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Citation

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PARADIGMATIC CHARACTERS
AND VIRTUE ETHICS

In the *Analects*, discussions of how someone should act or had acted are accompanied by some assessment of that person's character, some conclusion as to his having or lacking what are traditionally understood as Confucian virtues—*ren* (benevolence or humanity), *yi* (appropriateness or rightness, or even righteousness), *li* (rites, rituals, or ritual propriety), *zhi* (wisdom), *xin* (trustworthiness), and *yong* (courage).[1] Scholars have different views as to how and to what extent Confucian virtues are comparable with virtues in Western ethics like Aristotle's.[2] The *Analects* is as preoccupied with the exemplary person (*junzi*) and his virtues as the *Nicomachean Ethics* is concerned with elucidating the virtues via portraits of the virtuous man. Alasdair MacIntyre considers the concept of virtue secondary to that of a role-figure or paradigmatic individual in virtue ethics.[3] In Confucianism, virtues are tied together in the ideals of the sage (*shengren*) and the exemplary person (*junzi*). While there are no doubt significant differences between Confucian ethics and various Western virtue ethics, there is a *prima facie* resemblance among them in their concern with character and the question, "What kind of person should one become?"

A wide variety of moral theories, including Kantian and utilitarian ones, could give a subordinate place to virtues understood as the enduring and effective dispositions to act morally. While acknowledging its internal diversity, virtue ethics has been distinguished from deontological and consequentialist moral theories by the priority it gives to the agent's character, in contrast to principles and consequences of actions. As a recent collection of works on virtue ethics puts it, "the basic judgments in ethics are judgments about character."[4] The central ideals of the sage and the exemplary person demonstrate this primacy of character in Confucian ethics.

In virtue ethics, the ethical thing to do in any situation is what a virtuous person, the sage, or at least the exemplary person in the case

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of Confucianism, would do. While this may still involve application of "virtue rules," going beyond the confines of rule-governed behavior is considered a strength of virtue ethics for many who are critical of conceptions of morality as systems of rules. Rule-governed conceptions are at best incomplete since application of rules must at some stage involve non rule-governed judgment if we are to avoid the problem of infinite regress. They appear ungrounded and unconvincing in an age of skepticism about divine lawgivers and universal natural laws for humans *qua* moral agents. They are more often than not too abstract and rigid to guide action. They tend to be overly impersonal and neglect the problem of motivation. They override the integrity of moral agents and provide too narrