because of a blind fervor for whatever is ancient while many others do so out of fear of punishment (both from others and from the ancestors).

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, we should remain true to ourselves and to others in both word and deed, because "it is only through such truthfulness that the distress, the inner misery of human beings will come to light, and take the place of the anxious concealment" (*HL* 5). The health of a culture can only be restored by the rediscovery of its instincts and, with them, its honesty. Moreover, historical culture should have effects
“in the realm of action of so-called life,” instead of in any form of thinking, writing, or metaphysical philosophy.

Knowing that the zhouli has ceased to function in his time, Confucius introduces the idea of ren, which greatly influences Chinese civilization for the next two thousand years. After Confucius’s reformation, traditional zhouli (a body of “rites and customs”) is enriched by the idea of ren, an attitude towards life. In addition, the rituals (that is, the actual practices) of li, become more flexible and can be adapted to concrete situations. For example, the whole of chapter 7, entitled “Zengzi-wen,” of the Liji consists of conversations between Zengzi and Confucius in which Confucius is asked about modifications of li in exceptional cases. Confucius clearly expresses the underlying rationale of certain aspects of li, showing that ceremonial details of li can be adjusted to accommodate different purposes. Li is no longer strict recipe-following: like a chef, one is allowed to modify dishes to accommodate whatever ingredients are local and fresh.

Confucius is the first to connect human created values, such as ren and yi to li. He is also the first to introduce the self-cultivation process of becoming a renzhe 仁者, even though many aspects of ren can be found in the tradition, especially in the underlying and neglected meaning of the zhouli. Analects 12.1 clearly uncovers the close relation between li and ren: “To return to the observance of li and overcoming (ke 克) the self constitutes ren” (A 12.1). After Confucius’s reformation of the zhouli, ren and li can be considered mutually enhancing. For Confucius, to take full participation in

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94 The idea of ren is discussed in section 3.2.2 & 3.3.
95 Yi, a more specific idea than ren, can be taken to be the sense of appropriateness. That is, when given a specific situation, yi, enables us to act in a proper and suitable manner. Ames & Rosemont (1998): 53-54.
li requires the personalization of prevalent customs, institutions, and values, and those li-observers who can perceive the real meaning of li would be looked upon as persons of ren in the eyes of Confucius. Ren and li can be looked upon as the two sides of a single coin for three reasons. First, ren is a kind of created value, which has to be integrated into our thinking processes and value system, whereas the zhouli is more or less a kind of external ritual in everyday life. Secondly, ren is a value one relies on when making decisions while li offers the actual guidelines for his or her everyday behavior. Thirdly, if one perceives the underlying meaning of li and performs accordingly, he or she is actually undergoing the cultivation process of ren. The idea of ren continues in chapter 3 where Confucius’s process of human becoming, the cultivation of the self, is discussed.

To be Nietzsche’s lion is to be critical of what one has learned. Although Confucius claims that he does not innovate but rather transmits, he is accessing tradition in a subtle way. He points out that in his time the zhouli loses its piety and most li-performers simply pay attention to the external rituals. This point is similar to Nietzsche’s notion of the failure of antiquarian history: one obeys, not because li is useful to oneself, but simply because it commands (DM 9). However, the most important aspect of the observance of li is honesty and sincerity. One should be authentic to oneself and to others in both word and deed. In order to solve the drawbacks of the zhouli, Confucius connects human-created values, such as ren, to li.

2.3 Human Life as an Experiment

Nietzsche’s early work, Human, All Too Human, is his first major attempt to describe the
lion stage. It is subtitled “A Book for Free Spirits” because from then on, Nietzsche challenges and discards the worthless aspects of tradition he inherited. In his autobiography, Ecce Homo, he describes this stage as having a torch with a never-wavering flame so that an incisive light can be thrown into the underworld of the ideal (EH, “HA” 1). Nietzsche’s lion stage is fighting against the “great dragon” (Z I.1), the original error: “all teleology is built upon speaking of the human being of the last four millennia as something eternal, towards which all the things of the world from the beginning have naturally been directed” (HA 2). Nietzsche, on the contrary, points out that “there are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths” (HA 2). Nietzsche entitles his book Human, All Too Human, because “‘where you see ideal things, I see what is—human, alas, all-too-human!’— I know people better” (EH, “HA” 1). The dualistic opposition between the human world and “the eternal” paves the way for the traditional concepts of being human. He explains the so-called “higher” activities in terms of the “lower,” the merely human beings in terms of this very world (HA10). Even though “there might be a metaphysical world” (HA 9), it would cease to be of any interest to us. With “psychological observations” and “reflections on the human, all-too-human,” Nietzsche explains many idealized activities without positing anything beyond the natural world (HA 35). For instance, he describes traditionally idealized forms such as the Christian saints as egoistic and merely human (HA 135-43).

Nietzsche’s idea that the “human being is something that must be overcome” implies that human life is “an experiment to be conducted in the ‘laboratory’ of the psyche.”

His experimental method probably originates from Montaigne’s Essais, which are

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“experimental in the sense of being’s tests or trials of his judgment, his natural faculties, and indeed his life,” designed to test his responses to various topics and situations. The *Untimely Meditation* on history begins with this quote from Goethe: “I hate everything that merely instructs me without enhancing my activity or directly enlivening it.” This demonstrates that Nietzsche’s thinking is “experimental.” Here, “experimental” does not simply mean trying new things but refers to the active process of engaged self-cultivation. From *Dawn of Morning* on, Nietzsche explicitly advocates this experimental method for his philosophy. Later, in the *Joyful Science*, he says that “I admire any piece of skepticism to which I can reply, ‘Let’s try it!’ But I have no interest in any thing or question that does not admit of experiment” (*JS* 51). His texts, hence, should not be taken as explications of the truth, but rather as invitations to accommodate a number of perspectives and to consider the effects of such a change of perspective for one’s experience. Similarly, his ideas on the human condition are not to be taken as absolute truth but rather as hypotheses to be tested in one’s experience. Zarathustra illustrates that life is an experiment. In the Prologue and Part 1 of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Zarathustra presents the Übermensch as an evolutionary phenomenon, yet from Part 2 onwards, Zarathustra decides to take up this task of human becoming and eventually becomes the Übermensch himself.

In *Dawn of Morning*, Nietzsche says, “We investigators are, like all conquerors, discoverers, seafarers, adventurers, of an audacious morality and must reconcile

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99 *HL*, F: DM 432, 501. As well as proposing a variety of *Experimente*, Nietzsche uses the terms *Versuch* (experiment, test, attempt) and *versucherisch* (tempting) in connection with his methods. This point is raised by Parkes (1994): 384, fn. 6.
ourselves to being considered on the whole evil" (DM 432). Human beings are comparable to experimenters in the laboratory: after the destruction of the metaphysical and religious realm, there is no “Truth” beyond the irrefutable errors of human beings (JS 265). In short, human life should be taken as an experiment. It is unavoidable that throughout the “experimental process,” there is always a danger of going in the wrong direction. Hence, one must attain the courage “for error, for experimentation, for accepting the provisional” (DM 501). Errors and mistakes are within the expectations of Nietzsche, yet he demands that one has to “overcome” them for “the human being is something that shall be overcome” (Z, P3).

Confucius’s notion of self-cultivation as ren also implies that human life is an experimental process. This point is illustrated by the fact that he places emphasis on attaining courage in overcoming and correcting our mistakes. He comments about himself: “Grant me a few more years so that I may continue to learn at the age of fifty and I shall, perhaps, be free from major errors” (A 7.17). As discussed in section 2.1, Confucius is recognized as a person of wisdom (zhì 知) when he is forty years old (A 2.4). However, as evidenced by A 7.17 and 2.4, wisdom does not necessitate perfection. Though Confucius was considered a wise person in his forties, he nevertheless made some mistakes. What Confucius wants to be free from are major errors, and he does not consider making mistakes in less important issues to be terribly harmful. This attitude can be further proven by other passages. When asked about government, Confucius recommends that “one should show leniency towards minor offenders” (A.13.2). His attitude towards making insignificant mistakes can also be shown in A 3.26 where he points out that people in high positions are not worthy of note if they are lacking
tolerance. Confucius’s view on human errors is that they are common and unavoidable. This perspective is also evident in Confucius’s attitude that one of the best ways to understand a person is to observe the errors he or she makes, since in observing his or her divergences, the degree to which he or she is ren can be known (A 4.7).

There are a number of passages in the Analects where Confucius explicitly admits that he has made a mistake (A 7.30, 17.4). Zigong once compared the errors made by the junzi君子 to an eclipse of the sun and the moon: when they make a mistake the whole world sees it, and when they reform the whole world looks up to them (A 19.21). It is rare that one has the courage to admit his or her mistakes and mend accordingly (A 1.8), or one can be able to reflect inwardly, when he or she makes an error (A 5.27). Thus, Confucius greatly appreciates and respects those who try their best to correct their mistakes (A 14.25). Making a mistake is not disastrous for Confucius but failure to mend one’s ways is. He says, “Not to mend one’s ways when one has erred is to err indeed” (A 15.30). Yan Hui is considered by Confucius to be his best disciple and one of the reasons for this is that Hui never makes the same mistake twice (A 4.3). However, when petty people make mistakes, they tend to gloss over them rather than rectifying them (A 19.8).

Both Confucius and Nietzsche make use of human errors in a positive and constructive way. They consider the process of overcoming mistakes a useful and constructive way for improving oneself, that is, one of the tools for the process of human becoming. Zarathustra constantly reflects on what he has done and said. For instance, after Zarathustra comes down the mountain, he teaches the masses in the market place
about his idea of human becoming (Z I.1). He is mocked by them and he learns from
this failure. After that, he looks for companions and disciples, who are willing to
undergo self-cultivation. In the Prologue and Part 1 of Thus Spoke Zarathustra,
Zarathustra portrays the Übermenschen as an evolutionary phenomenon. From Part 2
onwards, he revises his position and takes up this path. He successfully becomes the
Übermenschen himself in Part 3. Confucius’s attitude on the rectification of mistakes
includes a reflection on oneself and learning from others. Confucius says:

Even when I walk in the company of two other people, I am sure to be in a position
to learn from them. The good points of the one I copy; the bad points of the other I
correct in myself (A 7.22).

When you meet someone better than yourself, turn your thoughts to becoming his or
her equal. When you meet someone not as good as you are, look within and
examine your own self (A 4.17).

Here, Confucius is saying that by reflecting on the actions of others, one can either learn
from their strengths or avoid their weaknesses. Nietzsche makes a similar point in

Human, All Too Human where he says:

Insofar as we come to know ourselves and to regard our being as a changing sphere
of opinions and moods and thereby learn to lower our estimation of ourselves, we
bring ourselves into equilibrium with others. It is true that we have good grounds
for despising each one of our acquaintances, even the greatest among them; but we
have equally good grounds for turning this feeling back upon ourselves (HA 376).

Here, Nietzsche is saying that nobody is perfect but one has to constantly reflect on
oneself for further improvement.

Confucius is creative and flexible in his everyday life. In chapter 13 of the
Analects, Confucius and the Governor of She have a discussion about straightness of
character (zhì 直). The Governor tells Confucius that in his village, when a father steals
a sheep, the son who is straight would give evidence against his own father. However, Confucius says, “In our village those who are straight are quite different. Fathers cover for their sons, and sons cover up for their fathers. In such behavior is straightness (zhi) to be found as a matter of course” (A 13.18). There are two points worth noting here. First, although Confucius proposes another way of being straight, he does not say that the way proposed by the Governor of She is wrong. He only says that in his village, the idea of straightness (zhi) is different. Hence, for Confucius, context and interpersonal relation form the creative ingredients of a cultivated response, and this kind of engagement can be seen as superior to rule-following (A 2.3). More importantly, for Confucius, rules and order begin in the family: “Simply by being a good son and friendly to his brothers a man can exert an influence upon government” (A 2.21). Proper cultivation of filial and fraternal responsibility enables one “to be broadly generous with the people and to help the multitude,” that is, to become a sage (A 6.30).

The case in A 13.18 involves the crime of stealing a sheep, yet this is not the most important issue at stake. “Although Confucius resists a depiction of social life as fundamentally conflict-ridden, he does not deny that at any one time there could be conflicts that are beyond our abilities to resolve, and the best we could do is damage control.” Confucius’s acknowledgement of the reality of conflicts, however, is different from some Western views that perceive conflicts as consisting in a clash of absolute moral duties, or categorical imperatives, which are, in principle,

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100 Confucius says, “Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by de, keep them in line with li, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves” (A 2.3).

Confucius’s answers to dilemmas created from situational conflicts or different relations are neither simple nor absolute.

Ironically, Confucius considers filiality so important that it encompasses various other virtues (such as zhong 忠 and de 德) that contribute to flexibility in practice. Confucius says that one should remonstrate with one’s parents when they err, though this must be done in a gentle and respectful manner. When they refuse to listen, one should not become disobedient, nor should one complain about being worn out in the process (A 4.18). Nevertheless, if the members of one’s family were to do something wrong in a matter of real importance, Confucius’s advice would be different from that of A 13.18. Confucius points out that when it comes to patricide or regicide, one should not do as one is told (A 11.24). We get a similar picture in the Xunzi:

Being filial at home and respectful to one’s elders outside the home is the minimal ethical practice (xiaoxing 小行)... Following dao 道 instead of one’s ruler and following what is appropriate (yi 義) instead of one’s father constitute the highest ethical practice (daxing 大行) (X 29.1)

Xunzi makes a distinction between more important issues and less important issues, naming the former as daxing and the latter as xiaoxing. This passage shows Xunzi’s agreement with Confucius’s point that when it comes to patricide or regicide, we should follow according to daxing (A 9.24).

Xunzi’s point can also be illustrated from the concrete example of Shun’s marriage in the Mencius. In the Shijing, it says, “How does one take a wife? By first telling

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103 We can see the all-embracing nature of filiality in various passages in the Xiaojing, the Liji, and the Da Da Liji.
one's parents” (Shijing 101). Shun chooses to circumnavigate their expected refusal by marrying without consulting his parents, and, according to traditional standards, he would not be considered a filial son. Mencius, however, points out that the most serious infidelity is not to have any heir (M IVA.26). Had Shun consulted his parents and been refused by then, he would have had no heir and this would have resulted in social bitterness against his parents (M VA.2). As an obligation demonstrating filial piety, xiao, the customary parental deference may be bypassed when the outcome of the most important relationship (that is, marriage) (M VA.2) appears to warrant it. Based on this, Mencius argues that Shun’s not informing his parents of his marriage is “as good as having told his father” (M IVA.26).

All the above passages show that although Confucius recommends us to be obedient to our parents and rulers, there is a need to oppose them when they are contemplating immoral conduct—it is unfilial to obey one's parents when they are morally wrong. Introducing the additional consideration of whether the parents' wishes and actions are ethical or not sets a limit on what children should tolerate from parents. The Liji elaborates on Confucius’s comment about “not complaining” to include occasions when parents, in a rage, beat their children until they bleed (Liji 12.12/74/20-22). In contrast, the Kongzi Jiayu and the Shuoyuan both tell the story of Zeng Shen who, when he behaved as recommended in the Liji, was reprimanded by Confucius as “entrapping his father in unethical practices” (xian fu yu buyi 陷父于不義). Whereas relatively light beating may be tolerated, one should escape from any beatings that would cause serious injury; for if parents cause harm to their children, they would be acting unethically, and

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the consequences would be detrimental to them. Hence, a filial child should not allow his or her parent to injure him or her seriously. Such disobedience can be justified on the grounds that the parents’ immoral action is not good for them.

Confucius provides a model of resistance to dogmatism; he refuses to insist on certainty, but rather encourages us to be flexible. When Confucius had a problem in everyday life, he would contextualize the case, be creative and look for a way to solve that particular problem. This type of contextual morality is, in fact, similar to Nietzsche’s “perspective of the critical historian” and “life-experimenter’s attempts” in life. Nietzsche says:

There are the services which history is capable of rendering to life: each person and each people requires, according to their goals, strengths and needs, a certain knowledge of the past, sometimes as monumental, sometimes as antiquarian, sometimes as critical history: but not like a crowd of pure thinkers who only contemplate life, not like individuals, hungry for knowledge, satisfied with mere knowledge, whose only goal is the increase of knowledge, but always only for the purpose of life and therefore also always under the rule and highest direction of that purpose (HL 4).

Here, Nietzsche is saying that different styles of history are appropriate for different people at different stages in their careers. As a Nietzschean experimenter, there is no guarantee that one is doing the most appropriate thing; one is merely conducting an experiment, hoping that the results are the most appropriate. There is no definite “standard” or “answer” in life and every one has to look for the best, that is, “the most appropriate solution” for a particular problem or situation.

For both philosophers, there is no universal rule in solving problems in life, but
people should be “experimenters” or “attempters” in life. Even if we believe that we are facing a problem that is similar to those that Nietzsche or Confucius might have faced, being a mere follower and an imitator of Nietzsche’s or Confucius’s way is not good enough. One has to create his or her own solutions, become the creator of oneself, and proceed in one’s life as an experimenter. This point is of great importance for Nietzsche and he repeats it more than once in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He speaks to his readers through the mouth of Zarathustra: “Alone I go now, my disciples! You too should now go away, and alone. Thus do I will it” (Z I.22.3). What the Confucian renzhe 仁者 or the Nietzschean Übermensch actually does in the everyday life or how the renzhe or the Übermensch responds to a particular situation depends on his or her personality, background, and judgment of the circumstances. Nietzsche explains this point through the mouth of Zarathustra:

You say, you believe in Zarathustra? But what does Zarathustra matter? You are my believers: but what do any believers matter?

You had not yet sought yourselves: then you found me. Thus do all believers: therefore is all belief worthy so little (Z I.22.3).

What Nietzsche (or Zarathustra) says is merely human knowledge, rather than the everlasting Truth. Thus, every person has to look for his or her own unique way of living in the world.

Confucius does not have any particular, pre-determined blueprint for human life. He has great respect for all those who live according to ren, despite the fact that their lifestyles may be very different. He groups historical figures into different categories according to their personal cultivation and achievements. Some of them “do not lower
their purpose or allow themselves to be humiliated,” while some “lower their purpose and
allow themselves to be humiliated, but their words are in accordance with their station,
and their deeds with circumspection,” and yet some others “live as recluses and give free
rein to their words. Confucius points out that they are all in “accord, in their persons,
with purity, and, in their words, with the right measure for the occasion” (A 18.8). These
people are all highly regarded, but when Confucius talks about himself, he says, “I,
however, am different. I have no preconceptions about the permissible and the
impermissible” (A 18.8). As long as we attain ren and act accordingly, we can create
our own lives and will be considered renzhe in Confucius’s eye.

One might object that, because there is no standard of moral judgment in the
teachings of Nietzsche and Confucius, they are relativists. Although there is no ultimate
moral standard in their philosophies, Nietzsche and Confucius are not relativists. An
absence of universal rule does not mean anything goes. For both philosophers,
standards, rules, and principles are merely human knowledge and creations but there are
criteria for ethical judgment in their philosophies. They rely on their created values and
attitudes towards life. Nietzsche evaluates actions according to his ideas of amor fati
and eternal recurrence of the same whereas Confucius appraises actions according to his
idea of ren. I will discuss these important ideas in Part 3 and 4.

2.4 Human Beings as a Totality of Drives

There is a shift in Nietzsche’s strategy in Dawn of Morning, where there is a fresh
beginning, \(^{105}\) "a reevaluation of all values, a liberation from all moral values" (EH, "DM" 1). Unlike his previous books, Dawn of Morning marks the beginning of Nietzsche’s constructive and affirmative philosophical project. In Ecce Homo, where Nietzsche comments on his own works, he says, “the whole book (that is, DM) contains no negative word, no attack, no spite” (EH, "DM" 1). With Dawn of Morning, he brings back "light, love and tenderness" to his readers.

In Dawn of Morning, Nietzsche proposes a new alternative and uses an analogy to illustrate his denial of traditional morality. The passage is entitled, “There are two ways of denying morality”:

I can deny morality as I deny alchemy, that is, I deny their underlying premises: but I do not deny that there have been alchemists who believed in these premises and acted in accordance with such belief. – I also deny immorality; not that there had not been countless people who felt themselves to be immoral, but that there is any true reason so to feel. It goes without saying that I do not deny (unless I am a fool) that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged. But I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for reasons other than those hitherto given. We have to learn to think differently — in order at last, perhaps at a very much later date, to attain much more: to feel differently (DM 103).

In Dawn of Morning, Nietzsche amends his previous denial of morality. He no longer denies the existence of morally motivated actions but now claims that these actions, when they occur, are based on erroneous presuppositions. Human, All Too Human and Dawn of Morning thus involve two different ways of denying morality and this is the reason for Nietzsche’s claim that Dawn of Morning is the beginning of his “campaign against morality.” In his earlier work, Nietzsche claims that morality is an “error” and a “lie”

\(^{105}\) Rather than affirm or construct, Nietzsche mainly destroys and negates in his two books before DM, that is, HA and UM.
(HA 39-40), while in *Dawn of Morning*, he is against the belief that human beings act from moral motives.

In *Dawn of Morning*, Nietzsche points out that traditional morality involves false presuppositions: a false picture of human agency (that is, the view that human beings act autonomously or freely, and thus are morally responsible for what they do). He attacks this picture of agency from the perspective of a naturalistic view of persons: actions are "determined" by the fundamental physiological and psychological facts about them.

The German Materialistic Movement of the 1850s and 1860s had a great intellectual influence on Nietzsche. In *Ecce Homo*, where he tells us (in the discussion of *Human, All-Too-Human*) that in the late 1870s, "A truly burning thirst took hold of me: henceforth I really pursued nothing more than physiology, medicine and the natural sciences" (*EH*, "HA" 3). The Materialists\(^{106}\) embraced the idea that human beings were essential bodily organisms, whose attitudes, beliefs, and values were explicable by reference to physiological facts about them. Spiritual, religious, and moral explanations of human beings were to be supplanted by purely physical or physiological explanations. In *Dawn of Morning*, Nietzsche says,

> Whatever proceeds from the stomach, the intestines, the beating of the heart, the nerves, the bile, the semen—all those distempers, debilitations, excitations, the whole chance operation of the machine of which we still know so little!—had to be seen by a Christian such as Pascal as a moral and religious phenomenon, and he had to ask whether God or Devil, good or evil, salvation or damnation was to be discovered in them! Oh what an unhappy interpreter! (*DM* 86)

Following the Materialists, Nietzsche replaces "moral" or "religious" explanations for

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\(^{106}\) Nietzsche reads Friedrich Lange's *History of Materialism*, from which he knows much about Feuerbach, Jacob Moleschott, Hermann von Helmholtz, with great enthusiasm.
phenomena with naturalistic explanations, particularly explanations couched in physiological and psychological languages. In other words, one “has to learn to think differently—in order at least, perhaps very late on, to achieve even more: to feel differently” (DM 103).

The Nietzschean picture of human is that we are nothing more than “a totality of drives”:

However far we may drive our self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than the image of the totality of drives that constitute our being. We can scarcely even name the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay, and above all the laws of their nourishment remain quite unknown to us (DM 119).

According to Nietzsche, “the activity of the drives goes on unbeknownst to us, below the threshold consciousness: we remain for the most part oblivious to ‘the laws of their nourishment.’” He claims that the sustenance of the drives is dependent on chance and if the drives continue to find nothing in the way of nourishment, they will wither away like a plant without rain. According to Nietzsche, the human body is like a small cosmos in which activities function smoothly without consciousness. The majority of the drives do not require us to arrange for their sustenance, except in cases where they malfunction.

Nietzsche is using his views about human drives in a rejection of “traditional” morality. This has to be located in the context of the history of Western thought, the influence of Greco-Christian heritage that dualistically separates soul and body, reasons 107

and passions, and privileges soul and reason in their conception of morality. However, there is no comparison of such a prevalent bias inherited from the past in Confucius's tradition.

Nietzsche wants a new beginning: we must free ourselves from traditional, erroneous moral beliefs, so that we may take seriously other values, as he himself does in *Dawn of Morning*. His discourse concerning human beings dips into the realm of instincts and drives:

[That] one wants to combat the violence of a drive at all is not within our power; neither the choice of method nor whether that method will succeed. Rather, in this whole process our intellect is clearly just the blind tool of another drive that is a rival of the one that is torturing us by its violence: whether it be the drive for peace and quiet, or fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love. So while "we" think we are complaining about the violence of a drive, it is basically one drive that is complaining about another, that is: the perception of suffering from this kind of violence presupposes that there is another drive that is just as violent or even more violent, and that there is going to be a struggle is in which our intellect is going to have to take sides (*DM* 109).

Nietzsche is suggesting that we do not choose our actions freely and we are more or less "spectators" in the struggle between our drives. We do not know much about the "motives" that prompts us to act, "whether it be the drive for peace and quiet, or fear of disgrace and other evil consequences, or love," because what "determines" our actions are the underlying drives and the outcomes of their "struggles." Nietzsche is claiming that "subjugation of an importunate drive is effected only by another drive, such as the drive for peace and quite, that is using the intellect as a tool."108 This is a move toward the decentering of the psyche as in Schopenhauer: the intellect, the primacy of which is

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rarely questioned by the Western tradition, is demoted to the status of a tool.

Nietzsche’s decentering of the psyche strikes at the heart of traditional philosophical anthropology. In an unpublished note, Nietzsche explains the role the “I” plays in the ordering of the drives:

The I is not the attitude of one being to several (drives, thoughts, etc.) but the ego is a plurality of personlike forces, of which now this one now that one stands in the foreground as ego and regards the others as a subject regards an influential and determining external world... Within ourselves we can also be egoistic or altruistic, hard-hearted, magnanimous, just, lenient, insincere, can cause pain or give pleasure: as the drives are in conflict, the feeling of the I is always strongest where the preponderance is (KSA 9:6[70]).109

The “I” is no longer a stable entity that is independent from the drives. On the contrary, any drive (or group of drives) may “stand up” and complain, or prevail as “I.”

The appropriate management of the drives is, thus, an important issue for Nietzsche’s new way of doing philosophy. He says:

About the philosopher,110 conversely, there is absolutely nothing that is impersonal; it is above all his morality which proves decidedly and decisively who he is—that is, in what hierarchy the innermost drives of his nature are arranged (BGE 6).

According to Nietzsche, great philosophers are great persons, who can rank their drives in an appropriate order.

Nietzsche admits that it takes a long time for him to draw “rational” conclusions from his experiences (EH II.1), that is, it takes some time for him to conclude that human

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109 This quotation of from Parkes (1994): 302.
110 Here, Nietzsche is referring to the philosopher of the future, who is noble, free from traditional morality, that is, he or she lives beyond good and evil.
beings are physical bodies and human actions are based on sensory perceptions with reason as a tool, whereas throughout the Chinese tradition, the human being is understood from a naturalistic point of view. For Confucius and most philosophers after him, human actions are “determined” by the fundamental physiological and psychological facts about them. Confucius does not have the mind/body dichotomy because throughout the Chinese tradition, the physical and the mental are naturally taken as inseparable. Human drives are considered natural. For instance, Confucius points out that the drive for possessing wealth and high station is natural for everyone, whereas poverty and low station are what people dislike (A 4.5).

The teachings of Xunzi and Mencius are recognized as legacy as they come after Confucius and both thinkers further elaborate the idea that human drives are natural and common for everyone. For instance, Xunzi says:

There is one common thing shared by all humans: when we are hungry, we want to eat; when we are cold, we want to get warmth; when we are tired, we want to rest; we prefer good and avoid evil. These are what we are born to be rather than to acquire through learning to. These are things shared by both Yu [one of the most respected Former Kings] and Jie [one of the most wicked kings in history] (X 4). According to Xunzi, the satiation of physical needs and the preference of good over bad are natural and shared by everyone. Mencius illustrates this very same point from the perspective of sensational drives and he says:

The way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colors, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smells and the four limbs towards ease is human nature (xing性)... (M VII B.24)

Unlike many Western philosophers who look down on (or even condemn) human drives,

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111 Confucius is recognized as the Sage (shengren 聖人), Mencius is named the Second-sage (yasheng 亞聖), and Xunzi is named the Great Confucian (daru 大儒).
in the eyes of Nietzsche and Confucius, we human beings are pluralities of personlike forces or drives. For both philosophers, those who undergo the process of human becoming have to know how to choose from and find an order of rank for their drives and desires.

Although the Analects does not present a detailed discussion on the management of human desires, Confucius’s point of view is clear. The highest stage of Confucius’s self-cultivation is described as: “At seventy, I followed the desires of my heart-mind without going over the bounds” (A 2.4). There are a few points to be noted. First, Confucius admits that he does have desires when he is seventy years old. Second, as discussed in section 2.1, when Confucius reaches seventy, he is at peace with tianming 天命 in all aspects of his everyday life. In other words, Confucius satisfies his desires in accordance with tian 天. Thus, becoming the junzi 君子 and the satisfaction of human desires are not mutually exclusive. Confucius also points out that those who have made progress in self-cultivation—that is, the junzi and the complete person (chengren 成人)—“have desires without being greedy (欲而不貪)” (A 14.12, 20.2). The Confucian junzi satisfies his or her desires appropriately because he or she acts according to ren.

According to Confucius, one’s native substance or stuff, that is, native drives (zhi 質), and acquired refinement (wen 文) are of equal importance in the process of self-cultivation. Only a well-balanced admixture of the two (wen and zhi) will allow one to become the junzi. He explains as follows:

When there is a preponderance of native substance (zhi) over acquired refinement (wen), the result will be churlishness (ye 野). When there is a preponderance of acquired refinement over native substance, the result will be pedantry (shi 史) (A
Confucius does not explain the terms *ye* and *shi* in further detail: all he says is that being either *ye* or *shi* is not good enough to become a *junzi*. This is the reason that Confucius proposes self-cultivation with an emphasis on self-discipline with the help of *li*. He says, "To return the observance of *li* through overcoming the self constitutes *ren*" (A 12.1). When he is asked to list the items, he begins from basic things in the everyday life. That is, one should not look, listen, speak, or move unless it is in accordance with *li*. The Confucian *junzi* lives according to *ren* in every moment in life: he or she "never deserts *ren*, not even as long as it takes to eat a meal" (A 4.5).

Inheriting the teaching of Confucius, Mencius provides a more in-depth discussion on the management of human drives. One of the most important issues in Mencius’s teachings is how one should choose among numerous drives the one which is the most appropriate to satisfy. Human beings are greedy and want to satisfy all desires, but in most cases, the satisfaction of all desires results in conflict. For instance, a king might like to satisfy all his desires: to be *ren*, *yi*, very rich and powerful at the same time. Or, in Mencius’ words, the king “loves all parts of his person without discrimination” and he wants to “nurture them all without discrimination” (*M VIA.*14). There is no way of telling whether such a king is good or bad other than by the choices he makes. Mencius points out that “the parts (*ti*) of a person differ in value and importance” and one should not “harm the parts of greater importance (*dai ti*) for the sake of the less valuable (*xiao ti*)” (*M VIA.*14). *Mencius explains that to retain one’s original heart-and-mind (*ben xin*) is of much greater importance than sensational satisfactions because the latter can easily be misled by external things (*M VIA.*15).  

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Mencius makes use of the metaphors of choosing between fish and bear’s palm to illustrate the struggle we go through for the selection of our various drives and desires:

Fish is what I want; bear’s palm is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would rather take bear’s palm than fish. Life is what I want; yi is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would rather take yi than life. On the one hand, though life is what I want, there is something I want more than life. That is why I do not cling to life at all costs. On the other hand, though death is what I loathe, there is something I loathe more than death...

What I would not accept in the first instance when it was a matter of life and death I now accept for the sake of beautiful houses; what I would not accept when it was a matter of life and death I now accept for the enjoyment of wives and concubines; what I would not accept when it was a matter of life and death I now accept for the sake of the gratitude my needy acquaintances will show me. Is there no way of putting a stop to this? This way of thinking is known as losing one’s original heart-and-mind (ben xin) (M VIA.10).

This is one of the most widely known and frequently quoted passages of the Mencius. According to Mencius, yi is of greater value than life and his choice of yi over life is guided by the original heart-and-mind (ben xin). In the most extreme case, if he had to choose between the desire to live and the desire to act according to yi, he would give up the former and take the latter. Certainly Mencius would not sacrifice yi for the satisfaction of any other human desires such as ten thousand bushels of grain, beautiful houses, the enjoyment of wives and concubines, or the gratitude of acquaintances. For both Confucius and Mencius, one’s actions are determined by the choice in the satisfaction of one’s particular drives and desires. In the process of human becoming, one learns how to arrange the drives in the most appropriate way.
Nietzsche’s method in dealing with human drives is similar to the pre-Qin Confucianists’ but he goes a step further. Nietzsche points out that human instincts and drives are powerful: if one can make good use of them, then they can be liberated in a constructive manner. He says:

Every mistake, in every sense, is the effect of degenerate instincts, of a disintegrated will: this virtually defined the bad. Everything good is instinct—and consequently is easy, necessary, free (TI 6.2).

According to Nietzsche, one should sublimate human drives so that energy (of the drives) can be retained and redirected. Many Western philosophers before Nietzsche suggest that one should suppress or tame one’s drives. According to Nietzsche, the loss of energy entails the weakening of the creative urge. Nietzsche suggests that one should train the instincts without taming, so that “one gives them back their [the instincts] freedom with confidence: they love us like good servants and ultimately go where our best inclines.”\(^\text{112}\) That is, one should divert the drives in proper directions so that they can be useful and constructive to the health of the person. Through self-cultivation (that is, the transformations of the spirit), one can make use of such power in a productive way.

Nietzsche’s new picture of what is human is that human actions are “determined” by the fundamental physiological and psychological facts about them. He perceives the human body as a manifold of activities which works smoothly without consciousness. For Confucius, the physical and the mental are naturally taken to be inseparable. Both philosophers consider human beings to be pluralities of drives, in which can be good or bad. Nietzsche’s method on the arrangement of the drives is that they should be sublimated. Thus, the best way is to make use of the power of the drives by redirecting

\(^{112}\) Quoted in Parkes (1994): 357.
them rather than suppressing them. For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the preservation of the native substance (the drives) and the acquired refinement (self-cultivation) are of equal importance in the process of human becoming. The drives of those who have undergone self-cultivation are arranged in an appropriate manner.

2.5 The Lion: An Intermediate Stage

The critical lion is an intermediate figure, yet it is essential before one can proceed to the child stage. It consists of a series of “battles” fought against traditional cultures and values. Only after the lion hurls out the battle cry, “No,” and declares the “I will” (Z I.1) does it transform itself into the child. The child is “innocent,” a clean slate, informed but not bound by any tradition or past. The child can thus create new values, write a new script, and become the master of his or her own self: only then does the lion culminate in a positive conquering and reauthoring of tradition.
Part III The Child Stage of the Three Transformations of the Spirit;

"... At fifty I understood tianming 天命; at sixty my ear was attuned..." (A 2.4)

In this part, I compare the last constructive stage of Zarathustra’s three transformations of the spirit, the child, with Confucius’s renzhe 仁者. Although the child is a kind of culmination of the three transformations of the spirit, it also represents a “new beginning.” The three transformations of the spirit are presented in the early pages of Nietzsche’s most important book, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, but most of this work is devoted to the further development and maturation of the child. For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the process of human becoming is a life-long project, and in Zarathustra we are presented with a kind of “photo album” of the process. Part III is divided into four sections. Section 3.1 is a discussion of the Nietzschean child stage and section 3.2 is a comparison between the elements of the Nietzschean and the Confucian processes of human becoming, the latter expressed as the self-cultivation of a renzhe. Section 3.3 focuses on the Confucian creation, ren 仁. Finally I bring these scattered ingredients together in a comparison of the two ways for becoming a consummate human. Only with the formation of the child stage can Nietzsche gain back and affirm the world. With the creation of ren, Confucius establishes the process of self-cultivation. Both Nietzsche’s child and Confucius’s renzhe enjoy their everyday lives in this world.

3.1 The Child Stage of Nietzsche: A New Beginning

Because Nietzsche’s lion attacks almost everything in the territory of its tradition, it ends up in complete despair on an empty plain. Only when the lion goes beyond the negation
of the tradition it inherited and creates its own values can it be transformed into the child. Or, in Nietzsche’s words, only after the act of crying out the sacred “No” to the “Thou shalt” and the declaration of the “I will” can the lion be transformed into the child. In virtue of this act of rejection and determination, we may understand the child as “innocent and forgetting” (Z I.1). It refuses to be constrained by inherited ideals or to be burdened by obedience to the past. In Zarathustra’s use of the special term “innocent,” there is an indication that what the child is liberated from is the Christian burden of “original sin.” The child defeats the “golden dragon” of the Christian commandments (the “Thou Shalt”), which is the strongest power against which Zarathustra has to fight. It would, however, be inappropriate to perceive the innocent child as “naïve,” since this would suggest a lack of experience and wisdom. The child is, in fact, a potent creature which emerges from the three transformations of the spirit having passed through the stages in which it learns and becomes critical. By retaining what is of practical use to life and leaving behind what is of no use to its own progress, the child is now free to create its own “new world.”

Nevertheless, the child is young, and this is why Zarathustra describes this stage as a “beginning anew” (Z I.1). In the stages prior to becoming the child, the “Thou Shalt” was a command. The stage of the child is a new beginning because, from now on, there will be a revaluation of the standards that have fortified the community into which the child was born. This deconstructed world is completely new for the child, and from now on the child becomes a creator (a kind of craftsman), living according to its own decisions and judgments, setting a course in a vessel of its own design. Nietzsche describes the child as a “self-propelled wheel,” (Z I.1) the captain of its own dispatch.
In section 2.1, the lion was described as desolate, lacking in direction, and lost in nihilism, but the child is able to affirm, and even engender the world, with a will of its own. Facing the abyss, the child affirms life as the vital and joyous activity itself. With the sacred “Yes” of the affirmation of life, the child gains back a world untrammeled by inherited trappings, and fertile with the conditions for its own flourishing.

The child, then, is a “beginning anew” and a “first movement” (Z I.1). Although human becoming is a life-long process, the transformation to the child is a critical beginning. The child must then progress, and there are many things for it to learn. By using each creative step as an impetus towards greater creative projects, the child proceeds to progressively greater acts of creation. Hence, each generative act of creation cannot be considered in any way as a goal per se, since static goals are inappropriate for Nietzsche's notion of continual progress. Rather, what he proposes is an attitude towards life: becoming human is a process of overcoming that persists throughout one's life. To become the Nietzschean child is to live with such an attitude of self-reliance. There is no room for religious or cultural indoctrinations in such an attitude towards life. The will of self-determination alone steers the course.

The child continues to craft (or “create”) its world throughout its lifetime and its creation does not have any metaphysical context. The child's creations are decisions and judgments based on human experiences which will unavoidably involve errors, mistakes and omissions. The child has to review the fabric of its creations and modify its weave from time to time. The advice of Zengzi, a disciple of Confucius, would be useful for the Nietzschean child: “Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have
undertaken on another's behalf, have I failed to do my best? In my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I failed to practice repeatedly what has been passed on me?" (A 1.4) In the most extreme case, the child should again become a courageous lion that negates and discards its own creations when they fail to flourish. The child has to reflect on and criticize its own knowledge and creations from time to time, and with imagination proceed on to further creations. Nietzsche points out that every new creation will eventually become an artifact of the past (HL 3). In this light, the three transformations of the spirit can better be understood as “the three transformative cycles of the spirit.”

3.2 Human Becoming: A Life-long Process

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, self-cultivation is a life-long process. I begin by comparing the nature of Nietzsche's three transformations of the spirit to Confucius's personal experience of self-cultivation (A 2.4). The burden for becoming a consummate human is heavy, and this path is long because only with death does the path come to an end.

3.2.1 The Life-long Process of Self-cultivation

Nietzsche's three transformations of the spirit suggest that the human being is not something that one is; it is something that one does, and in so doing one becomes a consummate human. Thus Spoke Zarathustra is an illustration of Zarathustra's struggle to “become what he is.” Zarathustra says, “Human being is something that shall be
overcome” (Z, P3). Among Western philosophers, Nietzsche is recognized as perhaps the strongest advocate of the idea that the human being is not a given, but rather an ongoing, dynamic process. That is to say, humanity is not something permanent or enduring as such, because humanity is a creative process, not a static entity.

Nietzsche asserts that the greatness in humankind is that “it is a bridge” between the beast and the Übermensch (Z, P4). Analects 2.4 presents the overcoming process of Confucius: the process of self-cultivation. The structure of the passage suggests that it is a continuous, life-long process:

At fifteen my heart-mind (xin 心) was set upon learning; at thirty I took my stance (li 立); at forty I was no longer in two minds (bu huo 不惑); at fifty I understood tianming 天命; at sixty my ear was finely attuned (er shun 耳順); at seventy I followed the desires of my heart-mind without going over the bounds (A 2.4).

Confucius himself successfully becomes a consummate human being, so one can learn the appropriate path of self-cultivation from his own personal achievement. Confucius’s emphasis on perseverance throughout the process of self-cultivation is evident in the following words:

As in the case of making a mound, if, before the very last basketful, I stop, then I shall have stopped. As in the case of leveling the ground, if, though tipping only one basketful, I am going forward, then I shall be making progress (A 9.19).

Confucius is saying that self-cultivation is not the achievement of a particular goal of “self” and that, if one stops before this goal is achieved, one has not completed one’s task. Rather, self-cultivation is a process through which one simply tries to cultivate oneself to the highest degree that one can in one’s time on earth.

Confucius says that he has not come across anyone whose strength is insufficient
when striving to be *ren* (A 4.6). Confucius respects highly the very few who can naturally act, talk, and live according to the *li* and music (A 11.1, 16.9) and considers them "educated" (*xue*) even if they know nothing about his teachings (A 1.7). Nevertheless, both Nietzsche and Confucius admit that only a few human beings are willing to undergo the painful and arduous process of human becoming.

In A.2.4, Confucius states that he found his stance (*li*) at the age of thirty after studying and learning from tradition for more than twenty years (that is, from the time he started to memorize the ancient texts until the age of thirty). The term, "*li*," probably means that by the time Confucius was thirty, he had found his appropriate standpoint or position and he knew that he wanted to undergo the process of self-cultivation and become a consummate human. The passage continues, “at forty I was no longer in two minds (*bu huo*).” It seems that though Confucius found the appropriate position for himself when he was thirty, he had not overcome all his doubts in making judgments. Only at the age of forty did he leave his doubts behind. The Chinese term, *bu huo*, can also be found in A 9.29 & A 14.28, “The person of wisdom (*zhi*) is never in two minds; the person of *ren* never worries; the person of *yong* never afraid.” This shows that Confucius was recognized as a person of wisdom (*zhi*) when he was forty years old. Nevertheless, as the passage continues, it becomes apparent that the process of human becoming involves much more than becoming a person of wisdom: “At fifty I understood *tianming* 天命; at sixty my ear was finely attuned (*er shu* 耳順).” The Chinese character “*sheng* 聰” (sage) is found in archaeological texts with an ear (*er* 耳)

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113 The idea of finding one’s standpoint (*li*) (also found in A.8.8) can also be considered as a process of personal cultivation. Confucius says, “Be stimulated by the *Shijing*, take your stand through the help of *li* and be fulfilled by music” (A 8.8).
and a mouth (kou 口) components. According to D.C. Lau, "This saying (at sixty, my ear was finely attuned) of Confucius's has something to do with the fact that Confucius was regarded as a sage by even his contemporaries." For example, Confucius was named as a sage by a high office in the government (A 9.6).

A 2.4 continues, "At seventy I followed the desires of my heart-mind without going over the bounds." This last part of A 2.4 is a further step beyond the earlier stage, "At fifty I understood tianming." At the age of fifty, Confucius was able to understand tianming, but it seems that he had to be consciously aware of the vague "order" of tian in every aspect of his daily life. That is, he had to remind himself constantly and be careful with his everyday behavior by reflecting on tianming. Only when he reached the latter stage of his life (at the age of seventy) could he "follow the desires of his heart-mind without going over the bounds." That is, Confucius could be at peace with tianming in all aspects of his everyday life at the age of seventy. Another passage in the Analects is useful to capture the difference between these two stages. Confucius says, "To be fond of (hao 好) it is better than merely to know (zhi 知) it, and to find joy in (yue 樂) it is better than merely to be fond of it" (A 6.20). At the age of fifty, Confucius understands (knows) tianming but when he reaches seventy, he is fond of tianming. It is, however, important to note that there is no final destination for the process: one has to take the process of human becoming as a heavy burden and a long road. Zengzi, a disciple of Confucius, points out that "only with death does the road come to an end" (A 8.7). If Confucius did not die in his seventies, there would be additional stages in the

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115 However, it is not clear who this person was or even from which state the officer came.
Confucian process of human becoming. A reading of A 6.20 can, perhaps, anticipate a further stage.

It is possible that the next step might read as follows: at eighty, I found joy in living with the guiding light of tianming. This suggestion is drawn from the self-portrait Confucius paints of himself in the Analects:

In the eating of coarse rice and the drinking of water, the using of one's elbow for a pillow, joy is to be found. Wealth and rank attained through inappropriate (bu yi 不義) means have as much to do with me as the passing clouds (A 7.16).

It is not known how old Confucius was when he said these words, but these descriptions suggest that he did “find joy in living with tianming.” According to historical records, Confucius died in his early seventies, but such information can be inferred from the lifestyle upon which he sets his heart:

In late spring, after the new spring clothes have been made, I should like, together with five or six adults and six or seven boys, to go bathing in the River Yi and enjoy the breeze on the Rain Altar, and then to go home chanting poetry (A 11.26).

This is a description of a pastoral and peaceful community. First, people are physically unconstrained and satisfied, and they even have new clothes in springtime. Secondly, they live according to the li 禮, for the passage describes a kind of ritual ceremony in springtime. Thirdly, they are educated, for they go home chanting poetry after the ceremony. This highest stage of Confucius's self-development is characterized by becoming coextensive with the community of which one is part (A 5.26, 11.26).

Confucius's and Nietzsche's emphasis on the importance of self-cultivation and the development of one's character is similar to Aristotle's emphasis on eudaimonia (1094-1102) in some of its aspects. Aristotle remarks that “it agrees with our account
that the *eudaimon* lives well and acts well; for it [that is, *eudaimonia*] has been pretty well defined as a sort of well-living (*euzoia*) and well-acting (*eupraxia*)" (1098b21). The *eudaimon* is the one who undergoes self-cultivation and acquires good character. To call one a *eudaimon* is to say something about how one lives and what one does in one's everyday life.

However, we should be careful not to interpret Nietzsche's or Confucius's ideas along the lines of the Aristotelian notions of *potentiality* and formal cause. According to Aristotle, "Actuality is prior to potentiality" (1049b5). Aristotle points out that the actual is *logically* prior to the potential because actuality is the end, and it is *for the sake of* this that the potentiality exists or is acquired.\(^{116}\) For instance, although a boy is prior in time to his actualization as a man, his manhood is logically prior, since his boyhood is *for the sake of* his manhood. For both Nietzsche and Confucius, the Aristotelian distinction of actuality/potentiality is not applicable. There is no pre-given "essence" or "potentiality" in their philosophies. For both philosophers, there is no such thing as "actuality prior to our potentiality" in becoming a consummate human. For Nietzsche and Confucius, human becoming is taken as a creative attempt to fulfill aspirations in life. In other words, such becoming depends on the ways we are able to make use of ourselves given the interface between our initial conditions and our natural, socio-cultural environment.\(^ {117}\)

\(^{116}\) According to Aristotle, the main proof for the priority of actuality is the same as in the case of the argument for the priority of nature to what is perishable and that which is eternal, imperishable, is in the highest sense actual.

In one of Nietzsche's earliest writings, he suggests that our true nature is a yet-undefined possibility that we might achieve through self-overcoming: "Be yourself! You are not all that which you are now doing, believing, desiring" (SE 1). What Nietzsche means is that there is no self-encapsulated consciousness or "core" self for our experience to be layered upon. In the non-teleological Chinese philosophical tradition, there is no clear-cut distinction between actuality and potentiality.

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, human becoming is a creative and dynamic process pursued over the course of a lifetime. Zengzi’s words about being the junzi 君子 can also be used to describe the Nietzschean child: "Only at death does the road [the process of human becoming] come to an end" (A 8.7). After Yan Hui’s death, Confucius says of him, “I watched him make progress, but I did not see him realize his capacity to the full. What a pity!” (A 9.21) In his short life span, Yan Hui makes progress (jin 进) in the process of human becoming and he never stops (zhi 止) overcoming himself. For both thinkers, self-cultivation should be understood as a building upon previous stages, rather than a substitution of them.

3.2.2 Becoming the Junzi 君子 and the Renzhe 仁者

According to Confucius, there is no single, “ideal” character, but rather a variety of options. Lower down the scale of the “ideal” figures are the good person (shanren 善人) and the complete person (chengren 成人). Confucius says that he has not seen any shanren but this term applies to those in charge of government (A 13.11, 13.29). On one occasion, he is asked about the way of the good person but his answer is obscure (A
11.20). Complete persons are described in terms applied not exclusively to them. The *chengren* "remembers what is *yi* 義 at the sight of profit," and is ready to lay down his or her life in the face of danger (A 14.12). These features are also used to describe the *junzi* (A 19.1). It is important to note that Confucius does not draw a clear distinction among various model characters; they are not mutually exclusive and very often overlap with each other.

The highest or most estimable character is the sage (*shengren* 聖人). This character is so highly developed that it is hardly ever attained. Confucius claims neither to be a sage himself nor to have seen such a person. He says, "I have no hopes of meeting a sage" (A 7.26). On another occasion, he says, "How dare I claim to be a sage or a *renzhe*?" (A 7.34) The only time he points to the kind of person that would be called a sage is when Zigong asks him, "If there were one who gave extensively to the common people and brought help to the multitude, what would you think of him? Could he be called *ren* 仁?" Confucius’s answer is as follows: "It is no longer a matter of *ren* with such a person. If you must describe such a person, ‘sage’ is, perhaps, the right word" (A 6.30). There is no doubt, however, the model character for Confucius is the *junzi*, who is discussed in more than eighty passages in the *Analects*. Confucius says that there is no hope of meeting a sage and he would be content if he ever met a *junzi* (A 7.26). This passage shows that the *junzi* can be met whereas the *sage* cannot be found. Confucius, nevertheless, does not have a distinctive definition for each model character and many of the characteristics of these multiple characters are overlapping.

Another way to understand the Confucian *junzi* is to discuss it in contrast with the
petty person (xiaoren 小人). In traditional texts, the former refers to people in authority while the latter refers to those who are ruled. In the Analects, however, junzi and xiaoren are terms more commonly used to refer to personal achievements in self-cultivation. The junzi is a person of cultivated character, while the xiaoren is the opposite. The two usages indicating the social and moral status are not exclusive and, in individual cases, it is difficult to be sure whether, besides their moral connotations, these terms may not also carry their usual social connotations as well.

The Confucian petty person and the Nietzschean “last human” are similar in many aspects. Zarathustra’s “last human” can be considered the essential counterpart to the Übermensch. According to Nietzsche, the “last human” and the Übermensch represent the two extremes made possible by the malleability the human being, “the as yet undetermined animal” (BGE 62). As Zarathustra presents the historical crisis, the consequence of the death of God is that we either decay into the nihilism of the “last human being” or revive ourselves by reaching for the Übermensch.

According to Lampert, the “last human” lives on the basis of calculated self-interest and makes use of other people for his or her own spiritual and physical advantage (Z, P5):

The approaching universal domination by the last man poses the greatest threat to the project of the Übermensch; the victory of the last man would preclude the coming of the Übermensch and thereby prevent the earth from having any meaning.118

The Nietzschean “last human” and the Confucian xiaoren (A 4.11) are people “without any ideals and aspirations, but well fed, well-clothed, well-housed, and

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well-medicated.”¹¹⁹ In short, their interest concerns worldly profit and comfort for themselves (Z, P5, A 4.11, 4.16). Their happiness, which requires the reassurance and recognition of others (A 4.24), is a “fragile happiness.”¹²⁰ These people use others as a means for their self-interest, as they are themselves used by others. They tend to be content with themselves in a uniform community in which particularity, variety and uniqueness are diminished.

In contrast to the petty person, Confucius’s junzi is his model character. It is expected that a person becomes a junzi only after a great deal of hard work and self-cultivation. In order to have a full understanding of the character of the junzi, we have to look into the most important quality, ren 仁, that the junzi is supposed to possess. Although this term was known and used before Confucius, he is the first one to propose the cultivation of ren for the process of human becoming. Becoming ren is the foremost task set by Confucius for himself and his disciples and the idea of ren, a human created value, greatly influenced Chinese civilization for the next two thousand years.

In the following passage, it is clear that ren is the essential quality a junzi must possess: “If junzi forsake ren, wherein can they make a name for themselves? Junzi never desert ren, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. If they hurry and stumble one may be sure that it is in ren that they do so” (A 4.5). In some passages, “the junzi 君子” and “the renzhe 仁者” are almost interchangeable terms. For instance, “the junzi is free from worries and fears” (A 12.4), whereas “the renzhe does not have worries (A 9.29,

Confucius is once asked about the junzi and he enumerates a number of tasks for this character (A 14.42). First, the junzi must cultivate himself or herself to achieve reverence. The highest task of the junzi is to cultivate himself or herself and thereby bring peace and security to the people. However, if there is one who gives extensively to the common people and brings help to the multitude, then he or she is considered a sage (A 6.30). Even King Yao and King Shun, the most respectable ancient-sages in history, would have found it difficult to accomplish as much.

To sum up, like the Confucian junzi (or the renzhe), the process of becoming the Nietzschean new philosopher (or the immoralist) has no terminus; it is not a path of study that culminates in particular recognition, like a degree from a university. The Confucian junzi and the Nietzschean immoralist cannot find any status in the winning of awards or the formal recognition of achievements. Their dedication is not tied to external signs of accomplishment, or to accomplishment at all. Instead, it is by virtue of their attentive engagement with life in all its aspects that the junzi or the immoralist can have these attitudes towards life. Only death can bring an end to this process of human becoming.

3.3 Seeing Through the Lens of Ren 仁

The character for ren, which appears over one hundred times in the Analects, is a fairly simple graph, and according to the Shuowen lexicon, it is made up of the elements ren 人, “person”, and er 二, the number “two.” This etymological analysis underscores

121 Along with the idea of ren, Confucius also creates other values such as yi, xin, and zhong. These values are also connected with the observance of li but the idea of ren is the most frequently and broadly discussed. These values are not mutually exclusive but very often overlap in various aspects.
the Confucian assumption that one cannot become a cultivated person on one’s own.\textsuperscript{122} In other words, human beings are irreducibly social. Herbert Fingarette states the matter concisely: “For Confucius, unless there are at least two human beings, there can be no human beings.”\textsuperscript{123} Moreover, it is important to point out that the pronunciation of the Chinese character, “ren 仁,” is the same as the Chinese character, “human 人.” According to archeological researches, Chinese characters in ancient times were very often written by a homophone instead of a graph with the correct meaning. Hence, it is possible that the two terms, “ren 仁” and “human 人” were interchangeable in ancient usage. At the very least, they are cognate terms with a shared range of meaning. Ames and Rosemont give a detailed elaboration of the meaning of ren 仁:

\textit{Ren} is one’s entire person: one’s cultivated cognitive, aesthetic, and moral sensibilities are expressed in one’s ritualized roles and relationships. It is one’s “field of selves,” the sum of significant relationships, that constitute one as a resolutely social person.\textsuperscript{124} Ren is not only “mental,” but physical as well, and includes one’s postures, comportment, gestures and body language (A 5.25). The idea of ren will be impoverished if we isolate “one out of the many dispositions at the expense of so much more that comes together in the complexity of becoming human.”\textsuperscript{125} The full participation of ren requires our thoughts, feelings, emotions, values, and attitudes to be appropriate to the circumstances we involve ourselves in.

Generally speaking, when one becomes a Confucian renzhe 仁者, one satisfies the criteria for the Nietzschean sovereign individual (GM 2.2). Ren is a kind of value that

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{122} Ames & Rosemont (1998): 48.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} Fingarette (1983): 217.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} Ames & Rosemont (1998): 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} Ames & Rosemont (1998): 49.
\end{itemize}
renzhe actively attain, rather than pre-determined. In other words, renzhe are free from any morality of custom, and possess their own standards of values. Renzhe are always honest with themselves: they live in a ren manner because they want to do so. Renzhe live with honesty and sincerity and they are responsible for their actions in everyday life. In order to understand a person’s true character, Confucius would look at each aspect of the everyday life of that particular person, including the means he or she employed, would observe the path he or she took and would examine where he or she felt at home (A 2.10). Renzhe behave, live, and are attracted to ren because they want to be ren (A 4.2).

Persons of ren (renzhe) behave according to their own created values (that is, ren). The decisions a particular renzhe actually makes in everyday life depend on his or her own background and his or her judgment of particular circumstances. Different renzhe could respond quite differently to the same situation because they are creators of their own ren. As long as people are acting according to ren, they will be appreciated. There is no rule-of-thumb for being ren, though we can learn from the personal experiences of historical figures such as Confucius. It is important to point out that for both Confucius and Nietzsche, the emphasis on one’s values as self-created entails their intimacy with actions taken. There is no separation between actions and values, and indeed, it is inconceivable to have a separation of form and content. Actions do not follow values, they are the consummation of the dynamics of the personally realized values.

It is noteworthy to point out that what Nietzsche and Confucius propose is an
attitude towards life, which is different from moral theories such as Kant’s categorical imperative, which makes a distinction between being boorish and being immoral. Both Nietzsche and Confucius emphasize that the cultivation of character and learning from historical models is far more important than following rules or theories. Both philosophers live according to their teachings and are models from whom we can learn. According to Confucius, if one is correct (cheng 正) in one’s own person, then there will be obedience without orders being given; but if one is not correct (bu cheng 不正) in one’s own person, there will not be obedience even though orders are given (A 13.6). For instance, if the ruling class were people of few materialistic desires who set an example by not stealing from the people, then the common people would not steal even if stealing carried a reward with it (A 12.18).

Many moral theories tend to appeal to super-imposed measures like Principle, Truth, or Good, whereas in the teachings of Nietzsche and Confucius, there is no quest for such metaphysical ideals. The values and ideas proposed by Nietzsche and Confucius are products of human experience. As Nietzsche says, it is “overthrowing idols (my word for ‘ideals’)—that comes closer to being part of my craft” (EH Preface). For both Nietzsche and Confucius, there is no Truth or “Standard,” though there are varying degrees of appropriate or inappropriate behavior along a continuum on which a failure is considered a lapse in the process of human becoming. This kind of continuum can be understood as a polarity that consists of correlative terms such as appropriate and inappropriate, instead of exclusive terms such as good and evil. The Nietzschean immoralist and the Confucian renzhe are profoundly different from the followers of law and order. The former involves the process of forging new values for oneself, whereas
the latter conforms to external restrictions on actions. There is a separation of inner values and outer rules in most cases of law and order. By and large, law and order take rationality, or in some cases intention, into consideration, but for the most part, they work by means of social contracts in which the emphasis is on compliance.

Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s teachings go beyond traditional definitions of good and evil. There is no universal moral principle in their philosophies; rather, the judgment of good or evil has to be put in the particular context and circumstances. As discussed at the end of section 2.3, Nietzsche and Confucius are not relativists. Ethical criticisms can be based upon how one behaves according to Nietzsche’s created values (amor fati and eternal recurrence of the same) or Confucius’s idea of ren. Nietzsche and Confucius do not have a kind of constant “measure”\textsuperscript{126} for the evaluation of actions such as those found in the Platonic or the rationalist tradition. Their created values or “measures” have to be used in a contextual way, according to a particular situation.

The role of law and punishment in the teachings of Confucius differs radically from its role in classical Western thinking. For instance, Aristotle points out that “laws in their enactment in all subjects aim at the common advantage of all” (1129b15). For Confucius, the laws are viewed as a poor way of achieving the common good. He says:

Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by excellence (de 德), keep them in line with the li 禮, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves (A 2.3).

As Aristotle argues, law is necessary for keeping order in a community. Confucius also

\textsuperscript{126} Refer to section 1.2.3 for a discussion of the affirmation of becoming and more on non-everlasting “measure.”
knows that the common people (min 民) in the community have little interest in undergoing the process of self-cultivation. Though it is not the best way, law and punishment are useful tools to restrict the common people (A 2.3). To achieve what is best for the community, as befitting an ethics that is centered on “modeling” and self-cultivation, persuasion and education are preferred over the sanction of law. Henry Rosemont argues that the prudential or obligatory concept clusters embedded in Western law-governed morality, such as “autonomy,” “rights,” “duties,” and “ought,” are absent in Confucius’s teaching.\footnote{127} Moreover, modern laws and rules belong to a kind of prohibitive, punitive mechanism—they focus on what we should not do—whereas Nietzsche’s human becoming and Confucius’s self-cultivation provide positive guidelines and directions for how one should live and become consummate human beings.

Nietzsche and Confucius think that reason also has an important role to play in the decision-making processes, but their notions of reason are commonsensical and based on human experience instead of resting on metaphysical principles. Reason emerges from knowledge of the world. Knowledge and values are human creations derived from concrete experience of everyday life. One’s ideas about value and appropriateness are pegged on one’s past experience. The past serves as a mainstay against which one’s new ideas are compared and from which they are developed. Ideas and values of the past are thereby seen instrumentally, instead of as goods or ends in themselves.\footnote{128} The idea that values have to be \textit{created} provides positive implications for inter-cultural discourse: only when we speak of good, instead of The Good, can we take a pragmatic

\footnote{127}{Rosemont (1991), 71-101.} 
\footnote{128}{This point originates from McDermott (1981): 588.}
stance in cross-cultural issues.

3.3.1 Ren 仁 as a Disposition in Action

Renzhe 仁者 have to pay attention to their decisions and behavior in everyday life. They must always consider whether their behavior is felicitous, and Zengzi suggests that one should examine oneself on three counts every day (A 1.4). Certainly it is demanding to act with ren or engender ren all the time, and Confucius admits that, except for Yan Hui, the rest of his disciples succeed in practicing ren only once in a while (A 6.7). An exception, perhaps, is that when Confucius reached seventy, he granted that he finally had the ability to follow (cong 從) his heart-and-mind’s desire (yu 欲) without overstepping his bounds. By then, the practice of ren was entrenched. A 6.20 can be used to identify various markers in the process of becoming ren. Confucius says of ren: “To be fond of it is better than merely to know it, and to find joy in it is better than merely to be fond of it” (A 6.20). The first stage is to act in accordance with ren; the next is to be fond of being ren; and the highest level is to find joy in being ren. Renzhe are those who understand, are fond of, and find joy in living with the propensities of tianming 天命: they relish every aspect of life, take pleasure from every moment, and delight in all circumstances.129 This renzhe employs ren as an attitude towards living attentively. Such an understanding of ren illustrates how Confucius’s views on self-cultivation (A 2.4) are really teachings about how to live well.

With the idea of ren, Confucius points to the path of self-cultivation and provides an

129 This point is discussed in Part 4, in a comparison to Nietzsche’s idea of “amor fati.”
answer to the question, “How can one become a consummate human being?” Confucius emphasizes the exercise of self-cultivation and, like Nietzsche, who objects to the separation of inner and outer in his teaching, eschews the theoretical and the abstract. Confucius holds that those who can behave naturally with ren, even if they know nothing about him or his teaching, should be recognized as consummate human beings. Formal education recognized by the official system is not what matters for Confucius. His focus is on actual practices in the real world. In the Analects, it is evident that Confucius is not overly impressed by the standards and trappings of formal education, but instead sees that cultivated habits and attentive behaviors in everyday life are tools for the cultivation of ren. Zixia, a disciple of Confucius, offers an elaboration on what sort of a person can be considered “educated” (xue 學):

I would grant that one is indeed, a scholar—who shows deference to those of excellent character by putting on the right countenance, who exerts oneself to the utmost in the service of one’s parents and offers one’s person in the service of one’s lord, and who, in one’s dealings with one’s friends, is trustworthy in what one says—even though one be said to be unschooled (A 1.7).

Here, Zixia is pointing out the mundane practices of everyday life. If one lives in accordance with appropriate attitudes and values, then one will be considered “educated” even if one has never received any formal education. Those who live and behave in an appropriate way will be respected and appreciated, even if they never have any intellectual grasp of ren. According to Nietzsche and Confucius, a well-educated or knowledgeable person does not necessarily become a new philosopher or a junzi.

Whether a particular person is a new philosopher or a junzi depends on what that person

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130 For instance, A 1.2, 1.14, 4.1, 6.22, 12.1.
131 “Being educated” (xue) is a description of great appreciation for Confucius. Confucius himself is proud to claim that throughout his life, he loves learning. He says, “In a hamlet of ten households, there are bound to be those who are my equal in doing their best for others (zhong 忠) and in being trustworthy in what they say (xin), but they are unlikely to be as eager to learn (hao xue 好學) as I am” (A.5.28).
actually does and how that person lives his or her everyday life.

Zixia believes that nothing is lost and much can be gained by having his students focus on sweeping and cleaning (A 19.12). In progressing through the steps of his instruction, from superficial to fundamental concerns, students would have much to gain even if, in pursuing their studies, they had not seen the process of human becoming through to its end. In this light, two points emerge as noteworthy. First, only the very few can become consummate humans, yet many can achieve a certain degree of personal development if they are dedicated to such learning. Second, one may learn about ren through the humdrum chores of an ordinary life. For instance, when one responds to calls or replies to questions, one should act according to the li. Zixia’s point is that because the junzi or the renzhe is careful to avoid mistakes even in minor matters, one who wishes to begin self-cultivation can do so by acting according to the li in everyday, pedestrian practices.

Ren is a created value one relies on whereas the system of li provides concrete and culturally specific guidelines for the presentation of values and attitudes (that is, ren). The reason why Confucius still places so much emphasis on the observance of li is that most people (including most of his disciples) have not become junzi and renzhe. After all, only Yan Hui does not lapse from ren for a period of three months, whereas the other disciples attain ren merely in fits and starts (A 6.7). There are a few points worth noting in this passage. Confucius does not say that Hui, being his favorite disciple, can always live according to ren. He only says that for three months at a time, Hui does not

\[132\] A 5.4, 5.5, 5.8, 5.19.
lapse from ren. Even for those who have attained a certain consistency in becoming ren, it would be a difficult task never to lapse from ren in one’s life. Confucius, therefore, proposes li as a kind of structure for appropriate actions in facing particular circumstances of everyday life—a kind of bridge over doubt and uncertainty. Youzi points out that “to be respectful is close to being observant of li” because it enables one to stay clear of disgrace and insult (A 1.13). With the observance of li, one becomes a good member in the clan and a respectful person in the village: such a person devotes himself or herself to the roots of self-cultivation (A 1.2). This point is further supported by A 8.2, where Confucius says, “Unless people have the observance of li, in being respectful they will wear themselves out, in being careful they will become timid, in having courage they will become unruly, and in being forthright they will become unrelenting.”

Even for those who have gained some progress in the process of human becoming, it is difficult to recall ren and correlate appropriate behavior in every moment and situation. Confucius, thus, refers to the observance of li as a means to self-cultivation. For instance, when traveling abroad, one should behave as though one is receiving an important guest; when employing the services of the common people behave as though one is officiating at an important sacrifice (A 12.2). The actual practice of li can be used as a tool for the development of ren and yet the attainment of ren can further strengthen the practice of li by providing a kind of structure for conventional rituals. There are other passages in the Analects that show the importance of li 禮. For instance, “taking the stance for oneself (li 禮)” is one of the essential steps in Confucius’s self-cultivation (A 2.4) and Confucius suggests more than once that li 禮 can be achieved
through the observance of *li* (A 8.8, 16.13). Passage A 6.27 discusses the very same point from another perspective when Confucius says, “Junzi widely versed in culture (*wen* 文) but brought back to essentials by *li* can, I suppose, be relied upon not to turn against what they stood for” (A 6.27). To sum up, the observance of *li* can be taken as a means to be *ren*.

When Confucius is asked to list the items of *ren*, he answers in terms of *li*: “Do not look at anything that violates the observance of *li*. Do not listen to anything that violates the observance of *li*. Do not speak about anything that violates the observance of *li*. Do not make any movement that violates the observance of *li*” (A 12.1). This advice is similar to Nietzsche’s words on the “three tasks for which educators are required”:

One must learn to see, one must learn to think, one must learn to speak and write. The goal of all three tasks is a noble culture.

To learn to see—to accustom the eye to composure, to patience, to letting things come to it; to put off judgment, to learn to walk around all sides of the individual case and comprehend it from all sides (*TI* 8.6).

This is what Nietzsche named as the “first preliminary schooling in spirituality”. This preparatory strategy involves “not reacting immediately to a stimulus, but gaining control over the restraining, repressing instincts.” However, for Nietzsche and Confucius, this kind of self-control is merely a means, rather than an end in itself, in self-cultivation. For both philosophers, the next step is the creation of one’s own values, so that one can act accordingly. The Nietzsche immoralist and the Confucian *renzhe* “give back to the drives their freedom” but it is a kind of self-determination of which only the greater human beings are capable.
The active pursuit of values is an essential undertaking for one who wishes to become the Confucian renzhe or the Nietzschean immoralist, yet a zhouli-performer or the one who lives with an ascetic ideal tend to acquiesce to the rituals and the ideals in a passive way. Whether one can become the immoralist or the renzhe depends mainly on one’s own efforts. Confucius says, “The practice of ren depends on oneself alone, and not on others” (A 12.1) and “Is ren really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here” (A 7.30). Whether one can become a person of ren depends solely on one’s will, effort, and determination. On one occasion, Confucius wants to settle amongst the Nine Barbarian Tribes of the east whose ways are commonly criticized as uncouth. Confucius replies, “Once a junzi settles amongst them, what uncouthness will there be?” (A 9.14) There are a few points worth noting in this passage. First, one mainly relies on one’s own effort in self-cultivation. Second, if the junzi settle in a barbarous environment, their good qualities may have a positive influence on the people there. Third, Confucius does not have any prejudice toward the “uncivilized” people 133 and he would respect and appreciate those barbarians who can naturally act according to appropriate li and music (A 11.1). The li and music of the “barbarians” are probably different from those of the Confucian culture, yet if their actions are in accordance with Confucian ren, then they would also be considered junzi. My elaborations of A 9.14 are supported by Confucius’s words in A 13.19, 15.6:

While at home hold yourself in a respectful attitude; when serving in an official capacity be reverent; when dealing with others give of your best. These are qualities that cannot be put aside, even if you go and live among the barbarians (A 13.19).

133 Confucius also says, “In instruction there is no grading into categories” (A 15.39).
If in word you are conscientious and trustworthy and in deed single-minded and reverent, then even in the land of the barbarians you will go forward without obstruction (A 15.6).

The qualities mentioned in A 13.19 and 15.6 are almost the same as those Confucius appreciates in Zichan, who possesses the way of the junzi on four counts: in the manner he conducts himself, he is respectful, in the service of his lord, he is reverent, in caring for the common people, he is generous, and in employing their services, he is just (A 5.16).

Although the process of human becoming can only be attained by personal endeavor, one can learn from those who have made progress in self-cultivation. Confucius explains this as follows: “Of neighborhoods ren is the most beautiful. How can people be considered wise who, when they have the choice, do not settle in ren?” (A 4.1) Confucius teaches one to seek the patronage of the most distinguished Counselors and makes friends with the persons of ren (renzhe) in one’s state (A 15.10). If one is among those who are ren, then one can learn from them and derive support from them. Perhaps this is why when Zarathustra has gained a number of disciples, they stay together in the Isles of the Blessed (Z II.2).

Both Nietzsche and Confucius assert that one gains no advantage if one blindly follows their ways. One has to become a cultivator of one’s own values and look for one’s own ways of living in the world. Nietzsche presents this point clearly through the voice of Zarathustra: “One repays a teacher poorly if one always remains only a student. And why do you not want to pluck at my wreath?” (Z I.22.3) In the Analects, Confucius
says almost the same thing: “When faced with the opportunity to practice ren do not yield precedence even to your teacher”\(^{134}\) (A 15.36). More than once, Confucius is not happy for Yan Hui to be pleased and to agree with all his words (A 2.9, 11.4) but when he finds out that Hui actually reflects on what he is taught, Confucius is delighted (A 2.9). In order to solve the problems of everyday life, one has to reflect on what one has learned so that one can progress beyond it. More importantly, both Nietzsche and Confucius know that their wisdom is a human creation and thus always subject to the possibility of error. Zarathustra says to his disciples, “Verily, I counsel you: go away from me and defend yourselves against Zarathustra! And better still: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he has deceived you” (Z 1.22.3). This admonition explains why the process of human becoming is an ongoing project requiring constant self-adjustment—more than once, both philosophers admit that they have made mistakes. In this light, self-satisfaction for what one has attained would be a distortion. Even wisdom is not a final achievement, but only a steady attentiveness to continue the process of human becoming.

More than once, Zarathustra expresses his refusal to play the part of the shepherd of a timid herd (Z I.22.3, II.1, III.2.2). He asserts that one should go beyond being a mere follower and become an active creator and live in accordance with one’s self-generated values. Zarathustra leaves his disciples every now and then and retreats to the mountains for solitude. There are two reasons for this. First, Zarathustra does not want his disciples to sheepishly follow his way and he leaves them alone every now and then so that they can have time to reflect on and pursue in their own ways the project of becoming Übermenschen. Zarathustra says, “Now I bid you lose me and find

\(^{134}\) A teacher is a person worthy of the highest respect throughout the Chinese tradition.
yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you” (Z I.22.3). But after Zarathustra returns to the solitude of mountains, he “becomes full of impatience and desire for those whom he loves: for he still has a great deal to give them. This indeed is what is hardest: out of love to close the open hand and preserve one’s modesty as a bestower” (Z II.1). Zarathustra is sad to withdraw from his disciples, but he has to do so in order to give them an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned. Nietzsche clearly points out that Zarathustra is not a shepherd. He says, “You say that you believe in Zarathustra? But what matters Zarathustra? You are my believers—but what matter all believers?... Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you” (EH, P4.). Secondly, in order to reflect on his own process of human becoming, Zarathustra wants to be alone in solitude. Nietzsche claims that the whole of “Zarathustra is a dithyramb on solitude” (EH I.8). In his autobiography, Ecce Homo, Nietzsche admits that he “needs solitude— which is to say, recovery, return to myself, the breath of a free, light, playful air” (EH I.8).

Although Confucius emphasizes learning, he expects his disciples to reflect on what they have learned. Reflecting (si 思) on what one has learned and learning are of equal importance (A 2.15). For Confucius, ren can be attained by oneself as well as through learning from others’ experience (copying the good points and correcting the bad points of others) (A 4.17, 7.22). Confucius’s notion of the self is relational, that is, the self is defined by its relationships with others in the community. This point will further be discussed in the next section where ren is examined in the social context. Nietzsche does not rely on others’ experience but emphasizes self-reliance through abandonment.
The fact that Confucius treats education in a personalized manner (according to the particular character of each disciple) further shows that he is aware of the danger of being the shepherd of a herd. He gives markedly different advice on ren to different disciples according to their backgrounds, weaknesses and needs. When he talks to his disciples, he uses different tones and gives them different suggestions according to their strengths and weaknesses. Confucius is asked the same question by both Zilu and Ranyou, “Should one immediately put into practice what one has heard?” He gives completely opposite answers to them because of the difference in their personalities. Confucius urges Ranyou on because Ranyou always holds himself back, yet Zilu has the drive of two persons and it is for this reason that Confucius tries to hold Zilu back (A 11.22). Another example is when Confucius is asked about filial conduct (xiao). The answer for Meng Yizi is fundamental: “Never fail to comply” (A 2.5). When Ziyou and Zixia ask the same question, Confucius gives an interesting answer. To the former, he says, “Nowadays people are considered filial because they are able to provide for their parents. Even hounds and horses are, in some way, provided with food. If you do not respect your parents, what is the difference?” (A 2.7) To the latter, he says, “What is difficult to manage is the expression on one’s face” (A 2.8). Probably, Ziyou and Zixia provide sufficient physical comforts to their parents but do not show enough warmth and respect for them. Confucius identifies each disciple’s personal weaknesses and advises them to improve themselves where improvement is necessary.

Ren denotes the qualitative transformation of a particular person and it must be understood in relation to the specific, concrete circumstances of that person. The idea of
ren is vague. Unlike the Judeo-Christian tradition, which looks for precise definitions for the meanings of words, the Confucian use of words is vague. For Confucius, vagueness is considered “rich” and evocative of many useful ideas whereas for many philosophers, such vagueness is considered “unclear” and demands an explicit definition.

For instance, the Chinese word, “tian 天,” can be used to refer to “the way, the sky, to know, to understand, heaven and god.” Nietzsche, who disagrees with most philosophers but makes himself the heir of Heraclitus, appreciates the power of vagueness: the ideas he proposed are also vague but rich. In order to avoid the danger of misinterpretation, vague but rich ideas should be understood in context. Without a particular context, these ideas lose their reference. In contrast to the rational character of philosophical thinking in the Judeo-Christian tradition, Confucius’s Analects and Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra belong to the dialectical tradition. Dialectic has the character of a dialogue: it is “a ‘talking through’ or a ‘thinking through’ which requires the sort of reflective engagement best represented by Plato’s early Socratic dialogues.”

Dialogues provide the background stage, that is, a particular context, for the readers to comprehend the particular meaning of the vague ideas.

There is no formula for being a person of ren and Confucius does not furnish his disciples with any ideal. An interesting paragraph in Thus Spoke Zarathustra shows similarities to Confucius’s ideas of ren. Zarathustra says:

My brother, if you have a virtue and she is your virtue, then you have her in common with nobody.

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135 Important ideas of Confucius (such as tian and he 和, discussed in Part 1) share the features of vagueness and richness.

This is my good; this I love; she pleases me wholly; thus I want her to be solely my own good. I do not want her as divine law; I do not want her as a human statue or a need; she shall not be a signpost for me to the otherworldly or paradises (Z1.5).

In this quotation, Nietzsche uses the term “virtue” in a positive way that it refers to the “fruits” developed in the child stage. The Confucian ren can be understood as the Nietzschean “virtue” in this paragraph. Every person of ren is unique, and he or she creates a personification of values of his or her own. Different persons of ren would respond quite differently to the same circumstances, but they are all praise-worthy provided that they are in accordance with ren. Remember that in the Confucian world, ideas are rich and vague rather than clear, distinct, or defined. There is no precise set of instructions for how to be ren, yet Confucius points out that the highest task of a consummate human is to give extensively to the people and bring help to the multitude. Such a person would be more than a renzhe; for he or she would be a sage (A 6.30).

The fact that Confucius is asked so often about ren suggests that those asking him are not confident in their understanding of it. Almost every intimate disciple of his asks questions about ren. When Confucius is asked whether his close disciples such as Zilu, Ranyou, and Zihua are persons of ren, he points out their strengths and says that they can be given certain responsibilities in governing. But on the question of whether they are ren or not, Confucius’s reply is, “I cannot say” (A 5.5, 5.8, 5.19). Those who attain certain good qualities (such as zhong 忠, doing one’s best, being pure and loath to speak) and strengths (such as good in managing the military levies, good in

138 A.5.19.
139 A.12.3.
conversing with the guests) have not yet become renzhe in Confucius's eye.

Being the renzhe or the Übermensch should be considered an aesthetic project that is “realized on one's own” (A.12.1). Like a piece of artwork, “ren is a process of disclosure rather than closure” and has no fixed definition. Flexibility is necessary in becoming ren. Confucius is once asked about Guanzhong’s decision to stay alive and help Duke Huan, who killed Guanzhong’s former master, Prince Chiu (A 14.16-17). According to tradition, Guanzhong should try his very best (even if it means the sacrifice of his life) to protect his master. For many people (including Zigong and Zilu), Guanzhong failed to be a genuine, faithful minister to Prince Chiu. Confucius defends Guanzhong’s decision and appreciates the reforms and peace brought about by Guanzhong. Confucius points out that Guanzhong’s faithfulness “was not the petty faithfulness of the common man or woman who would commit suicide in a ditch without anyone taking any notice” (A 14.17). Like an aesthetic project, there is no rule for the formation of beauty and good style. Aesthetic beauty involves the emergence of a complex whole by virtue of the particularity of its details. Guanzhong is definitely not an ideal person since Confucius points out because he does not live according to li in some less important aspects (A 3.22). Every particular detail of a piece of artwork contributes to its aesthetic value, yet its beauty is revealed by the complex whole rather than by the individual details. Confucius looks into the life of Guanzhong as a whole and concludes that he is a renzhe: Guanzhong makes great contributions to cultural reform (A 14.17) and brings peace to the multitude (A 14.16). The case of Guanzhong

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140 A.5.8.
also shows that the teaching of Confucius has to be interpreted in the concrete contexts from which it arose. When Confucius praises or criticizes a historical figure, he points out what that particular person has done and in which respect he or she is worthy of appreciation or is wrong. Rather than carrying a slide rule for calculating sets of definite answers for a predictable array of life problems, a renzhe or Übermensch bears an attitude towards life that is increasingly realized as a bounteous invitation to engage in all of life’s offerings.

As discussed in the beginning of section 3.3, the etymological analysis of ren 仁 underscores the Confucian assumption that human beings are irreducibly social and one cannot become a cultivated person on one’s own. In the next section, I explore how the idea of ren can only be grasped within a social context.

3.3.2 Ren 仁 in the Social Context

Confucius describes the difficulties of attaining ren in a state in the following words:

Even with a true king it is bound to take a generation for ren to become a reality (A 13.12).

How true is the saying that after a state has been ruled for a hundred years by good persons (shengren 善人) it is possible to get the better of cruelty and to do away with killing (A 13.11).

Even if the state was governed by a renzhe 仁者 or a shengren, it would take a long time to bring peace. Confucius emphasizes patience and persistence because these great tasks will not be accomplished if one sees only petty, short-term gains (A 13.17).
When Confucius is asked by Fan-chi about ren, he simply says, "Love (ai 愛) others" (A 12.22). This is indeed the foundation of ren. What Confucius assumes in his proposal is that every human being is treated as someone worthy of love. He says, "Human beings are closely alike by nature. They drift apart through habits" (A 17.2). Moreover, he believes that every human being has the capability of learning to be ren and he says, "I have not come across a person whose strength proves unequal to the task (of becoming ren)" (A 4.6). Guo Moruo named Confucius's ren "the discovery of human beings." According to Guo, we have to treat others as human beings before we can become "fully human" ourselves. Mencius further develops Confucius's point by saying that the differences between human beings and brutes are but slight. Mencius says, "The common people lose this distinguishing feature [the original heart-and-mind], while the junzi 君子 retains it" (M IVB.19). Mencius believes that the "roots" of ren and yi 義 are present in every human being, though only the junzi or the renzhe can hold on to them.

Many passages in the Analects show that Confucius genuinely loves and cares for humanity (ren 人, min 民 and zhong 聲). In the Analects, Confucius uses different Chinese characters to represent different kinds of people, yet this is not a caste system. The character, "ren" represents those with the same social status as Confucius, probably referring to those who are educated and have some political status. "Min" refers to the

142 It is worth noting that love, for Confucius, cannot be understood according to the Judeo-Christian point of view. The common usage of the Chinese character “ai 愛” is modern. It is not an important character in Confucius's time, for instance, in the Analects, "ai" appears only 9 times whereas "ren 仁" appears 109 times.
common people, whose social responsibilities are few (except, perhaps paying taxes or joining the army). “Zhong” is a more general term which is, as a rule, translated as “the multitude.” Categorically the highest human being, the sage is one who is able to give extensively to the common people (min) and bring help to the multitude (zhong) (A 6.30). This is the greatest task for a Yao or a Shun (two of the most respected ancient sage-kings) and even they cannot hope to achieve it easily. In short, the sage loves humanity as a whole and devotes his or her life to the benefit of the community.

Confucius’s love for humanity is shown in his words to Ranyou. The junzi must strive first to have a teeming population (A 13.4, 13.9, 13.16), then to improve the people’s living circumstances, and, finally, to educate and train them (A 13.9). For Confucius, love for humanity is more than providing a comfortable lifestyle or materialistic enjoyments. To love people is to make them work hard and to educate them so that they can be guided to live according to ren (A 14.7). Confucius becomes a junzi himself and he wants everyone to become a junzi. This essential point about ren is found in Confucius’s answer to Zhonggong’s inquiry about ren. He says, “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (A 12.2). Confucius repeats these very same words when he is asked by Zigong for a single word as a guide to conduct throughout one’s life. He says, “It is perhaps the word “shu 忍.” Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (A 15.24). By taking the two passages together we can see that shu forms part of ren and is of great importance in the teachings of Confucius. This can be confirmed by Zengzi’s explanation of Confucius’s remark that there is a single thread binding his way (dao 道) together. Zengzi says, “The way of Confucius consists in doing one’s best (zhong 志) and shu” (A 4.15).
In A 6.30, Confucius's idea of ren is discussed in relation to the idea of shu where he says:

A renzhe helps others to take their stand in that he wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in that he wishes to get there. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can be called the method of ren (A 6.30).

This is the positive way of presenting shu, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (A 12.2, 15.24). This is Confucius's method of ren. This method involves taking yourself ("what is near at hand) as an analogy\textsuperscript{145} and asking what you would like or dislike if you were in the position of the person on the receiving end of your actions. A renzhe wants to take his or her stand and he or she makes use of himself or herself as a measure in gauging the likes and dislikes of others, thus he or she should also help others to take their stand. Recall that Confucius says the highest task of a sage is "to give extensively to the people and bring help to the multitude" (A 6.30): if a renzhe can help everyone to become a renzhe, the community then returns back to the harmonious period of the past, named "da tong."\textsuperscript{146} This highest task of the renzhe is similar to Zarathustra's greatest gift to humanity: the teaching of human becoming (Z, P2-3).

From the Prologue of Thus Spoke Zarathustra, we know that Zarathustra seeks wisdom and enjoys himself in the mountains. After ten years of solitude, Zarathustra chooses to leave the mountains (or, in his words, to go down or to go under) because he

\textsuperscript{145} There is a more explicit definition of shu in another philosopher of the Warring States period. The Shizi says, "By shu is meant using oneself as a measure" (Qun Shu Zhi Yao.36.19b). Also quoted by Lau (1992): xvi.

\textsuperscript{146} For details of a community of da tong, see the Liji. 19, "Da Tong & Xiao Kang 大同與小康."
wants to share his ideas with others and wants to do something for his fellow human beings. After Zarathustra goes down from the mountains, he is asked his reasons for going under. His first sentence after ten years in solitude is: "I love human beings" (Z, P2). The meaning of the term, "love," for Zarathustra is not easy to grasp fully. He uses the analogy of the sun to present his ultimate concern for human beings. There will be no happiness for the sun if there is nobody for it to shine on. It will be tired of its journey (climbing up the mountains everyday) without Zarathustra and his animals. Zarathustra compares himself with the sun. He is already weary of his wisdom—he is like a bee that has gathered too much honey and he needs out-stretched hands to receive it. Zarathustra decides to give away and distribute his wisdom so that the wise among people find joy once again in their folly, and the poor in their riches (Z, P1).

In Part II, Zarathustra's speech to his animals reveals his eagerness to return to his disciples:

Indeed there is a lake within me, solitary and self-contained; but the river of my love draws it off—down to the sea!...

Like a cry of jubilation I want to voyage over far seas, till I find the Isles of the Blessed where my friends are staying... (Z II.1)

Unlike a river, a lake does not go anywhere, but is peaceful, beautiful and self-sufficient. Zarathustra uses the metaphor of a lake to reflect that he is at peace with himself in the mountains, yet his love for humanity urges him to go down to the sea. The metaphor of "the wide seas" illustrates that his going under to humanity is long, dangerous, and full of obstacles. Here, the use of the words "my stream of love" recalls Zarathustra's expression of love for humanity in the beginning of the Prologue. Zarathustra knows
that the process of going under is long and difficult, yet due to his love for humanity, he is willing to take up this task. This time Zarathustra knows that his teachings are for his disciples, rather than everyone in the marketplace. Once again Zarathustra abandons his solitude out of his love for humanity.

It is important to note that neither Nietzsche nor Confucius lives with a merely local or national perspective. Although Germany was powerful in his time, Nietzsche was more critical of Germany than he was of any other European country (EH, “CW” 1-4). He wanted to overcome the weaknesses of the Germans and pointed out that he would prefer to become a “good European” (EH I.3). Confucius can see beyond the locally or nationally conditioned perspectives. This point is supported by the fact that Confucius goes from one state to another to look for a place where he can actualize his teachings. He must be fervent in bringing peace and stability to humanity, since, in the Chinese tradition, it is uncommon (or even shameful) for one to leave one’s home state to live somewhere else. Even now, in the twenty-first century, many Chinese are still bound by this conservative thinking. Also, Confucius is willing to receive people from “the four quarters” (A 7.29, 14.25, 14.44) and convey his teachings to them. There is an occasion on which some of these visitors are difficult to talk to and Confucius perplexes his disciples by agreeing to receive such nasty visitors. Confucius explains as follows: “Approval of his coming does not mean approval of him when he has withdrawn. Why should we be so exacting? When a man comes after having purified himself, we approve of his purification but we cannot vouch for his past” (A 7.29). What Confucius approves of is the visitors’ eagerness in meeting him and he hopes that they can learn from their conversations with him.
Confucius himself undergoes self-cultivation and becomes the \textit{junzi}, while Nietzsche himself becomes the new philosopher and the first immoralist. Both philosophers love and care for humanity, and they want to share their wisdom (that is, the process of human becoming) with other people. Their love for humanity is evident in the fact that they are willing to help everyone who takes up the process of human becoming to become an \textit{Übermensch} or a \textit{renzhe}.

It is easy to say “love others,” but difficult to fulfill this saying and live consistently with compassion in everyday life. According to \textit{Book of Rites (Liji)}, in the period of antiquity (that is, in the period of Yao and Shun) when \textit{dao} prevailed, people in the empire lived in harmony and they loved each other. In Confucius’s time, the empire was founded on the structure of hierarchical love. According to Mencius, the teaching of human relationships began in the time of the sage kings. At that time, the common people were physically content, yet if they were allowed to lead idle lives without appropriate education or discipline, they would never rise above the level of the brutes (\textit{M IVB.19}). Therefore, the sage king “appointed Qi as the Minister of Education and his duty was to teach people about [appropriate] human relationships: love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and faith between friends” (\textit{M IIIA.4}). The hierarchical structure of love among people is well established in Confucius’s time. Confucius, however, is born in “a period of escalating internecine violence,”\textsuperscript{147} when the empire consists of many independent states in which the historical order of social

harmony, the system of *zhouli* 周禮, has already lost its influence. Confucius looks back with nostalgia to the harmonious past, when every member of the community loved every other member.\(^{148}\)

Living under the Zhou Dynasty, Confucius believes that human beings are socially constructed and relational. For instance, in his nuclear family, Confucius himself is the son of his parents, the brother of his siblings, the husband of the woman he married, and the father of his children. These are the most important relationships in his family life, the centerpole in a radiating web of relations (*M* IIB.2, VA.2). The web radiates out to include the grandparents/grandchildren, the relative in-laws, and the cousins. In the stable, agricultural world of Confucius's time, it would not be uncommon for all of the members of a whole village to be relatives. This kind of highly complex and refined web of familial relationships is absent in the teachings of Nietzsche, and his wisdom is gained in solitude when he is alone with nature. According to Zarathustra, people (especially the masses in the market place) are animals with too much shame (*Z* II.25). In contrast with Confucius, whose wisdom is the product of his engagement with others in the community and in his family (*A* 7.22, 7.31), Zarathustra seeks wisdom in his internal relations—his dialogue is with himself (and with his animals) and the world apart from human reciprocities.

Family relations, according to Confucius, are the roots for the cultivation of *ren*. Being a good and obedient child is the root of *ren* because it is rare for such a good child to have the inclination to transgress against a superior or start a rebellion (*A* 1.2).

\(^{148}\) This very best period is named "*da tong* 大同."
According to Confucius, “Simply by being a good son and friendly to one’s brothers one can exert influence upon government” (A 2.21). Mencius also points out that “the way of Yao and Shun is simply to be a good son and a good younger brother” (M VIB.2). He elaborates his point as follows:

The able-bodied people should learn, in their spare time, to be good children and good younger brothers and sisters, loyal to their lord and true to their word, so that they will, in the family, serve their parents and elder siblings, and outside the family, serve their elders and superiors (M IA.5).

Further support can be found in this saying from the Great Learning:

Those in antiquity who wanted their pure and excellent character to shine in the world would first bring proper government to the empire; desiring to bring proper government to the empire, they would first bring proper order to their families; desiring to bring proper order to their families, they would first cultivate their persons (Liji 43.1).149

Tu Wei-ming points out that, in the Confucian world, the process of human becoming “enables us to embody the family, the community, the nation, the world, and the cosmos in our sensitivity.”150

One looks for relationships in which life is given security, fulfillment, satisfaction, and meaning. The quality of one’s relationships has much to do with the quality of one’s life, and one’s relational structures, the more or less enduring patterns of interactions, either facilitate or impede the continued maturation of the participants in these relationships. One’s attachment with one’s immediate family leads to a natural bonding with other members of the world and such attachment can be taken as the basis of a developed relationship. The elements of a healthy engagement with life are

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149 Translation is from Hall & Ames (1999): 175.
dynamic products of a *history* of relational reciprocity whereas the absence of such attachment may lead to dysfunction.

In the Confucian arena of human relations, one’s natural dependency upon one’s important relationships suggests that love is the propulsive force that defines subsequent relations by one’s proximal status. The legitimacy of these relations arises by virtue of their collateral kinship or association, their claims determined by their place in a hierarchy of relatedness. According to Confucius, family (*jia* 家) sometimes includes only members of a nuclear family, while sometimes all members of a lineage or a clan are included. Feng Youlan asserts that, in the past, what was meant when the state (*guo* 國) was mentioned was in fact the family, *jia*.\(^{151}\) The classical usage of *jia*, at one extreme, refers to a single person of high rank, such as a noble or the emperor (the “son of *tian*,” *tianzi* 天子), and at the other extreme, refers to an unlimited number of people so that “all under *tian* belong to one family” (*tian xia yi jia* 天下一家). Confucius says:

> Because family relations extend to the whole empire, those who behave in an appropriate manner at home will behave appropriately in the community as well. Proper cultivation of filial and fraternal responsibilities enables one “to be broadly generous with the people and to help the multitude,” and thereby become a sage (*A 6.30*).

The idea of obligations inherent to one’s role as a member of a family can be extrapolated to the social and political community, depending upon the circumstances one is engaged in.

The structure of family relations acts as a template for a kingdom consisting of a

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\(^{151}\) Feng (1996): Chapter 4.
ruler and his subjects: the ruler is related to the subject as a father and the subject is related to the ruler as a son. The whole kingdom can thus be considered to be an extension of the family hierarchy. Confucius says, "Let the ruler be a ruler, and the subject a subject; the father be a father, and the son be a son" (A 12.11). These are the four most important relationships in government. The status of the state (guo) and the family (jia) tends to be co-extensive, or more precisely, the state can be considered to be a big family and the families of the state can be considered to be children of that big family. As a ruler of the state, one should be a good father and employ the services of one's subjects in accordance with li; being a subject, one should be a good child and spare no effort in serving one's ruler (A 3.19). As a father or a mother, one should nurse and love one's children (A 17.21); as a child, one should comply with li in serving one's parents when they are alive, in burying them when they are dead, and in offering sacrifices to their memory (A 2.5). Under the Confucian notion of "kinship," members of the community will be placed in appropriate positions, and if they behave in accordance with the li, they will live well in a harmonious community without rebellion. The Confucian "kinship" of the family and the state provides some concrete directions in the process of self-cultivation. However, this kind of kinship tends to be absent in the teachings of Nietzsche. Nietzsche is an isolationist both familiarly and politically. He has to tolerate his aloneness until he finds companions, who are willing to undergo the process of human becoming.

The words of Zixia illustrate a harmonious community: its members are those who exert themselves to the utmost in the service of their parents, offer their persons in the service of their lords, and who, in their dealings with their friends, are trustworthy in
what they say (A 1.7). However, Confucius does not advocate equal love for everyone. If one loves everyone equally, then one fails to acknowledge the ethical significance of family relationships. The junzi practice a “graduated love” that radiates through their network of relations like ripples on a pond. No matter how far a ripple extends, the energy is always greatest at the center, decreasing in proportion to its distance from the center.

In view of this notion of proximal relations, we can understand Confucius’s idea of ren in the social context in light of the modern concept of “empathy.” A sophisticated feature of psychotherapy and counseling, empathy can enhance mutual understanding. The root meaning of the word empathy is “feeling into.” Empathy can be conceived as “understanding and feeling into” another’s world. Confucius says, “It is difficult to be a ruler, and it is not easy to be a subject either” (A 13.15). This passage can easily be transposed to family relationships: it is difficult to be a father or a mother, and it is not easy to be a son or a daughter either. With empathy, however, we can have a better understanding of the circumstances of our counterparts. Empathy is not just an observation of another’s situation but is seeing the world through his or her eyes. We can apply the idea of empathy to Confucius’s statement about just how difficult it is to perform one’s role and not be forgetful about others at the same time. If you are a ruler, you may take the perspective of your subjects by projecting yourself into their positions and circumstances. In this way your leadership will not be oppressive. If you are a subject, you may take the perspective of your ruler through projecting yourself into his or

her circumstances and thereby recognize the monumental difficulties of good leadership. In that way you would not retreat from the authority he or she has over you.

Confucius’s words present this point clearly: “You should approach your duties with reverence and relegate reward to second place” (A 14.38). Empathy sheds light on this advice as follows: by comparing your own experiences with those of your counterparts you can infer what they might be experiencing—a kind of identification with the other. This act of inference involves going back and forth between your view and your sense of what it must be like to be in their shoes. Such reciprocity can be accomplished by a process of imagination and modeling, or mirroring your counterparts in order to see the world through their eyes.

Zarathustra leaves his disciples in the last chapter of Part I and retreats again into the mountains to the solitude of his cave. “But whereas the ten years of solitude reported in the Prologue were years of enjoyment, the years of solitude between Part I and II are filled with impatience and longing, because Zarathustra now has disciples whom he loved.”154 It is out of empathy that Zarathustra does not give all he possesses to his beloved: from his own process of becoming the Übermensch, he knows that there are things that the disciples have to seek for themselves. Although Zarathustra suffers for this withholding, he knows that his absence is necessary for the cultivation of his disciples. He can only return when they have denied him. Only when the disciples reflect155 on and deny his teachings can he give them what he has previously withheld.

155 According to Lampert, the title of the chapter, “The Child with a Mirror,” refers to a “disciple whose
C.R. Rogers goes a step further and suggests that empathy is a process of "entering the private perceptual world of the other and being thoroughly at home in it... It means temporarily living the other’s life." Rogers moves from "as if" (an imaginary knowing) to actually entering the other’s world through an act of alignment. For instance, in order to be a father, one should use one’s self as an instrument, not just for analysis and distant sensory observation, but as a means of direct participation in a child’s world. As the father enters the child’s world, he can become the child through a kind of merging of the two selves. The extent of the momentary collapse of the self and the degree of participation (rather than more observation) is largely dependent on the father’s ability to suspend his own self temporarily, or to put this in Roger’s words, the father lays aside his self. For instance, the father would attempt to understand the circumstances of his daughter, know her friends and finally to assume that “he, himself, is the daughter.” Roger’s understanding of empathy can be used to interpret the following passage in the Mencius:

Treat the aged of your own family in a manner befitting their venerable age and extend this treatment to the aged of other families; treat the young in a manner befitting their tender age and extend this to the young of other families, and you can roll the Empire on your palm (M IA.7).

With Roger’s notion of empathy, one can interpret the above quotation in the following ways. First, one can “enter into” the worlds of the aged and the young of one’s own family to grasp their needs and help them. Second, one can “enter” the worlds of the

three transformations (Z I.1) are complete, but whose immature creativity reflects a Zarathustra who, to Zarathustra’s eyes, has become a devil.” The denial of this disciple shows that Zarathustra can now go back to his loved ones, for they (the disciples) have now denied him.

156 C.R. Rogers is a famous psychoanalytic psychotherapist.
aged and the young of the community and help them. In this case, members of whole communities will love one another and the community would return to the ideal, harmonious world of the ancient, pastoral age—the world of *da tong* 大同.

Family relations are the roots of the Confucian *ren*, yet there is always a possibility that the family and law might conflict with each other. Confucius does not point out clearly how to attain a balance between law and the family. As discussed in section 2.3, for relatively unimportant issues (such as the theft of a sheep), Confucius believes that “fathers should cover up for their sons, and sons should cover up for their fathers” (A 13.18) whereas when it comes to patricide or regicide, we should not do as we are told (A 11.24). With the example of King Shun, Mencius gives us more information on how to deal with conflict between law and the family. From childhood, Shun is not loved by his family, and his father and brother even attempt to kill him (*M* VA.2). Shun is in dire straits with no home to which he can return (*M* VA.1), yet he shares his wealth, power, and glory with his parents and his brother when he becomes the Emperor. However, in order to protect people in Yu Pi, Shun has officials appointed to run his brother’s fief; Xiang is not allowed to take part in the running of the fief or to mistreat his people (*M* VA.3). Mencius’s appreciation of Shun raises the important point that one should try one’s best to maintain family relationships, even when they are dysfunctional. A *renzhe* such as Shun does not harbor anger or nurse a grudge against his family members but rather behaves according to Confucius’s “*shu*”: Shun does not impose on Xiang what he himself would not desire (A 6.30, 12.2). As a ruler of wisdom, Shun removes the threat from and sustains respectful relations with his family. This is truly *ren* in practice. This account illustrates how a *renzhe* may achieve a balance between law and family.
The best way is, of course, to guide one’s family members back to dao, so that they might cultivate themselves and become consummate humans.

3.4 Nietzsche’s New Philosophy and Confucius’s Self-cultivation

As early as Dawn of Morning, Nietzsche considers philosophy to be “the highest struggle for the tyrannical domination of the spirit” (DM 547). In Beyond Good and Evil, he characterizes philosophy itself as a drive to create—and as will to power: “Philosophy always creates the world in its own image, it cannot do otherwise; philosophy is this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power, to the ‘creation of the world,’ to the causa prima” (BGE 9). According to Graham Parkes’s elucidation of Nietzsche’s notion of will to power, philosophy is “the most spiritual will to power” because “it exemplifies at the highest level the interpretive function of the drives.” From this point on, when Nietzsche discusses will to power, he emphasizes that it is “fundamentally interpretation.”

More than once, Nietzsche tries to clarify what he means by the will to power by contrasting this notion with a view of what constitutes the motivating force behind all forms of life. Nietzsche points out that Spinoza formulates “a law of self-preservation,” according to which all living things strive to preserve themselves and their own

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159 Refer also to BGE 158: “To our strongest drive, the tyrant in us, not only our reason submits, but also our conscience.”


161 An unpublished note from the period begins, “The will to power interprets,” and ends with the emphasized claim: “In truth interpretation is itself a means of becoming master of something” (WP 643). An adjacent note, in which Nietzsche pronounces his formula “Life is will to power” and characterizes moral evaluation as interpretation, ends with the important question and answer: “Who interprets? Our affects” (KSA 12:2[190]). (Parkes, 1994: 448-449, ft. 55).
species. Nietzsche, however, believes that such “a law of preservation” cannot be a correct explanation of what motivates living things, for if it were true, then when a life form had reached the point at which it could survive, its development and growth would be stopped. It is evident that every living thing does everything it can, not just for the preservation of its own life, but for the achievement of a great deal more (WP 688). For instance, a tree in a pasture does not simply spread its foliage and sink its roots to the minimal degree sufficient for survival. A tree keeps on growing, spreading its branches out further and further, and sinking its roots deeper and deeper into the soil. The tree keeps striving for more energy and strength long after it has satisfied the minimum conditions for survival. From the observations of living organisms in general, Nietzsche concludes that they do not just possess a will to survive, but a will to prosper, to realize ever greater possibilities and powers.

Nietzsche’s understanding of the will to power in the natural world explains his view of the fundamental force that motivates human beings. Like all living things, we are driven by a will to achieve ever greater power and abundance, to “go beyond” what we are. Such a driving force tends to be irresistible, both in human beings and in the natural world. This force is not an act of our will, but an act of “nature’s will”—in this sense, growth identifies nature. A limb, for instance, can grow straight or it can grow crooked; but it cannot opt out of nature’s push and still continue to live. The “fundamental driving force” to flourish and “become more” can take two forms. First, it takes a sickly form when it is merely reactive, intent simply on negating something else.

Nietzsche says that the same conception of evolution in nature is found in “Darwinism with its unbelievably one-sided doctrine of ‘the struggle for existence’” (JS 349).
This unhealthy form of the will to power is motivated by resentment and is always negative. Second, it spontaneously goes beyond all apparent boundaries in a quest for greater strength and expanded possibilities. This creative form of the will to power is central to Nietzsche’s healthy, affirming way of life.

From *Beyond Good and Evil* onwards, Nietzsche emphasizes that will to power is fundamentally a matter of interpreting the world. This point deserves to be stressed because this central Nietzschean idea is widely interpreted as the conquering of others by force. Physical power is rudimentary in comparison with Nietzsche’s will to power. Using one’s physical power or exercising brute force over others is a short-lived undertaking. To use the Nietzschean will to power—to offer an interpretation of the world or to bring others to another perspective of seeing the world—is to exercise a subtle and more enduring form of power. “Insofar as they imaginably interpret the world, the drives are manifestations of will to power.”\(^{163}\) What Nietzsche’s new philosopher undertakes is the creation of the world in his or her own image.

The Nietzschean new (or genuine) philosopher bears the “duty” of conducting “attempts and temptations of life” (*BGE* 205). He or she also becomes the master and the judge of his or her own life. Nietzsche points out that “what was at stake in all philosophizing hitherto was not at all “truth” but something else: health, future, growth, power, life” (*JS*, P2). He points out that human beings before him have misplaced the “sacred”: life and the world, rather than the metaphysical realm, are “sacred.”

In Confucius’s opinion, it is human beings who have the capacity and endowment for the development and enhancement of life. He says:

It is the human who is capable of broadening dao. It is not dao that is capable of broadening the human (A 15.29).

How could ren 存 be at all remote? No sooner do I seek it than it is here with me (A 7.30).

Nietzsche’s words can be taken as an illustration of Confucius’s position:

Whatever has value in our world now does not have value in itself, according to its nature—nature is always value-less, but has been given value at some time, as a present—it was we who gave and bestowed it. Only we have created the world that concerns us!” (JS 301)

For both philosophers, the world in itself does not contain any meanings or values. We human beings are the ones to impose values, meanings, and interpretations onto the world. Zarathustra teaches one not “to bury one’s head into the sand of heavenly things, but to carry it freely, an earthen head that creates a sense for the earth!” (Z I.3) Philosophers are responsible for the creation of values for the world and have to take the risk of going in the wrong direction.

For both Nietzsche and Confucius, human understanding is a tool to interpret or arrange the world (BGE 14). Knowledge, according to Nietzsche and Confucius, is always human knowledge. Knowledge of the world can be nothing more than a set of interpretations. Each interpretation of the world is bound to be replaced by other, more powerful, interpretations. Nietzsche says, “Let us... not forget that in the long run it is enough to create new names and valuations and appearances of truth in order to create new ‘things’” (JS 58). When we say that a certain interpretation is more powerful than another, it is important what counts as “power.”
Genealogy of Morals. There, Nietzsche tells a story of how a certain outlook or interpretation, embodying metaphysical illusions, came into existence as a psychological compensation, and how this outlook triumphed over the strong and their view of the world. Nietzsche proposes a new way of describing the world as the creation of social and naturalistic explanations.

Nietzsche's new perspective on epistemology has a great impact on the development of modern science: scientific knowledge is considered not the eternal Truth but a kind of human explanation, interpretation, and exploration of the world which improves the quality of our life. Scientific theories have to be constantly revised and refined in accordance with factors such as simplicity, accountability, and accuracy. Modern scientists clearly know that the scientific theories they propose are merely current interpretations of the world and their theories will be modified, or even refuted, in the future. For instance, Newtonian physics was replaced by the relativity theory of Einstein. In becoming the Nietzschean new philosopher, one should have the attitude of the modern scientist, who conducts experiments in the "laboratory of life" to seek better theories with which to interpret the world. Likewise, we new philosophers have to struggle individually and look for new meanings in life. Our interpretative outlook, our particular 'take' on the world, is modeled on the analogy of a literal, visual, perspective, and this analogy has two implications. That is, there can be alternative perspectives, and more importantly, there will be alternative interpretations of the same reality. Nietzsche points out that "we cannot reject the possibility that it [the world] includes infinite interpretations." It seems that the idea of the "alternatives" remains an entirely

164 For more details on philosophy of science, refer to Gillies (1993).
abstract possibility: “we cannot look around our corner” (JS 374).

Nietzsche’s perspectivism provides insights to a short but difficult passage in the Analects:

**zi jue si—wu yi, wu bi, wu gu, wu wo.** (子絕四—毋意,毋必,毋固,毋我.)

There are four things Confucius refuses to have anything to do with: he refuses to entertain conjectures or insist on certainty; he refuses to be inflexible or to be egoistical (A 9.4).

If we understand the above passage from the viewpoint of Nietzsche’s perspectivism, we can grasp Confucius’s refusal of these four things more easily. We can create our own perspectives, but there are other possible perspectives for the very same reality. Confucius also says, “In the dealings with the world the junzi 君子 is not invariably for or against anything. He is on the side of what is yi 義” (A 4.10). In other words, there is no absolute truth or evil, but one should act with ren or yi.

According to Nietzsche, the “career” of the new philosopher is different from all other professions:

A scholar’s real “interests” [other professions besides the new philosopher] generally lie elsewhere, in his families, or in the acquisition of wealth, or in politics...: what he eventually becomes does not distinguish him. About the philosopher, conversely, there is absolutely nothing that is impersonal; and it is above all his morality165 which proves decidedly and decisively who he is—that is, in what hierarchy the innermost drives of his nature are arranged (BGE 6).

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165 In this quotation, the term “morality” is used in a positive way instead of referring to those traditional moral theories that Nietzsche negates. “Morality” here can be understood as the ways in which one lives in the world. This reflects one of the difficulties in reading Nietzsche: in his writings, he uses the same terminology in different tones, here, positively, and there, negatively; here, referring to its traditional usage, and there, referring to his new meaning. Moreover, many of his writings are not developed in a structural manner, and sometimes the context is not clear enough to show how he makes use of certain terminology in a particular passage. This is one of the reasons that he can easily be misinterpreted.
Nietzsche is stating that the real “interest” of the new philosopher is nothing other than “becoming” the new philosopher. Throughout his or her life, the new philosopher devotes himself or herself to the process of human becoming without thinking of other-worldly rewards. Human beings are naturally born with drives and desires, but the new philosopher arranges his or her drives in accordance with the process of human becoming.

The ultimate concern of the Nietzschean new philosopher and the Confucian renzhe（仁者）or junzi（君子）is how one might become a consummate human. Confucius makes a clear distinction between self-cultivation (the development of character in the promotion of dao) and attaining the mastery of craftsmen (the practice of honing specific skills or the mastery of a trade) (A 19.7). He points out that the junzi is not a “mere vessel” (A 2.12), meaning that the junzi is not a person of instrumental skills. Confucius himself is once criticized for not making a name in any field. He replies humorously, “What should I make my specialty? Driving? Or archery? I think I should prefer driving” (A 9.2). On another occasion, he is asked about how to grow crops and vegetables but his reply is that he is not as good as an old farmer (A 15.32). The junzi should devote himself or herself in attaining dao rather than to any worldly reward. According to Confucius, the cultivation of ren is much more important even than water or food because the consequence of a deprivation of food is death, yet “death has always been with the people since the beginning of time” (A 12.7, 15.35). When there is no ren or trust (xin信) in the community, “the common people will not be able to stand on their feet” (A 12.7), and there will be neither order nor security.
A common misreading of Confucius is that he is against any accumulation of wealth and that he wants us all to live in hardship. This misinterpretation may come from the fact that Confucius does appreciate Yan Hui's devotion to self-cultivation without an eye to worldly comforts. However, a more careful reading of the Analects shows that Confucius is not prejudiced against the wealthy if they live with dao. Confucius points out that even if we are poor, we should delight in dao, and even if we are rich, we should observe the li (A 1.15). Confucius presents his attitude on wealth as follows, "If wealth were a permissible pursuit, I would be willing even to act as a guard holding a whip outside the market place. If it is not, I shall follow my own inclinations" (A 7.12). Being a guard with a whip outside the market place is commonly considered an inferior job, yet Confucius will accept it if it is versed in what is ren and yi. On becoming the steward of Confucius, Yuansi is given grain which he declines. Confucius persuades Yuansi to accept it, saying "Can you not find a use for it in helping people in your neighborhood?" (A 6.5) However, in a different setting, Confucius does not approve of Ranyou's generous supply of grain to Zihua's mother. He points out that Zihua lives in luxury though the junzi should be one who "gives to help the needy and not to maintain the rich in style" (A 6.4).

In reality, most people (including some of Confucius's disciples) study with an eye toward fame, power, or wealth but pay no attention to the observance of li, ren or yi. For Confucius, the objective of studying and learning (xue) is to improve oneself. Confucius once lamented that it was difficult to find one who would study (xue) for three years without concentrating on the matter of salary (A 8.12). He was also unhappy to discover that people of his time would study (xue) to impress others (A 14.24).
According to Confucius, when one becomes a *junzi*, therein lies an official career (A 2.18). Moreover, when one becomes an official, one should approach one’s duties and responsibilities with reverence and relegate reward or salary to second place (A 15.38). Zixia, a disciple of Confucius, points out the relation between being an official and the process of human becoming. He says, “When one is in office and finds that one can more than cope with the duties, then one should study.”  When one finds that one can more than cope with one’s studies, then one should take office” (A 19.13).

Both the Nietzschean new philosopher and the Confucian *junzi* undergo the process of human becoming because they want to do so. They are faithful, truthful, honest and sincere to themselves. They take up the burden and responsibility for healthy development and growth of their own lives. Nietzschean self-overcoming and Confucian self-cultivation can be taken as the roots of the consummate human. Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, explains that *junzi* should first devote their efforts to the roots of self-cultivation, because when the roots are established, *dao* will grow therefrom (A 1.2).

Self-cultivation is the first step in becoming the Nietzschean philosopher and the Confucian *junzi*. The next step is to help others to become consummate humans, and thereby bring peace and security to the common people (A 14.42). For both Nietzsche and Confucius, philosophy should be taken as a way of living in the world, rather than as a game of abstract thinking or an academic puzzle. Philosophy is not merely for discussion or for the sake of winning an argument, but is about how one should act and

166 Recall that for Confucius, studying (*xue*) refers to self-cultivation, that is, the process of human becoming.
behave in everyday life. The idea of overcoming oneself in the process of human becoming is to develop a different way of being a human in this world. Both Nietzsche and Confucius realized their words in their deeds. With reference to their own teachings, I examine the everyday wisdom of both Nietzsche and Confucius in section 4.2. For Nietzsche, the “ultimate aim of existence” for the new philosophers is to harness their human instincts and drives to the extent that they may become “inspiring spirits” (BGE 6). For Confucius, the “ultimate aim of existence” is to undergo self-cultivation and becomes a renzhe or a junzi. For both philosophers, the purpose of doing philosophy is to become a consummate human being.

Nietzsche’s appreciation of the new philosopher is applicable to Confucius’s appreciation of the renzhe because both philosophers “assign value and rank according to how many and how many sorts of things one person could bear, could take upon himself, by how far a person could exert his responsibility” (BGE 212). The Nietzschean philosopher and the renzhe are “great” precisely because of their breadth and variety, and their wholeness in diversity. They are “noble,” for they manage to be different, stand alone and live independently. They are honest to themselves and have faith in themselves (JS 284).

Neither Nietzsche nor Confucius relies upon any metaphysical or religious realm, yet they live more happily and brightly than those who rely on the religious or metaphysical worlds. Confucius says that there are three things constantly on the lips of the junzi, “A person of ren never worries (bu you 不憂) [about the future]; a person of wisdom (zhi 知) is never in two minds [about right and wrong]; a person of courage is
never afraid” (A 9.29, 14.28). Zigong then points out that what Confucius has just said gives a description of Confucius himself (A 14.28). Zigong’s response shows that Confucius is highly respected and considered a junzi in his lifetime. Nietzsche was less fortunate: throughout his life, he suffered from bad health and, as a scholar, he was not appreciated by the academic world. Nevertheless, he found joy and warmth in life, and his happiness is evident in his autobiography, Ecce Homo:

On this perfect day, when everything is ripening, not only the grapes are getting down, a ray of sunshine has fallen on my life: I looked behind me, I looked before me, and never have been so many good things all at once. Not in vain have I buried my four-and-fortieth-year today; I had the right to bury it—that in which still had life, has been saved and is immortal. The first book of the Transvaluation of all Values, The Songs of Zarathustra, The Twilight of the Idols, my attempt to philosophize with the hammer—all these things are the gifts of this year, and even of its last quarter. How could I help being thankful to the whole of my life? (EH I)

Here, Nietzsche is telling the story of himself with honesty and sincerity. From the passage above, we can see that at the age of forty-four, Nietzsche finds his whole life fruitful, beautiful and peaceful. He is proud of his works and history has since proven that his ideas are immortal.

Both Nietzsche and Confucius are neither wealthy nor powerful in their lifetimes, yet they enjoy the simple life and are devoted to the process of human becoming. Confucius explains his happiness as follows: “Wealth and rank attained through bu yi (不義) means have as much to do with me as passing clouds” (A 7.16). Confucius once described himself as the sort of man who forgets to eat when he works himself into a frenzy over some problem, and is so full of joy that he forgets his worries (bu you) and fails to notice the onset of old age (A 7.19). This passage is an elaboration on ren zhe bu
you 仁者不憂, that Confucius lives with joy and does not have any worries. From A 7.16, 7.19 and 14.28, we can conclude that when Confucius reaches a certain age, he enjoys life and lives in a ren manner. This further supports my anticipation of an additional stage of Confucius's self-cultivation (A 2.4) in section 3.2: At eighty, I (that is, Confucius) found joy in living with the guiding light of tianming 天命. Confucius (or any renzhe) is not worried even over the greatest issue in human life—old age and death. One does not live in vain who dies in the evening having been told about dao in the morning (A 4.8). Those who live with dao will not be afraid of death.

More than once, Nietzsche pursues the theme of death and he teaches us to "reinterpret" death:

Fundamentally false evaluation of the dead world on the part of the sentient world [sic]. Because we are [the latter] and belong to it... The “dead” world! Eternally in motion and without erring, force against force!... It is a festival to go from this world across [überzugehen] into the ‘dead world’... Let us see through this comedy [of sentient being] and thereby enjoy it! Let us not think of the return to the inanimate as a regression! We become quite true, we perfect ourselves. Death has to be reinterpreted! We thereby reconcile ourselves with what is actual, with the dead world (KSA 9:11[70]).

This note seems to provide a basis for JS 278, “The Thought of Death” where Nietzsche further develops his idea on death.

It gives me a melancholy happiness to live in the midst of this jumble of lanes, needs, and voices: how much enjoyment, impatience, desire; how much thirsty life and drunkenness of life comes to light every moment of the day! And yet things will soon be so silent for all these noisy, living, life-thirsty ones!... It's always like the last moment before the departure of an emigrant ship: people have more to say to each other than ever; the hour is late... I would very much like to do something that

167 This quotation is from Parkes (1994): 303.
would make the thought of life even a hundred times more worth being thought to them.

Death is a natural process, rather than a terrifying "regression," in the world of Nietzsche. Through the words of Zarathustra, Nietzsche admits that he inherits the most famous idea of Heraclitus that "all is flux" (Z III.12.8). Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius understand the world as a dynamic process of becoming, in which momentary phases are transformed into their "polar opposites." In their worlds of becoming, life and death naturally come and go.

Inheriting the worldview of Heraclitus, Nietzsche distinguishes the world as the struggle of two forces or drives: the constructive (or the Apollonian) element and the destructive (the Dionysian) element are of equal importance. These two elements coexist and they contribute in different aspects. Nietzsche wants us to look at death from this "new perspective." Later in the very same book (JS 324), we can see that life was bright and joyful for Nietzsche—though at that time, he had already pursued the theme of the realm of death with the full understanding that "death and death silence are the only things certain and common to all" in the near future (JS 278).

In a self-descriptive passage, Nietzsche says as follows:

In media vitæ [mid-life]—No, life has not disappointed me. On the contrary, I find it truer [or richer], more desirable and mysterious every year—ever since the day when the great liberator came to me... (F)or me it is a world of dangers and victories in which heroic feelings, too, find places to dance and play... (O)ne can live not only boldly but even gaily, and laugh gaily, too... (JS 324)

Here Nietzsche looks at death from a new perspective and he finds life "more desirable" and "richer" than before. Dancing is his favorite metaphor (especially in Thus Spoke
Zarathustra) for the expression of his joy and ecstasy. Nietzsche also remarks on his “cheerfulness” and “high-spiritedness” in many of his writings after Joyful Science (TI F, EH “TI” 2-3).

Nietzsche points out that one must move beyond the nihilism of the lion to the yes-saying of the child. Nietzsche’s child and Confucius’s renzhe are free of the idols of society so that they can exercise their creative wills. The development of both figures is a lifelong process and they have to continuously examine their own creations. Nietzsche also names himself the new philosopher, whose task is to reevaluate traditional values. The Confucian renzhe and the Nietzschean new philosopher live beyond the dichotomy of good and evil; they are honest with themselves, for they rely on their own created values and are responsible for their actions. They thus become “masters” of their own lives. Confucius’s renzhe lives in accordance with ren in his everyday life. Those who have not yet become renzhe can rely on the system of li as guidelines for the presentation of values and attitudes. The active pursuit of values is an indispensable undertaking for one who wishes to be a consummate human because one has to create personalized values of one’s own. Nietzsche’s Übermensch and Confucius’s renzhe love humanity, and they are eager to share their achievements with others. In short, they wish for everyone to become a consummate human. They are “powerful” in their creations (that is, interpretations) of the world, in their influences on humanity as a whole, in the way they enjoy life in the world and in their reinterpretations of death.
Part IV “On this perfect day, when everything is ripening, and not only the grapes are getting brown, a ray of sunshine has fallen on my life: I looked behind, I looked before me, and never have I seen so many good things all at once. Not in vain have I buried my forty-fourth year today; I had the right to bury it—that in it which still had life, has been saved and is immortal... *How could I help being thankful to the whole of my life*?” (*EH* I).

“[I am] the sort of man who forgets to eat when I work myself into a frenzy over some problem, who is so full of joy that I forget my worries and who does not notice the onset of old age” (*A* 7.20).

In Part IV, I examine the developmental process of the Nietzschean child and suggest a parallel with the teachings of Confucius. This part is divided into two sections. Section 4.1 begins with a discussion on the maturity of Zarathustra, who eventually takes up the project of becoming the *Übermensch*. Next, I analyze Nietzsche’s constructive creations, the *amor fati* and the eternal recurrence of the same, which express the life values on which the *Übermensch* relies. These creations are complex ideas, not readily grasped, and they may be more thoroughly understood if approached from the Confucian perspective. Section 4.2 addresses the everyday wisdom of these two philosophers: since Nietzsche and Confucius affirm life in *this* world, I examine the meanings of the values and approaches they consider important in life. Their manners of engaging in the present world can be taken as instructive guidelines for those who wish to lead creatively self-determined lives.

4.1 Zarathustra Becomes the *Übermensch*

In this section, I compare Nietzsche’s creations, that is, *amor fati* and the eternal
recurrence of the same, with Confucius’s ideas on fate (ming 命) and no regret (bu hui 不悔). First, I examine Zarathustra’s project of becoming the Übermensch as a process of self-cultivation. Zarathustra proposes a new understanding of “selfishness” that emphasizes self-love and self-respect. For both thinkers, one has to love oneself in order to make progress in the process of human becoming. Next, I discuss the developmental process of Nietzsche’s sophisticated ideas of amor fati and eternal recurrence of the same, and offer a comparison with Confucius’s ideas and attitudes on past events.

In Twilight of the Idols, which Nietzsche intends to serve as a short introduction to the whole of his philosophy, he points out that the Übermensch is the “real progress” of humanity (TI 9.37). In his autobiography, Ecce Homo, Nietzsche claims that Zarathustra’s Übermensch is the greatest gift for human beings (EH, P4). Through Zarathustra, Nietzsche describes the Übermensch using three images: the goal of a willed evolution, the cleansing sea into which the polluted stream of humankind flows, and the lightning that kindles the greatest experience for humanity (Z, P3). The common theme here is that one is able to justify oneself only through the revolutionary process of overcoming one’s historical background. Zarathustra points out that the “human being is something that shall be overcome” (Z, P3). The Übermensch, however, should not be comprehended as a “higher human” or “super human,” but as the one who has transformed oneself to embrace a different way of living in the world. In Thus Spoke Zarathustra, this process of transformation is described as a “crossing over”—from early, choiceless indoctrinations to new and personally uncharted territory—as a rope or a bridge over the abyss, suspended between the unreflective animal and the determined
Übermensch (Z, P4). If, as Nietzsche says, Zarathustra is a "herald of lightning," then he is announcing to all who are willing to hear that he brings a flash of illumination, an insight ignited by the realization and effort of self-determination. In this way, his idea of the Übermensch as lightning itself makes sense as the illuminated person (Z, P4). Nietzsche has a "particular love of electronic storms," which signifies "both that it is potentially destructive and that the condition affords a kind of sudden illumination." Nietzsche's use of the lightning metaphor originates from Heraclitus's fragments: "The thunderbolt steers all things" (Cf. CXIX, D.64) and "A gleam of light is the dry soul, wisest and best" (Cf. CIX, D.118). The appeal of the metaphor of lightning extends further as a way of distancing Zarathustra from the Platonic tradition in which the sun is the source of knowledge and wisdom. The Platonic sun gives the world daylight, whereas Zarathustra's lightning is a flash of illumination, which vanishes in the next moment, only offering a glimpse of the possibility of renewal and recreation. In the chaos of a storm, a lightning flash reveals the direction or the path.

The goal of the early chapters of Thus Spoke Zarathustra is to initiate a historic project whose culmination will be the Übermensch. According to Lampert, in the Prologue and Part I, Zarathustra portrays the Übermensch as an evolutionary phenomenon, but this image is subsequently abandoned and instead, it presents the evolution of the man Zarathustra. It is worth noting, however, that "the path taken by Zarathustra in the later parts can never be a model for admirers to duplicate, because it

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168 Parkes (1994): 141. fn. 59. See the letter to Gersdorff of 7 April 1866, where Nietzsche gives a Schopenhauerian account of his exaltation in a thunderstorm; the note from the time of Zarathustra, Nietzsche writes: "I want to vanish in a dark thunderstorm: and for my last moments I want to be human and lightning at the same time." This note is cited in Janz, I, 98.

terminates in the singular and supreme act anticipated in Part 1.”\textsuperscript{170} In other words, transformations of the spirit should be taken as individual rather than universal.

What Zarathustra learns from his own experience makes possible his final ascent, and through this ascent he appropriates Nietzsche’s philosophy (as in the metaphor of the entrance hall\textsuperscript{171} which Nietzsche used in his letters\textsuperscript{172}). Emerging from the threshold, Zarathustra becomes the “philosopher”\textsuperscript{173} by taking upon himself the labors of the Übermensch.\textsuperscript{174}

Nietzsche explains the notion of Übermensch as follows:

[It is] the designation of a type of supreme achievement, as opposed to “modern” people, to “good” people, to Christians and other nihilists—a word that in the mouth of a Zarathustra, the annihilator of morality, becomes a very pensive word—has been understood almost everywhere with the utmost innocence in the sense of those very values whose opposite Zarathustra was meant to represent—that is, as an “ideal” type, a higher kind of person, a half “saint” and a half “genius” (EH III.1).

The Nietzschean Übermensch is different from the “good” person or the Christian, who lives obediently according to inherited, traditional moral standards, and different too from the “modern” person or the nihilist, who lives according to self-interest or else feels pessimistic about the world. As the “annihilator” of morality, the Übermensch is “innocent” of any moral conventions. Because the task of Übermensch is “to create values” (BGE 211), he or she is “a commander and a lawgiver” (BGE 211) for his or her

\textsuperscript{170} Lampert (1986): 21.
\textsuperscript{171} It is interesting to note that Confucius also uses this analogy (Though Zilu may not have entered the inner room, he has ascended the hall) to express the fact that Zilu has made some progress in the process of human becoming (A 11.15).
\textsuperscript{172} Lampert: 157.
\textsuperscript{173} Here, I employ the term in the elevated sense used by Nietzsche in BGE.
\textsuperscript{174} Here, the Übermensch refers to the image of Zarathustra itself.
own actions and judgments whereas most people need the noble lie (the convention of
good and evil) as the ground for their actions.

4.1.1 Insights of Life

For Zarathustra, there is no religious excuse to postpone the joys of self-reliance and
self-determination. With the destruction of the afterworldly,\textsuperscript{175} he affirms life in this
world. In the speech that Zarathustra gives before he leaves his disciples for the first
time, he describes his own, single virtue, the “bestowing virtue” (Z 1.22). Zarathustra
distinguishes himself from the others in town by employing the idea of “selfishness.”\textsuperscript{176} People in the Motley Cow, where Zarathustra stays, describe their actions as altruism, yet
their giving is based on the calculation of gain (that is, a kind of calculated selfishness)
which Zarathustra names a “sick selfishness.” Although his style of “taking” will make
him like a “wolf” or a “robber” (Z, P9) to the town, Zarathustra’s robbing is for the sake
of giving. He takes for himself, but such “selfishness” is preparatory to an act of giving
for the sake of humankind. This new definition of “healthy selfishness” is an example
of Zarathustra’s creations.

According to Nietzsche, one has to be “selfish” before one can love others and
hence, all of humanity, because those who “deny themselves and their own existence, are
no longer good for anything good” (\textit{JS} 345). Nietzsche points out that one should first
attain satisfaction with oneself, for whoever is dissatisfied with oneself is continually

\textsuperscript{175} Especially Christianity, with its fundamental resentment against life.
\textsuperscript{176} Here, for the first time, Nietzsche uses the word “selfishness” in an attempt to win back the meanness
of modern utilitarianism and the hedonistic egoism of the last human.
prepared to avenge oneself, with the sad result that others will be the victims (JS 290). In order to be truly free, one cannot be riddled with guilt or ashamed of oneself, since such shame, when prolonged, renders one powerless (JS 275). One has to be freely and fearlessly in "innocent selfishness" (that is, self-love) so that one can grow and blossom from oneself (JS 99). Yet there are people, such as some Christians, who consider all natural inclinations (including self-love) and unfettered motivations to be inferior and evil. According to Nietzsche, "[It is] they [who] are the cause of our great injustice towards our nature, towards all nature!" (JS 294) Here, Nietzsche is likely railing against the Lutheran structures familiar from his own childhood indoctrinations. He points out that there are many others (such as, some atheists) who can, with grace, entrust themselves to their own inclinations in the real world.

Zarathustra’s teachings of the Übermensch can be summarized as follows: “To become what one is” (Z IV.1, JS 270). The importance of this idea is reinforced by its use in the subtitle of his autobiography, Ecce Homo. More than once, Zarathustra describes the process of human becoming as the self-propelled effort of "mountain climbing" (Z, P1, III.1, IV.1). He says that this is the longest path reserved for him, the hardest path to ascend, the most lonesome wandering, yet "only in that way can human beings attain greatness" (EH IV.5, Z III.1). Every person in the world is a “unique miracle” and will be in the world only once since there is no conceivable second chance at life. Those “who do not want to belong to the mass only need to cease taking themselves easily; let them follow their own conscience.” They call to themselves: “Be your self!” (SE 1). “To become what one is” is to be faithful to and honest with

177 Note that Nietzsche uses the word “conscience” in a positive way.
oneself. This is exemplified by those who can justify their existence because they think and act independently, according to their own creation of good and evil. Nietzsche says:

Let us therefore limit ourselves to the purification of our opinions and value judgments and to the creation of tables of what is good that are new and all our own... We want to become who we are—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves! (JS 335)

A new and unique human being is the one who “creates for [one]self a sun of [one’s] own,” so that one can lie down in the sun with an abundance of well being in an existence that justifies oneself (JS 320). In Plato the sun, which stands for something that is more fundamental than a worldview or a life, is the one and the same for all, whereas Nietzsche is arguing that “some existences may be illuminated and sustained by their own particular sources.” Nietzsche does not mean that a sun of one’s own is completely new or different from the others, but one should be capable of contributing to some conditions of the creation of one’s own sun.

Nietzsche’s notion of sick selfishness is similar to Confucius’s notion of greediness (tan 貪) because both notions refer to the possession of as many materialistic and physical rewards and comfort as possible. Confucius points out the five excellent practices of the junzi 君子, and one of them is that “[The junzi] has desires without being greedy” because his or her desires are acted upon in a ren or yi manner (A 20.2).

The Analects presents the idea of self-love through concrete examples of the ways Confucius lives in the world. Confucius affirms and loves his life: he makes full use of

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179 The other four are: “The junzi is generous without its costing him or her anything, works hard without the people complaining, is at ease without being greedy, and is awe-inspiring without looking fierce” (A 20.2)
his time to undergo self-cultivation and share his ideas with others.\textsuperscript{180} He is passionate in teaching,\textsuperscript{181} though he admits sadly that he cannot do anything for those who show no interest in life. He points out that those who have "full bellies all day" but "do not put their heart-minds into some use are sure to meet difficulties" (A 17.22). Confucius is a person of modesty, yet he becomes angry\textsuperscript{182} when he knows that Zaiwo is in bed during the day. He says, "A piece of rotten wood cannot be carved, nor can a wall of dried dung be trowelled. As far as Wo is concerned what is the point in condemning him?" (A 5.10) Confucius cannot "help" Zaiwo, who is lazy and lacks the determination to undergo self-cultivation. According to Confucius, one should not merely look for a comfortable life, but should be motivated to learn from those possessed of dao 道 to put oneself right (A 1.14). As discussed in section 1.1, Nietzsche and Confucius believe that the first transformation (that is, the transformation to the camel stage) cannot be taught, but depends on one’s willingness to undertake self-cultivation. Self-love can be taken as the drive to undergo the first transformation of the spirit.

A frequently misread passage in the \textit{Analects} provides support for Confucius’s agreement with Nietzsche’s notion of “healthy selfishness.” A word-to-word translation of this passage is: “People of antiquity studied for themselves (\textit{wei ji} 爲己); people today study for others (\textit{wei ren} 爲人)” (A 14.24). A common interpretation of A 14.24, which I believe to be mistaken, is that Confucius criticizes the former and appreciates the latter, but such an interpretation is inconsistent with the rest of the \textit{Analects}.\textsuperscript{183} According to

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item A 7.7, 7.25, 15.39.
\item In the \textit{Analects}, Zaiwo is the only disciple that Confucius finds hopeless.
\item There are a number of passages in the \textit{Analects} where Confucius criticizes the shortcomings of people in his time (A 2.7, 17.16, 18.5) and appreciates the greatness of the antiquity (A 3.16, 4.22, 14.40,
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Lau, A 14.24 should be translated as: “People of antiquity studied to improve themselves (wei ji); people today study to impress others (wei ren).” Self-love (or, in Nietzsche’s words, “healthy selfishness”) is the first, essential step to enter Confucius’s process of self-cultivation and Nietzsche’s process of overcoming. Integral to such awareness, willingness or determination is the quality of character which impresses both philosophers and indicates a person’s readiness for growth and development.

The consistency between Confucius’s and Nietzsche’s notion of “selfishness” can be further reflected by the former’s ideas concerning the preservation of one’s life and the accumulation of wealth. Confusion regarding the first notion may stem from another misinterpretation of Confucius, namely, that he encourages one to sacrifice one’s life for one’s master or the state. This misunderstanding is probably due to the fact that many monumental figures mentioned by Confucius are so loyal to their states or masters that they do not die a natural death. A more careful reading of the Analects shows that Confucius’s position on this issue is complicated, and the constancy required by a loyal subject does not necessarily require joint mortality. Notwithstanding that Confucius expects one to be steadfast to the death in service to the efficacious way (A 8.13), he nevertheless wants one to protect one’s life and avoid unnecessary sacrifice (A 5.7). It is important to recall that as the junzi, Confucius is not invariably for or against anything in his dealings with the world (A 4.10). He is not a rule-follower. His decisions always depend on the specific context and circumstances in which he acts. As with Nietzsche, there is no moral code external to context, and hence no “absolute” standard of conduct.
Confucius is born in a state engaged in warfare, and he understands the potential personal dangers of a socially and politically chaotic environment. Whenever possible, he keeps away from a jurisdiction which is in peril and avoids staying in a state that is in danger (A 8.13). When the Duke of Wey asks him about military formation, Confucius departs the state on the following day (A 15.1). According to Confucius, when dao prevails in the Empire, one should not cast aside the state but serve it; when it does not, then one should keep oneself out of it so as to stay clear of unnecessary humiliation or punishment (A 8.13). Clearly, Confucius’s self-love favors prudential actions over those stemming from mere courage. Nanrong is this kind of person: Confucius’s great appreciation of him can be reflected by the fact that he gives his elder brother’s daughter in marriage to Nanrong (A 5.2). Ningwuzi is also a figure of this type. Confucius says, “When dao prevailed in the land, he [Ningwuzi] was wise; when it was without dao, he was stupid. His wisdom was within the reach of others, but not his stupidity” (A 5.21). Guanzhong is also a figure with self-love. He does not die after his lord’s death, yet Confucius supports this decision. Confucius explains that Guanzhong’s greatness is not the “petty faithfulness” of the common people who commit suicide in a ditch without anyone taking any notice (A 14.17). Rather, Guanzhong is a person of greatness: he brings order and peace to the states without a show of force (A 14.16) and makes great contributions to Chinese culture and civilization (A 14.17). According to Confucius, one should protect and retain one’s life to serve the state and humanity in the fullest sense.

184 Refer also to A 5.19, where Confucius appreciates Chenwenzi as “pure” (qing 清) for fleeing from politically unstable states.
It is, however, wrong to think that Confucius recommends the preservation of life at all costs and the practice of submission or obedience. Confucius says, “For people of purpose (zhishi 志士) and persons of ren (renren 仁人) while it is inconceivable that they should seek to stay alive at the expense of ren, it may happen that they have to accept death in order to have ren accomplished” (A 15.9). A death is considered glorious and worthwhile if it contributes something meaningful to humanity. A stupid and meaningless sacrifice of life should be avoided.

Confucius explicitly distinguishes between different ways of living in a dao-prevailing and a chaotic state. In the former, one should speak and act with perilous high-mindedness whereas in the latter, one should act with perilous high-mindedness but speak with self-effacing diffidence (A 14.3). Being the Confucian renzhe 仁者, one is expected to be steadfast to the death in service to the efficacious way (shengdao 善道) (A 8.13). In other words, if you are a renzhe, you are expected to do your utmost in serving a dao-prevailing state. However, should you find yourself in the state where dao did not prevail, a perilous high-minded speech would place you in great danger with little positive impact upon the state. Because the impact of your actions is greater than that of your words, it will be worthwhile to take the risk of putting yourself in danger and try your best to serve the state. The Confucian junzi is not invariably for or against the sacrifice of one’s life, but on the side of what is ren and yi (A 4.10). Context and particulars guide actions, and these are recognized as complex.

Confucius’s position that one should try one’s best to protect one’s life and avoid unnecessary death can be best gleaned from his conversations with Zilu, his most
courageous disciple. Zilu is overjoyed to hear that Confucius believes he would be the only one to follow if Confucius were to put to sea on a raft (A 5.7). However, Confucius points out that he would not take Zilu if he were leading the Three Armies. Instead of bringing Zilu, who “would try to fight a tiger with his bare hands or walk across the [Yellow] River and die in the process without regrets”; he would prefer someone who, when facing a task, was fearful of failure and who, while fond of making plans, was capable of successful execution (A 7.11). Confucius would be willing to die on the battlefield if the war was fought in respect to ren and yi. Hence, his evaluation of the conflict is guided by prudential concern for future conditions. No supporter of leading lambs to the slaughter, Confucius will provide good training for the common people before sending them to the battlefield, so that they can be ready to take up arms and fight (A 13.29-30).

Contrary to another misreading of the Analects, Confucius is not against the accumulation of wealth so long as it is obtained with ren and yi (A 7.12). When dao prevails in the state (bang you dao 邦有道), the community will be stable and enjoy prosperity. The junzi will naturally become an official in government and attain wealth and high status. Those who are not interested in becoming officials will also be successful in other areas whereas there must be something wrong with those who remain poor and humble. Thus, Confucius points out that when dao prevails in the land, it is a shameful matter to be poor and in humble circumstances (A 8.13). However, when dao does not prevail (bang wu dao 邦無道), the powerful and the wealthy are those who do not live with dao, presumably because they have cruelly taken advantage of others to

185 That is, when he is leading the army of the state to fight a great war.
gain such elevated status. It is reprehensible to gain ground by standing on the backs of one’s victims, and hence it is a shameful matter to be rich and noble when dao does not prevail in the state (A 8.13).

For both thinkers, only by differentiation and multiplicity in style can there be beauty in the world. Nietzsche suggests that one has to “give style” to one’s character and such self-creation is a great and rare art (JS 290). Only those who are willing to channel all their strengths and weaknesses into an artistic plan can practice and attain genuine style. Good or bad taste does not mean much to Nietzsche, because “even a weak plan can delight the eye.” A monotonous world is always boring and colorless. Confucius’s attitude on this point is reflected in the following passages:

Junzi enters into associations (gun 群) but not cliques (bu dang 不黨); the petty person enters into cliques but not associations (A 2.14).

Junzi agrees with others (he 和) without being an echo (bu tong 不同). The petty person echoes without being in agreement (A 13.23).

In the first quotation, Confucius is saying that the junzi creates one’s own notion of ren and acts accordingly, whereas the petty person is a follower of others, persuaded by fads or mob mentality rather than carefully considered self-determination. The junzi does only those things that a junzi would do whereas petty persons are followers of the others and, hence, they do whatever the others do. In the second quotation, Confucius means that when junzi come together, their group is always in harmony (he 和). They do not necessarily agree with one another, yet they respect the opinions of others and are accommodating with their peers. When petty persons form a group, they tend to agree with the opinions of others. However, the group is not in genuine harmony because it is
held together more by fear than by respective peer review. Nietzsche's emphasis on individual style and Confucius's emphasis on harmony rather than agreement infer that they are not looking for a kind of "tuning," which is an agreement achieved by bringing the parts into conformity with a certain standard, so that a feature is enhanced possibly at the expense of something else. Rather, they are seeking "attuning," which is combining and blending two or more elements into a harmonious, enhanced whole, in which the separate particularities of the individual ingredients are not sacrificed. Both Nietzsche and Confucius expect that different persons who are Übermenschen and renzhe will respond differently to the same situation because of the differences in their backgrounds, strengths and weaknesses. What a particular renzhe or Übermensch actually does in everyday life depends on his or her own background and assessment of particular circumstances.

The Nietzschean Übermensch and the Confucian renzhe attain "great health." Nietzsche says: "We who are new, nameless, hard to understand; we premature births of an as yet unproved future—for a new end, we also need a new means, namely, a new health that is stronger, craftier, tougher, bolder, and more cheerful than any previous health" (JS 382). For Nietzsche and Confucius, becoming the Übermensch or the renzhe is not just a matter of "knowing oneself" but, more importantly, of "making oneself" (though the former may be necessary for the achievement of the latter). The idea of aesthetic self-cultivation is elaborated in a passage from Dawn of Morning entitled "Deploying One's Weaknesses as an Artist":

186 The ideas of "tuning" and "attuning" is from Hall & Ames (1987): 166. Refer to section 1.2.3 for a full discussion.
If we are bound to have weaknesses, and are also bound in the end to recognize them as a law set over us, then I would wish that everyone had at any rate sufficient artistic power to set off his weaknesses against his virtues and through his weaknesses make us desire his virtues: the power possessed in so exceptional a degree by the great composers (DM 218).

There are two points worth noting in this passage. First, although we human beings are bound to have weaknesses, we should explore our limitations to the utmost. The creative, artistic power of the Übermensch is said to attain maximum effect when reflected upon the self, that is, when one's personality is itself taken as the material to be worked. Second, the Heraclitean notions of war and of the opposites are evident in DM 218. As discussed in section 1.2, Nietzsche's understanding of the world (as becoming and overcoming) seems to be indebted to Heraclitus. The worlds of Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and Confucius can be understood as dynamic processes, in which each phase is continuously transformed into a different phase, as, for example, in the phase transitions of water from liquid to vapor and vice versa.

4.1.2 Amor Fati

Nietzsche sees the unraveling of Christianity as part of the phenomenon he calls "European nihilism"—the loss of any sense of deep significance to life. In order to avoid pessimism and overt hatred, "the last human" (Z, P5) organizes a pleasantly undemanding and unreflective way of life, a dazed but adequately efficient consumerism. Nietzsche cannot reconcile himself to such a prospect and regards it as loathsome. At the same time, the other extreme response is Schopenhauer's pessimism, the judgment

that the world’s non-existence would be preferable to its existence. This cynicism too, cannot provide any answer to Nietzsche’s question of “How to live well in this world?” because those who pursue a life-denying pessimism to its end glimpse the opposite vista from those who are world-affirming. Nietzsche says:

We take care not to say that the world is worth less... The whole attitude of human... as judge of the world who finally places existence itself on its scale and finds it too light—the monstrous stupidity of this attitude has finally dawned on us and we are sick of it (JS 346).

The audacity assumed by a human judge of existence is recognized as “monstrous stupidity,” and Nietzsche gains the insight that it is sickening. He overcomes this dilemma in the form of amor fati (love of fate) and the eternal recurrence of the same.

Nietzsche uses the expression amor fati to refer to an affirmation of life that is at the same time an affirmation of his own connotation. He proclaims amor fati as his “formula” for “a Dionysian relationship to existence” (EH, “BT” 3), which he takes to be “the highest state a philosopher can attain.” Here, the Dionysian engagement with life is no longer that of The Birth of Tragedy. In Zarathustra’s ecstatic “dithyrambs,” the distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian is repudiated. What Nietzsche named as “Dionysian” in his later books is actually a union of Dionysus and Apollo in The Birth of Tragedy: a creative and passionate striving that gives form to itself and is unconditioned by what precedes it. The Dionysian person is the one who realizes that his or her own being is inextricably entangled in “the fatality of all that which has been and will be” (TI 6.8).
The idea of *amor fati* appears in "the most astonishing"\(^{188}\) of all the chapters of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "On Redemption" (Z II.20). This chapter begins with an interpretation of Zarathustra’s nightmare, showing it to be the nightmare of humanity. This understanding suggests that even Zarathustra himself is not yet redeemed and has not yet awakened.\(^{189}\) In spite of their retrospection, Zarathustra’s questions about the historical process of redemption take him a step further in the pioneering process of human becoming. According to Lampert,

[Nietzsche’s] first use of the word redeemer in the chapter on redemption pictures him as able to bear being human only because to be human is to be the redeemer of accidents or chance, but he now defines precisely what the accident or chance is from which humanity must redeem itself.\(^{190}\)

Only in this moment does Zarathustra realize that the will to power, the creative act which generates the *Übermensch*, is powerless against what is past. Zarathustra finds out that the will is "imprisoned" by time gone by. Lampert points out that "'time's desire' is its inexorable movement from future possibility through present actuality to past necessity."\(^{191}\) In order to break the imprisonment of time's desire, the creative will can either break time’s desire or will backward. It is impossible for the creative will to will backwards because time’s arrow always goes towards the future. Zarathustra’s nightmare also shows that the present is always shaped by the past. The unchangeable past tends to imprison the present and the future. In this way, one’s future is already fated—for the present is always part of the chain of moments from the past. If this were the case, Zarathustra’s creation would remain crippled and becoming would be detained in the unchangeable. It is no wonder that this is his nightmare.

\(^{188}\) Lampert (1986): 140.

\(^{189}\) Lampert (1986): 140.

\(^{190}\) Lampert (1986): 142.

\(^{191}\) Lampert (1986): 143.
Zarathustra brings revenge and will to power together, to unite them as “mutually grounding all interpretations of life hitherto.”\textsuperscript{192} The creative will (will to power), the distinctive feature of the Übermensch, turns sick towards revenge. The will is not free: “raging against its condition, it has invented redemptions for itself that are curses on its condition and on mankind.”\textsuperscript{193} According to Nietzsche, the well-cultivated spirit of revenge hides behind the name “punishment.”\textsuperscript{194} Zarathustra gives new definitions for redemption and revenge to create the possibility of “genuine redemption”:

To redeem those that have passed away and to re-create all “It was” into “Thus I did will it!”—that alone should I call redemption! ...

This, yes this alone is what revenge itself is: the will’s ill-will toward time and its “It was” ...

All “It was” is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident—until the creating will says to it: “But thus did I will it!”

—Until the creating will says to it: “But thus do I will it! Thus shall I will it!” (Z II.20)

From then on, the creative will responds to the “imprisonment” of time’s desire in a different way. Zarathustra’s new perspective on redemption is that the creative will has the power to transform whatever “it was”: whatever transpired to affect the past, the present, and the future. Until the creative will makes such a claim, the accidental and unchangeable past remains an “unwillable necessity that fates it to revenge.”\textsuperscript{195} In his

\textsuperscript{192} Lampert (1986): 144.
\textsuperscript{193} Lampert (1986): 145.
\textsuperscript{194} Lampert (1986): 146.
\textsuperscript{195} Refer to the eternal punishment in Christianity.
\textsuperscript{195} Lampert (1986): 146.
determination to be free of his indoctrinations and early influences, Nietzsche must face the burden of the rage of the innocent against the injuries of circumstance. The retaliation that revenge demands must be taken against something as it cannot be taken against someone. This is Zarathustra's thorough affirmation of time: he becomes a historical person.

Nietzsche explains the idea of amor fati in his autobiography, Ecce Homo:

My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati.¹⁹⁶ that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bears what is necessary, still less conceal it—all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary—but love it (EH II 10).

Here, Nietzsche is saying that one must love one's fate in the sense that what is past cannot be altered. One has to attain courage to accept the fact that one's past, which plays an important role in the formation of the present and the future, cannot be changed. There is nothing one can do to change what has been, and the best one can do is to "will" it and to "love" it. A more important consideration is that you cannot affirm and be who you are without affirming the whole (that is, every part of the past) including the most joyful and the most painful experiences. The present (and the future) is an extension of the past. In this case, it does not matter that time (and life) passes away, for what counts is the experience of joy throughout the process of overcoming (whatever one's task may be) and the meaning one gives to and creates in one's life. What one does in life either has intrinsic value or it does not, and it is only the individual who can give value and significance to the world. One has to accept this if there is to be meaning in one's life, because one could not change it even if one wished: one must affirm oneself in this

¹⁹⁶ It should be noted the way in which EH exemplifies this attitude. As long as one overlooks this, as well as the fact that Nietzsche's life was troubled by continued bad health and excruciating pain, and that his books were, without exception, totally "unsuccessful," one does not begin to understand EH. Kaufmann (1967): 258, footnote 4.
Confucius's affirmation of the past is reflected in the following passage:

Duke Ai asks Zaiwo about the altar to the god of earth. Zaiwo replies, “The Xia used the pine, the Yin used the cedar, and the Zhou people used the chestnut (li 栗), saying that it made the common people tremble (zhanli 戰栗).”

Confucius, on hearing of this reply, comments, “One does not explain away what is already done, one does not advise against what is already accomplished, and one does not condemn what has already gone by” (A 3.21).

Zaiwo is asked how the previous dynasties built an altar to the god of earth, apparently expressing an interest in how they ruled the state. Confucius knows the intention for the Zhou dynasty to build an altar with chestnut wood (the Chinese name of chestnut is li 栗) with the motivation of making the common people tremble (zhanli 戰栗). But at the same time, he knows that the Zhou dynasty made great contributions to Chinese culture. The wrong choice was made in the past and there is nothing that can be done about it in Confucius’s time. Rather than wasting his time to discuss what has been done, Confucius focuses on what he can do in the present. This passage shows that Confucius and Nietzsche say the sacred Yes to the past. Both philosophers take the present as an extension of the past.

Neither Nietzsche nor Confucius has much influence on his country or community in his lifetime. Throughout his writing career, Nietzsche’s writings were not appreciated by other scholars and none of his books was popular. Confucius wishes to practice his teachings but he is never given any important official post. However, both philosophers do whatever they can to promote their ideas, courageously accept their “failures” and find
joy in everyday life.

Nietzsche suffers from bad health from the age of thirty-six until his death (that is, from 1879-1900). In 1880, he was physiologically weak with "an extreme poverty of blood and muscle" (EH I.1), yet he finished his book, the Dawn of Morning, which is full of brightness and cheerfulness with "no negative words, no attack, no spite" (EH, "DM" 1). Nietzsche does not merely accept his severe pain and sufferings in life (such as the torment of a three-day migraine), he goes a step further: he makes use of everything in life, even pain and sufferings, in a positive way (EH I.2). For instance, illness provides him an opportunity to "look from the perspective of the sick towards healthier concepts and values and, conversely, to look again from the fuller self-assurance of a rich life down into the secret work of the instinct of decadence" (EH I.1). It is common for healthy people to forget the fact that being healthy is already a blessing. Thus, a short-term illness is an occasion for one to look at health from the perspective of the sick and attain new, energetic stimulus for life (EH I.2). For Nietzsche, who always suffers from bad health, life is discovered anew. He begins to notice and appreciate all kinds of good, even in little things: he turns his will to health, to life, into a philosophy. In short, Nietzsche makes good use of every life experience and he loves every part of his life, including his pain and suffering.

Fate (ming 命), which appears twenty-four times in the Analects, is an important idea in Confucian teaching. Of these occurrences, there are thirteen times where "ming"
refers to fate and destiny. Confucius discusses the idea of fate (ming) as it relates to his ideas on tian 天 and tianming 天命 whereas Nietzsche discusses fate from the perspective of time. The Analects does not provide any information on Confucius’s discourse on fate, but rather gives everyday examples to illustrate his acceptance of ming and tianming as something beyond the control of human beings.

We know that Confucius is never given any official post of high status despite of the fact that in his middle age, he goes from one state to another, hoping to become a government official and put his teachings into wide-spread practice. In his travels, there are times when Confucius is in great danger. On the occasion when Huan Tui, the ministry of War for the state of Song, attempted to kill him, Confucius had confidence in tian and believed that Huan could not hurt him because he would be sheltered by tian (A 7.23). When Confucius met danger again in Kuang, he said:

> With King Wen’s dead, is not culture (wen 文) invested here in me? If tian intends culture to be destroyed, those who come after me will not be able to have part of it. If tian does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of Kuang do to me? (A 9.5)

Here, Confucius is at peace with tianming. It is tian that “decides” whether he will be killed or not. If tian “intends” dao to prevail, then his life will be “protected.” If tian “intends” dao not to prevail, there is nothing he can do but to accept his death. Probably, at the age of fifty, he understands that whether he can become a government official or not depends on tianming. Confucius says, “It is fate (ming 命) if dao prevails; it is equally ming if dao falls into disuse” (A 14.36). Accepting that it is fate that he cannot disseminate his teachings, Confucius goes back to his home state and makes use of his

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197 A 2.4, 6.10, 8.6, 9.1, 11.19, 12.5, 14.12, 14.36, 16.8, 19.1, 20.2.
198 Refer to section 1.2.2 for the discussion of tian.
knowledge and experience to become a famous teacher with three thousand students.

From *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, we know that the idea of *amor fati* originates in Zarathustra's disgust with the imprisonment of the creative will by one's past (Z II.20). Zarathustra's philosophical and psychological discourse on *amor fati* emerges from the relations of redemption, revenge, and the will to power. As discussed in section 1.2.2, Nietzsche captures the Heraclitean idea of the *kosmos* with an analogy of a child playing a game. "Time is a child playing a game of draughts; the kingship is in the hands of a child" (Cf. XCVI, D.52). Inheriting the worldview of Heraclitus, Nietzsche portrays his understanding of the world in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, as follows:

[The world is] a process quite similar to Heraclitus the Obscure's comparison of the force that shapes the world into a playing child who sets down stones here, there, and the next place, and who builds up piles of sand only to knock them down again" (*BT* 24).

This quotation shows that Nietzsche understands the world as becoming and ever-changing, just like a momentary configuration of shapes in the sand. In his later work, *Genealogy of Morals*, he describes the "world-order" as "the most unexpected and exiting lucky throws of the dice played by Heraclitus's 'great child,' whether that is Zeus or chance" (*GM* 16). The play of Heraclitus's and Nietzsche's child does not follow any "rational" principles and there is no purpose beyond the play itself. In other words, "chance" or "luck" is the major factor for the configuration of shapes in the sand, and the world.

Chance and luck also play an important role in the Confucian world. Confucius knows that part of the world is unpredictable and cannot be controlled by human effort,
but is rather influenced by tianming (the “fate of tian”). In Confucius’s personal passage on self-cultivation, he mentions tianming. He says, “...At fifty, I understood tianming... At seventy I followed the desires of my heart-mind without going over the bounds [of tian]” (A 2.4). The importance of understanding tianming can be reflected by the fact that it is considered as the fourth of the six realizations in Confucius’s self-cultivation and only at the age of seventy can he act naturally with tian. Confucius’s ideas on tianming are further elucidated in the following passage:

I do not complain against tian, nor do I blame humans. In my studies, I start from below (xia xue 下學) and get through to what is up above (shang da 上達). If I am understood at all, it is, perhaps, by tian (A 14.35).

There are two points worth noting from this quotation. First, Confucius’s notion of shang da can be misleading to many Western readers, who tend to interpret “what is up above” as something Platonic or metaphysical. What Confucius actually means is that by learning from things in the world, he can grasp, understand, accept, and eventually live naturally with tianming (A 2.4). As discussed in section 1.2.2, the Chinese word, tian, refers to both the vague “world-order” and the concrete sky above the earth. Confucius’s notion of shang da is probably a metaphor with double meaning, referring to the vague order of tian and the sky above. Secondly, Confucius says that he can be understood by no one but tian. A 2.4 says that Confucius understands tianming and here, he says that he can only be understood by tian (A 14.35). In other words, Confucius and tian tend to “attain” a kind of “mutual understanding between each other.” If there is mutual understanding between two persons, then they are accepting, approving, and appreciating each other. Thus, Confucius and tian tend to know, accept, and approve of

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199 At the age of fifty, Confucius understands the tianming.
200 At the age of seventy, Confucius follows the desires of his heart-mind without overstepping the line.
each other.

Even for Confucius himself, it is a difficult task to understand *tianming*. Confucius begins the process of human becoming at the age of fifteen when he sets his heart-mind on learning and only when he reaches fifty does he understand *tianming* (A 2.4). It takes as long as thirty-five years for a person like Confucius, who loves learning without flagging (A 7.2), to understand *tianming*. The *Analects* rarely offers a passage where Confucius is proud of himself, except for A 5.28:

In a hamlet of ten households, there are bound to be those who are my equal in doing their best for others (*zhong* 忠) and in being trustworthy in what they say (*xin* 信), but they are unlikely to be as eager to learn as I am.

For the majority (including most of Confucius’s disciples), who are not as eager to learn as Confucius, it will probably take more than thirty-five years to achieve an understanding of *tianming*. This is why it is rare for Confucius to discuss fate (*ming* 命) and *ren* 仁 (A 9.1), since most people are not yet ready to understand them. A Confucian *junzi* understands *ming* (A 20.3), whereas a petty person (*xiaoren* 小人) is ignorant of it (A 16.8).

Life and death are issues that are beyond human control but depend on fate. Although Confucius shows undue sorrow\(^\text{203}\) when his favorite disciple, Yan Hui, dies at a young age (A 11.9-11), he accepts Hui’s death as “fated” (as the decision of *tianming*).

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201 Profit (li 利) is another topic which Confucius rarely discusses (A 9.1) because “The *junzi* 君子 should focus on *yi* 義, rather than profit” (A 4.16) and “The complete person (*chengren* 成人) remembers what is *yi* at the sight of profit” (A 14.12).

202 Confucius says that there is no hope of meeting a sage or a *shanren* and he would be content if he met a *junzi* or someone with constancy (A 7.26).

203 Confucius’ own son, Boyi, also dies at a young age but the *Analects* does not give any information on Confucius’ response for Boyi’s early death.
Confucius says, “Alas! Tian has bereft me! Tian has bereft me!” (A 11.9) and “Unfortunately (bu xing 不幸) his allotted span was a short one” (A 6.3, 11.7). Again, when Boniu, a disciple of Confucius, is ill, Confucius visits him and says, “We are going to lose him. It must be fate (ming). Why else should such a man be stricken with such a disease? Why else should such a man be stricken with such a disease?” (A 6.10) Confucius’s attitude on ming can be summarized by Zixia’s words: “Life and death are a matter of fate (ming) whereas wealth and honor depend on tian” (A 12.5).

The fact that Confucius is at peace with tianming does not infer that he lives with a passive, pessimistic attitude. Confucius once lamented that “The Phoenix does not appear nor does the River offer up its Chart. I am done for it” (A 9.9). There is no information provided on the meanings of the phoenix and the Chart, but the passage is commonly interpreted as Confucius’s lamentation of the hopelessness of putting dao into practice in the Empire of his day.204 Confucius expresses his eagerness in serving the state in a number of passages in the Analects. For instance, he compares himself with a piece of beautiful jade for sale (he is waiting for a right offer (A 9.13), and with the bull born of plough cattle of a sorrel coat and well-formed horns (A 6.6) (he is well-prepared to put dao into practice). Confucius has confidence that tian would not allow him to be passed over but would instead realize his capacity (A 6.6).

In his lifetime, Confucius is widely known as restless (A 14.32) and as the one “who keeps working towards a goal the realization of which he knows to be hopeless” (A 14.38). Even after he knows that he cannot actualize his teachings and he goes back to

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his home state, he makes use of every opportunity to give advice to the ruling class and is willing to meet with visitors from other places. There are a number of reasons for Confucius to do so. First, since “Confucius takes his place after the Counselors,” it is his duty to report to the Duke of Jian, who is the head of Confucius’s home state, (A 14.21). However, the most important reason for this homage is that Confucius never gives up hope for dao to prevail in the state. Confucius is even willing to meet those rulers with a poor reputation although his general attitude towards them is that the junzi should avoid “entering the domains of those who do what is not good” (A 17.7). Confucius explains that there must be a purpose for the rulers to meet with him. If, for example, their purpose were to employ Confucius, then he would turn a chaotic state into a harmonious community, or, in his words, “another Zhou” (A 17.5). Even in the cases where Confucius would not be receiving an official post, if the ruling class were persuaded by his words and took his advice, then their own meetings would still be advantageous for the state (and the common people). Confucius points out that “there is no grading into categories in instruction” (A 15.39): he is willing to teach anyone who is willing to learn, which includes the ruling class, people from any other places, and those who have done wrong but are willing to rectify their mistakes. Thirdly, Confucius wants to use this opportunity to introduce his good disciples to the ruling class, not merely hoping to get them a job, but trying to seek an opportunity for them to contribute to the state and serve the common people (A 6.8). Many of Confucius’s close disciples

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205 A 2.19, 3.24, 6.3, 6.8, 6.28, 11.7, 12.9, 12.11, 12.17-19, 13.15, 13.16, 13.18, 17.5, 17.7. The only exceptions are Yang Huo and Ru Bei: Confucius refuses to go to see the former but meets him on the way (A 17.1) and he declines to see the latter on the ground of illness (A 17.20).

206 A 7.29, 14.25, 14.44.

207 For instance, Kungshan Fujao stages a revolt against the Zhi family, under the pretext of restoring power to the Duke of Lu (A 17.5) and Nanzi is the notorious wife of Duke Ling of Wei (A 6.28).

208 A 11.7, 12.9, 12.11, 12.7-9, 13.15-16, 13.18.
become officials in government. Confucius keeps an eye on their everyday performances and frequently discusses governmental policies with them.\(^{209}\) His interest is clearly in the betterment of others.

With respect to the domain of influence, one cannot perceive Confucius’s notions of *tian*, *ming* and *tianming* from any external perspective of a God or gods (a personalized or the universal). Confucius’s teachings on *tian* are not preaching and no faith is demanded. If the Confucian notion of *tian* were a personalized deity (similar to that of Christianity), then prayers (*dao*) would play an important role in Confucius’s world. But Confucius is against any praying to *tian*. His illness once became grave and Zilu, his close disciple, asked permission to offer a prayer. Confucius wondered whether there was such a thing. When Zulu responded that the prayer offered was to pray the gods above and below, Confucius said, “In that case, I have long been offering my prayers” (A 7.35). Confucius’s attitude towards prayers is evident in another passage where Confucius says, “When you have offended against *tian*, there is nowhere you can turn to in your prayers” (A 3.13). For Confucius, *tian* provides a vague order for the human world and the natural world. However, if one does something against *tian*, which functions on behalf of its progeny to maximize the possibility of emergent harmony, prayers and offerings to *tian* cannot compensate one’s mistakes. One should rectify one’s mistakes and do something in the real world to compensate for one’s mistakes.

4.1.3 Eternal Recurrence of the Same

One of Nietzsche's best-known ideas is the eternal recurrence of the same, which is first introduced in *The Joyful Science*:

What if, one day or night, a daemon were to slide up to you in your loneliest loneliness and say: "This life, as you live and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more... The eternal hour-glass of existence will be turned over again and again—and you with it, you tiny particle of dust!

If this thought were to assume power over you, it would transform you as you are, and perhaps crush you. The thought in each and every thing, "Do you want this once more and innumerable times more?" would lie upon your actions as the greatest heavyweight! (JS 341)

Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same is a thought experiment to test whether one can overcome the world's horrors, sufferings, and apparent meaninglessness, for there is no "Truth" in the world to rely on, nor is there a "belief" that could provide "justification of the world." The quest for justification was misplaced after all. The only solution to the question of "the value of life" is to master the courage to say "Yes" to the world and all its foibles. The eternal recurrence of the same "lies on one's actions as the heaviest weight" for it should be taken as a serious test for oneself. Could you will that the whole of your life would happen over and over again, including not just happiness and joy, but also pain, sufferings, cruelty, and humiliation? Could you will the eternal recurrence of triviality, emptiness, meaninglessness, and ugliness in your life and in the world?

It is important to note that the eternal recurrence of the same is an entirely hypothetical question, a thought experiment. There is no question that Nietzsche
believes in the *theory* of eternal recurrence. The very same idea appears in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* where Zarathustra’s animals bring out the meaning of eternal recurrence (Z III.13.2). This important section of the text is entitled, “The Convalescent” and the root of “genesen” (convalesce) means “to come through alive,” or “be delivered.” To attend to this sense of the term and apply it directly to Zarathustra’s convalescence, his measure of optimism is made “in light of his interpretation of human kind hitherto as fallen or self-cursed.” 210 It also means “to return joyfully home,” thereby making Zarathustra’s convalescence his ultimate homecoming (Z III.9), his return to his own.” 211

Both Zarathustra and his animals sing the songs of redemption. Only the former’s words are those of a founder whereas the latter’s words are “the loyal words of those who discover themselves within the realm founded” 212 for they invite the former to step out into the world that “waits for him like a garden.” For the animals, the world is simply a garden and they sing confidently of “their wheel of being,” but from the perspective of traditional teachings about being, their song is a “wretched song” 213 celebrating the meaninglessness of things. Zarathustra knows that the human world “bows to the lords of Necessity, Purpose and Guilt” 214 whereas the animals sing and dance naturally, out of sheer joy for a non-teleological coming and going of things. Although the ways of Zarathustra and his animals are different, they are not contradictory. Zarathustra’s teaching of the *Übermensch* points out that it is we human beings who create and give meaning to the world. Everything in the world is under the power of our naming and

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210 Lampert (1986): 211.
211 Lampert (1986): 211.
creating. The world, nevertheless, falls under the curse of our revenge against time: “Only a naming free of revenge does justice to earthly things and frees them from that curse; on the morning of the new creation Zarathustra hears the song of earthly things freed by that naming.”

According to Nietzsche, such a naming is the will to power that is the will of creating.

Zarathustra’s animals claim to know who he is, what he teaches, and they know him as the teacher of eternal recurrence. Yet, as animals, they do not understand the heaxiness of such an idea for Zarathustra. The first horror of eternal recurrence is the fact that one must relive pain and sufferings in one’s past. Zarathustra is the young shepherd who has bitten off and been choked by the head of a black snake (Z III.2.2), and, from now on, he has to will this incident to happen over and over again. The second implication eternal recurrence is a refutation of the teachings of Schopenhauer (and the Soothsayer) which state that life is an endless, meaningless cycle in which “nothing is of worth and knowledge chokes” (Z II.19, III.12, 16, IV.2). In the songs that follow, Zarathustra describes the grounds for “his judgment that the knowledge of life elevates and exalts the knower and known.” Those who pursue a life-denying pessimism to its bottom glimpse the opposite vista of those who are world-affirming (BGE 56). The third horror of eternal recurrence is exemplified by Zarathustra’s disgust in the thought of willing the “last human.” Previously, Zarathustra is optimistic about what is possible for humanity through the elimination of the “last human,” but now Zarathustra knows that taking eternal recurrence seriously includes taking responsibility for the last petty

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and reactive human. According to Lampert, Zarathustra thus fulfills a prayer uttered by Nietzsche seven years earlier:

"May the same reason preserve us from the belief that humankind will at any future time attain to a final ideal order of things, and that happiness will then shine down upon it with unwavering rays like the sun of the tropics: with such a belief Zarathustra has nothing to do, he is no utopian." (WB 11).

Here, Zarathustra knows that there is no redemptive future as described in the earlier section which anticipates a world of the “high” without the “low” or the “unclean” (Z II.6). Zarathustra says “Yes” to the whole of the past but he does not will the future contained in the expectation of the Soothsayer. For Zarathustra, there is an alterable future. The teaching of eternal recurrence of the same revises “the very much alterable judgments of humankind” (WB 3) and, in that way, promises a bright future.

In this way the affirmative will of eternal recurrence does not deny itself in every “no,” nor does it say “yes” to everything. The “no” complementary to the “yes” of eternal recurrence is a “refusal of the modern theoretical and practical consequences of Platonism, a no that is not blind to what is great in those consequences, for it clearly recognizes the place of inquiry and adventure in the human enterprise and grounds it anew.” The teaching of eternal recurrence of the same frees “everything” in its existence as “transient.” If one becomes Zarathustra’s disciple, his or her existence is not beyond the transience of things (for instance, the claim of Plato’s Socrates that there is something eternal “above” the world of becoming). Rather, it is “the eternity of transience and passage itself, the eternal running and running out of the hour glass that marks the great year of being as the great year of becoming.”

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219 Lampert (1986): 221.
The teaching of eternal recurrence provides “comfort” for the human beings’ greatest concern: death. Zarathustra comforts himself with the completion of his labors to enclose the earth under the dome of sky. Zarathustra has nothing to do with immortality, but his understanding of death is enriched by the thought of return to the very same life over and over again. Zarathustra and his animals love their lives and they desire only to be again exactly as they are now: “In belonging to the cause of eternal recurrence, they will their own return.” Zarathustra's full understanding of death does not refute life. As a disciple of eternal recurrence, no longer will death become his or her greatest weight in life. Life is heavily weighed in every moment and in every aspect, because the teaching of eternal recurrence wills the very same life (in every moment and in every aspect) to repeat over and over again. The animals find comfort with their mortal life with the teaching of eternal recurrence because they perceive the world simply as a garden that continually renews itself. Unlike the animals, Zarathustra knows that the world is not merely a garden and he never speaks of the teaching of eternal recurrence as a source of solace. Zarathustra does not promise the abolishment of mortality. With the acknowledgment of the world of becoming, he affirms his existence as transient, and courageously says “Yes” to “the eternity of transience.”

It is important to note the limitations of Zarathustra’s animals: to them, Zarathustra’s teaching—the “true but deadly teaching of sovereign becoming” (HL 9)—is a return to nature, to the natural cycles of life and death. Yet, Zarathustra, with his inward gaze on eternal recurrence of the same and his outward gaze on the sun and sky, reconfirms the

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220 Lampert (1986): 221.
process of human becoming, the process from human to the Übermensch, “the great noontime of the earth and human.” According to Lampert, what Nietzsche means is that we human beings must be “made natural” or “naturalized” with the “pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature” (JS 109); one “must be retranslated into nature” (BGE 230).221

It does not matter that one passes away and returns only to pass away and return again. What matters is what one “eternally” does: the joy one finds in the process of overcoming, one’s tasks in life, and the meaning one gives to one’s life. The value of these activities is in the activities themselves, not in any consequences such activities might have. It is we human beings who create and give significance and meaning to whatever we do in life. This is Nietzsche’s will to power. One must accept this if there is to be meaning in one’s life (because one could not change this fact even if one wished): one must affirm oneself in this fate. This is Nietzsche’s affirmation: “My formula for greatness in human is amor fati: that one should not wish things to be otherwise, not before and not after, in the whole of eternity” (EH II.10). In a posthumous note Nietzsche has amplified: “My doctrine states,”

To live you must desire to live again. This is your duty. At any rate, you will live again. One for whom striving gives the greatest feeling, let one strive. One for whom rest gives the greatest feeling, let one rest. One to whom order-following and obeying gives the greatest feeling, let one obey. One must only be clear as to what gives one the highest feeling, and be shy of no means! Eternity is worth it.222

Nietzsche teaches one to act in such a way that one will be willing to act in exactly the same way an infinite number of times, over and over again. To live in accord with

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221 Lampert (1986): 223.
222 This quotation is from Danto (1965): 212. Refers to Werke, vol. XII, p.116.
Nietzsche’s creations, *amor fati* and the eternal recurrence of the same, one should avoid feelings of regret, resentment and compunction in one’s life.

To avoid feelings of regret and to live without resentment in one’s life is essential for one who wishes to become the Confucian *junzi*. Confucius once said of himself, “I do not complain (yuan怨) against tian天, nor do I blame (you尤) human” (A 14.35). Confucius becomes the *junzi*, who is “free from worries and fears” (A 12.4) and is at peace with *tianming*天命 (A 2.4). Upon self-examination, there is nothing Confucius finds in himself to reproach, and he does not have any worries or fears (A 12.4). This is why Confucius’s *renzhe*仁者 does not worry (A 9.29) and can remain long (jiu久) in either straitened or easy circumstances (A 4.2). For instance, Bo Yi and Shu Qi are excellent men (xianren賢人) of antiquity. Neither of them dies a natural death, yet Confucius believes that they would not complain or blame (yuan怨) anything for their death and sufferings because “they seek ren and get it” (A 7.15). The *renzhe* is attracted to ren and lives with dao道 (or tianming), because he or she “feels at home in ren” (A 4.2).

Confucius provides everyday examples of how one can make few mistakes (you) and have few regrets (hui悔). First, one should open one’s ears and eyes widely so that one can leave out what is doubtful and hazardous. Then one should claim (yan言) the rest or put the rest into practice (xing行) with caution. In this way, one will make few mistakes in speech and have few regrets in actions (A 2.18). The life of Confucius, who lives according to A 2.18, is similar to that of Nietzsche, who lives according to the eternal recurrence of the same: they are cautious in every moment and every aspect in
their everyday life \( (A\ 4.5,\ EH\ II.1) \)\(^{223}\) and live with joy \( (A\ 7.19,\ EH\ 1.2)\). It is likely that, if Confucius were presented with Nietzsche’s idea of eternal recurrence, he would say the sacred “Yes.” Confucius would will that the course of everything in his life would happen over and over again: even if he knew that his traveling journey would be a complete failure, he would still do so; even though he knew that \( dao \) would not prevail in his time, he would do as much as he could during his lifetime and not be infected with hopelessness. This point is further supported by the fact that Confucius is widely known as the restless one “who keeps working towards a goal the realization of which he knows to be hopeless” \( (A\ 14.38)\).

With his idea of eternal recurrence of the same, Nietzsche rules out the possibility of the after-worldly and sets up a plea for authenticity in this very world—an “immortal returning” to what we are in this world. Both Nietzsche and Confucius live without regrets or resentment. They are cautious in every moment and every aspect of their everyday lives. In place of a vision of another world, one should stamp this form of “eternity” upon one’s life.

### 4.2 A Relearning of Earthly Reality

In this section, I compare the ways in which Nietzsche and Confucius suggest how to live in this very world. The importance of this topic can be reflected by the fact that it is one of the main themes in Nietzsche’s autobiography, \( Ecce\ Homo \) and the theme of chapter 10 in Confucius’s \( Analects \). For both of them, philosophy is not theoretical knowledge but

\(^{223}\) These two quotations are on the topic of meals and diets
about how to live well in everyday life. Their personal experiences in life can be considered examples from which we can learn, rather than an "ideal" model. Human life is an experiment: every individual must become an active experimenter and a creative discoverer of his or her own life.

4.2.1 On Health

The most important advice given by both Nietzsche and Confucius on the everyday life is "to be physically healthy." Their advice is strikingly similar: the treatment of illness, nutrition, living style, and recreation are features of maintaining good health. Both philosophers are cautious in the treatment of illness. Nietzsche retires from his professorship at Basel when his health turns poor (EH I.1), and sickness (ji 疾) is one of the few things about which Confucius is careful (A 7.13). Second, they highlight the importance of appropriate diet and nutrition (EH II.1, A 10.8). Despite the great differences in their background, both philosophers have detailed discussions on cuisine and dishes. Drinking alcohol is also discussed: Nietzsche says that a small dose of alcohol is already bad for him, whereas it is pointed out that Confucius never drinks to the point of becoming confused (A 10.8). Third, Nietzsche points out the importance of climate and the place one chooses to live in (EH II.2). His advice is, in fact, in accord with modern scientific findings which show that the external environment does have great influence one's health. Nietzsche speaks from his personal experience: places with a high humidity (such as Leipzig, Basel, and Venice) are not good for one's

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224 The other two are fasting and war.

225 According to other biographies of Nietzsche, he only quits drinking in his later years.
physiology whereas dry and sunny weather (such as in Florence or Athens) is a favorable environment for drawing on great quantities of strength. According to recent medical researches, weather does have an impact on health. According to Hoffman, humidity, temperature and hours of sunshine have the greatest effect on mood. High level of humidity lowers scores on mental concentration with increasing reports of subjective sleepiness whereas longer hours of sunlight lowers anxiety and skepticism. According to Marsch, those who are exposed to inadequate sunshine, for example during winter with long nights, are more prone to develop depression and fatigue.

For Nietzsche and Confucius, the choice of one's own kind of recreation plays an important role in attaining good health. Reading and music are the most rewarding types of recreation in Nietzsche's life (EH II.5). Confucius himself is stimulated by the Shijing, takes his stand through the help of the li禮 and is perfected by music (A 8.8). Moreover, he takes his recreation in the arts (A 7.6), which are generally believed to be the six traditional arts: the li, music (yue樂), archery (she射), driving (yu御), reading (shu書), and mathematics (shu數). Among the six arts, Confucius tends to emphasize reading and music for these two are frequently mentioned in the Analects.

Both philosophers tend to seek refuge in a few “pleasant, brilliant and clever books,” for instance, Nietzsche's study on the lyrical poet, Heinrich Heine (EH II.4), and

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226 Hoffman (1984). In this multidimensional study, ten mood variables (concentration, cooperation, anxiety, potency, aggression, depression, sleepiness, skepticism, control, and optimism) are related to eight weather variables (hours of sunshine, precipitation, temperature, wind direction, wind velocity, humidity, change in barometric pressure, and absolute barometric pressure).

227 Mersch et al. (1999). During winter season, especially in high-latitude countries like Scandinavia, there is a change in the photoperiod related to short day and long night. Thus, the diminished exposure to sunlight will result in a chain of biological changes culminating in the presentation of seasonal winter depression with depressed mood, weakness, and an increase in sleep and appetite.
Confucius's interest in the *Shijing*, *The Book of Poetry*. Confucius points out that all of his disciples should study the *Shijing* because "an apt quotation from it may stimulate one's imagination, endow one with breeding, enable one to live in a community and give expression to grievance" (*A* 17.9). The study of the *Shijing* is broad: from the serving of one's parents and one's lord to the acquisition of a wide knowledge of the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees.

Music plays an irreplaceable role in Confucius's and Nietzsche's ideas of recreation. Nietzsche points out that he finds the early Wagnerian opera, *Tristan and Isolde*, "dangerously" fascinating and "he could not have endured his youth without the latter's music" (*EH* II.6). What Nietzsche really wants from music is as follows: "That it be cheerful and profound like an afternoon in October. That it be individual, frolicsome, tender, a sweet small woman full of beastliness and charm" (*EH* II.7). This kind of excitement is similar to Confucius's appreciation of the *Shijing*. For Confucius, music is as essential in the practice of *li* (especially in sacrificial offerings) as well as in recreation (*A* 7.32, 8.15). Confucius finds music enjoyable to the extent that there was an occasion in which, after hearing the music of *shao*, he did not notice the taste of the meat he ate for three months (*A* 7.14). Confucius describes the music of *shao*, which comes to the court through the abdication of King Yao, as both perfectly beautiful and perfectly good (*A* 3.25). Unfortunately, we are left with no information of the music in this historical period. The importance of the role of music for Confucius is reflected by the fact that he works on the proper replacement of music, such as the "Songs of the

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228 Refers to *A* 1.15, 3.8, 8.8, 16.13, 17.9.
229 The *shao* is a piece of music from the *Shijing*.
230 The *Shijing* was songs and could be sung with music.
Kingdom” (the ya) and the “Ceremonial hymns” (the sung) (A 9.15).\textsuperscript{231} However, both Confucius and Nietzsche distinguish good music from bad. Nietzsche distinguishes that the older-aged Wagner becomes a mere proximity and has “condescended to the Germans—that he becomes reichsdeutsch” (EH II.5). According to Confucius, the song, “Cry of the Osprey (guan ju),”\textsuperscript{232} is good music, since it arouses joy, but not to the extent of wantonness, and sorrow, but not to the extent of self-injury (A 3.20), whereas the tunes of the state of Zheng are wanton (A 15.11). For both philosophers, good recreation stimulates one’s imagination and provides opportunities for the release of grief and the expression of joy in life.

Nietzsche’s focus on choice of nutrition, on place and climate, and on recreation is motivated by an “instinct of self-defense,” (EH II.8) whereas Confucius considers his choices to be tools and instruments in the process of self-cultivation. Nevertheless, their intentions are not contradictory but complementary. Nietzsche’s preservation of the instinct of self-defense and Confucius’s self-cultivation are for the maintenance of the physical and mental health (that is, the self-love) of a person. For both philosophers, these small things (nutrition, place, climate, recreation, and self-love) are far more important than anything many other people have taken to be important.

4.2.2 Materialistic Desires and Rewards

Both Nietzsche and Confucius avoid indulgence in too many materialistic things.

\textsuperscript{231} The ya and the sung are sections in the Shijing.
\textsuperscript{232} The first ode in the Shijing.
Nietzsche says, “Not to see many things, not to hear many things, not to permit many things to come close—first imperative of prudence, first proof that one is no mere accident but a necessity” (EH II.8). Nietzsche recommends an ascetic life to avoid the painful sense of impoverishment which results from being parted, even occasionally, from the “small things” in life. Nietzsche does not want to waste his energy on the frustrations of denial, that is, in saying “No” to these things. It is better to simply do without. For Confucius, a renzhe 仁者 is always acting according to ren 仁, and he or she neither looks nor listens, speaks nor moves, unless it is in accordance with the li 禮 (A 12.1). A person of ren is constituted through the overcoming of the self (ke ji 克己, that is, through the discipline and control of the desires of the self) and the return to the observance of the li.

Both Nietzsche and Confucius have few materialistic wishes and “do not want to become different” from who they are or what they have (EH II.9, A 14.35). Although they are neither wealthy nor powerful, they live with joy and find their lives wonderful (EH II, A 7.16, 7.19). They find contentment in the process of self-cultivation and everyday life. Nietzsche and Confucius eventually become the Übermensch and the junzi respectively. They rank various desires and drives in a hierarchy of relevance according to the processes that characterize the Übermensch and the junzi. Nietzsche says that he “looks upon his future as upon calm seas: there is no ripple of desire” and he describes himself as “a man over forty-four who can say that he never strove for honors, for women, for money!” (EH II.9) Confucius points out that he will not seek the views of those who, though they set their heart-mind (you zhi 有志) on dao 道, are ashamed of poor food and poor clothes (A 4.9). We know that Confucius is not against wealth or
power, but he expects one to be at peace with one's living conditions, even when these are poor (A 4.5). Confucius says that he cannot find any fault with King Yao, who eats, dresses and lives in a mean way but devotes his wealth and energy to sacrificial offerings and the building of irrigation canals (A 8.21). Zilu is appreciated for a similar reason: Zilu is the one who “can, while dressed in a worn-out gown padded with old silk floss, stand beside a person wearing fox or badger fur without feeling ashamed” (A 9.27). Confucius points out that “it is more difficult not to complain of injustice when poor than not to behave with arrogance when rich” (A 14.10). It is rare that a person in poverty can live with dao and this is why Yan Hui is highly regarded: in poverty, he finds joy in life and living with ren rather than in complaints (A 6.11).

4.2.3 Beware of the Masses

Nietzsche admits that he needs “solitude” for a recovery and a return to himself. He needs the breath of free, light, and playful air (EH I.8). Nietzsche understands his solitude as a kind of “cleanliness.” For Nietzsche (and Zarathustra), wisdom can only be born out of doors where one moves freely, especially in the mountains (EH II.1). His nausea at his proximity to the masses (EH I.8) is reflected both in Zarathustra’s advice that one should “flee into solitude” and in his reference to the people of the market place as “the poisonous flies” (Z I.12).

Unlike Nietzsche, who wants to keep a distance from the masses, Confucius does
not hold such an extreme attitude towards the multitude (zhong). Confucius can be understood as a cultural elitist. He has no patience with those who are not trying their best in self-cultivation. He knows that there is a limit to the value of the opinions of the multitude and he will not base his judgment of a person merely on the opinions of those in the village (A 13.24). Confucius disapproves of the village worthy (xiangyian) and considers him to be the ruin of de (A 17.13). Mencius elaborates what Confucius means by the “village worthy” (M VIIB.37): one who has no ambition, who believes that so long as others say it is good, and who tries in a cringing way to please everyone. The village worthy shares with others the practices of the day and is always in harmony with the sordid world. He or she appears to be faithful, showing integrity in conduct. There is not much fault in his or her behavior, yet with such a person, it will be impossible to embark on the way of Yao and Shun (that is, to undergo self-cultivation). Confucius names such a person “the ruin of de” because this kind of “nice” person tends to receive wide acceptance from the masses and will often be mistaken for a person of ren 仁 or de. Confucius and Mencius dislike the village worthy, who is actually an average person, because such a person can easily be misperceived as a model of ren or a consummate human being.

Being a disciple of Nietzsche or Confucius, to know their teachings well is merely the preliminary stage. More importantly, one has to live accordingly in one’s everyday life. Without any metaphysical realm, both thinkers affirm life in this world and find joy in the process of human becoming.

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(Text continues)
CONCLUSIONS

Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s teachings are intimately related to their own life experiences and, in this way, their philosophies are maps of their lives. For both thinkers, philosophy is the epitome of a personal statement and is always connected with the philosopher himself. Nietzsche expects to inspire his readers to “experience” the sparks that are the products of a person’s “match striking.” Confucius wants his disciples to “realize”, and hence to “know their way” (zhidao 知道) to proceed in the face of any and all events in life. To become a disciple of either of them is to live according to his example of the process of self-overcoming and self-cultivation.

In spite of his literary output, Nietzsche declares with a certain insight that, “non legor, non legar,” that is, “I am not read, I will not be read” (EH III.1). Nietzsche means that his readers should not consider his works as instructional texts, to simply sit there and absorb them as rote lessons, for the “matches that one has to strike to make them emit sparks” (EH II.8) are in fact one’s own thoughts, and not simply materials read or instructions followed. He wants his readers to “experience” his books, to reflect on his teachings, to grasp the ideas behind his writings, to create ideas of their own, and live accordingly. Confucius rarely discusses his most important creation, the idea of ren 仁, in a direct or concrete manner. Ren must be taken not as a set of rules or regulations, but as a kind of created value to rely on—to give one confidence—so that one can think and make judgments for oneself and respond appropriately to all kinds of circumstances. Nietzsche’s description of his perfect reader is probably also applicable to Confucius: “[one who] always turns into a monster of courage and curiosity; moreover, supple,
cunning, cautious; a born adventurer and discoverer” (EH III.3). The overcoming of early indoctrinations and the habits of tradition requires the kind of courage not only seen by others to be “strange” (a criticism of customs and values), but also felt by the individual as a kind of frightening transformation from the known to the unknown, with unpredictable consequences. Outcomes are never certain in advance of one’s engagement with events. For both thinkers, human life is an experiment and everyone has to become the active experimenter, the courageous adventurer, and the creative discoverer of his or her life.

Doing philosophy is more than solving an academic puzzle or winning an argument. It is the practice of living well in this world. Nietzsche and Confucius live their everyday lives according to their beliefs. Confucius emphasizes the importance of making practical use of one’s knowledge. His point is clear in his words: “If a man who knows the three hundred pieces in the Shijing by heart fails when given administrative responsibilities and proves incapable of exercising his own initiative when sent to foreign states, then what use are these to him, however many they may be?” (A 13.5) As discussed in section 4.2.1, Confucius regards the Shijing as the most important book. If one cannot put one’s knowledge of it into practice, then, despite knowing its words, one remains “uneducated” (未學) in Confucius’s eyes.

In order to understand the true, hidden character of a particular person, Confucius “look[s] at the means he employs, observe[s] the path he takes, and examine[s] what he
feels at home (A 2.10). He will not recommend or dismiss a person on account of what he or she says (A 15.23). Having listened to a person’s words, Confucius will observe the speakers’ deeds (A 5.10). In the Analects, the topic of words (yan) is always discussed in parallel with the topic of actual practice in the world (xing).

Nietzsche and Confucius do not want their disciples to be mere followers, but creators who reflect on what they have learned and look for their ways of living in the world. This explains why Confucius and Zarathustra point out that they want and need companions (Z, P5) and friends (A 1.1), who can think independently and are of “equal” status so that they can support each other throughout the process of human becoming. Self-cultivation is reflected in the engagement with others. Despite Zarathustra’s solitude, personal transformation is possible only in the context of human society, since both Nietzsche and Confucius see the overcoming and cultivation of the self as a dynamic and life-long project with the human arrangements which happen to prevail. Such dynamism is the product of reciprocity with others. In this way, both Nietzsche and Confucius exemplify respect for the human condition, and this fact about their philosophies makes them expansive and lends them transference over time and place.

How would a good disciple of Nietzsche and Confucius approach the task of comparing their philosophies? For both thinkers, there is no salvation based on metaphysical or religious transcendence. If it is not a philosophy of salvation with transcendent source, then what one would search for? Rather, they both embrace and

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234 Confucius says, “The renzhe is attracted to ren because he feels at home” (A 4.2).
affirm life in this world. This world is not one of fixed being; the philosophical task is not to fathom reality, the eternal or the universal. Nor is the quest for knowledge about predetermined facts and unchanging comprehensive principles. The ever-changing world must always be interpreted and reinterpreted as the ground from which the elements of life come, so that one has the courage to construct one's creative self in a world suitable to human becoming.

As part of this world of becoming, according to both Nietzsche and Confucius, the self is not a constant, stable entity. On the contrary, it is something one becomes, something, they would say, one constructs. A person consists of everything he or she thinks, wants, and does. But a person of worthy of admiration is the one whose thoughts, desires, and actions are not haphazard but are connected to one another in an intimate way that indicates the presence of style. A self is merely a set of coherently connected episodes, and an admirable self consists of a large number of powerful and conflicting tendencies that are controlled and harmonized. A self is in and of its constantly changing context.

This process of human becoming requires learning from tradition and reflecting critically on it. When one is sufficiently loaded with the learning of the past, with lived knowledge of conventional views of the world, of moral codes and institutions, one comes to realize their contingent nature. Then comes the time to throw off these burdens, to transform from the camel to the lion, who roars a "No" to mere perpetuation of the past and the conventional. This act could be mistaken for nihilistic revolt. But it could be a constructive and positive response. To stop taking on a lading list of cultural
facts, to stop accepting the roles and tasks assigned by traditional customs, is to stop the passive preservation. It is to take charge of one’s own becoming by actively trying to change the world around oneself, and thereby creating oneself anew. This is a process of originality. The lion is only a transition stage between the camel and the child, but with the formation of the child is there a re-birth of both the self and the world.

The good disciple would gain a richer understanding of human becoming by comparing Nietzsche’s and Confucius’s views, not only by studying the philosophical texts, but also by reflecting on what is known about their lives. One has to relate their lives to their times and the traditions they learned, and on which they critically reflected. When one reads Nietzsche’s books and Confucius’s Analects, one has to constantly remember that they are speaking from their personal experiences; indeed some of the writings are diary-like records. One might compare this particular study to the camel stage of Nietzsche’s three transformations of the spirit—though, of course, it could not possibly be completed within a limited thesis. In this “loading up” process, the disciple becomes aware that there is no universal way to human becoming; every human being has to look for his or her own way.

Nietzsche was treated as a pariah by his society and by mainstream Western philosophy until very recently. In an enduring tradition, Confucius has been widely revered as the greatest teacher that ever lived. He is even deified in some parts of East Asia. On the surface, the life of Confucius, as depicted in the Analects, looks attractive and admirable, whereas Nietzsche’s life seems short and unpleasant. A more careful reading shows that Nietzsche found enjoyment in his life in ways very similar to
Confucius. The events of a person's life do not necessarily reflect his or her joy in the world. Both thinkers exemplify human becoming with great adaptability to each set of circumstances. Their contention comes from their projects of self-cultivation.

Neither Nietzsche nor Confucius thinks that there is an ideal kind of life or person. An admirable person is the one who essentially refused to be "programmed." To give universal principles for becoming an individual is surely as self-defeating as determining the destination even before one has studied the map. This is the reason Nietzsche and Confucius do not have anything like a traditional positive moral theory. They dissolve this problem by refusing to give any concrete road-maps of what an ideal person or an ideal life would be like. Confucius's ren or Nietzsche's eternal recurrence of the same can be understood as a kind of direction or a compass, but only with the understanding that many types of life are compatible with these maps. In human becoming, the good disciple takes up the responsibility of being his or her own master, the captain of his or her own ship.

A good disciple must appreciate the need to make an artwork out of himself or herself, as Nietzsche and Confucius did. Through their own writings and their lives, Nietzsche and Confucius exemplify how we human beings may succeed in fashioning ourselves. For them, philosophy is not just biographical, but genealogical. Genealogy is the continuity among related lives as supposed to an individual narrative. Definitions of good and evil always reflect the conditions and context of the existence of different groups. Both Confucius and Nietzsche believe that all moral codes and institutions have only a contingent existence and can, therefore, be changed. One should not simply hold
on to traditional rules or principles. Being a blind follower of the authority is not good enough for a full human experience; one has to have the courage to stand on one’s own, that is, to digest what one has learned and be the judge of oneself. The one who goes beyond traditional good and evil is not, thereby, morally objectionable. However, the one who goes beyond good and evil does not provide a model for imitation, since that person consists of the specific actions and circumstances that compose that life. To imitate Nietzsche and Confucius would produce a copy, more likely a caricature. To learn from them properly would be to produce a new creation which, in making use of everything that appropriately belongs to oneself, would also be uniquely one’s own.

A good comparison would not stop at gaining a richer understanding of the two thinkers’ views of human becoming. A good disciple must progress to the next stage of no-saying. This begins with critical reflection on what has been learned about human becoming. The comparative approach is useful in this respect as differences highlight both strengths and weaknesses through contrast. The comparison would no longer be between their two views, but must bring in one’s own interpretation of one’s world—the world in which one must realize one’s own human becoming. In its most radical form, the disciple in this stage would reject both views—something this comparison has not quite managed to achieve in the fullest sense.

I could not claim that I have completed the task like a good disciple. I have not yet managed to proceed to the stage of the child to create an entirely new view of human becoming that is uniquely my own. But such a creation could not be merely in words, it would have to be lived, as Confucius and Nietzsche lived their philosophies of becoming.
But in the light of their encouraging philosophies, I can hope that the understanding gained in this personal journey has brought me one step closer to becoming a good disciple of these two great thinkers.
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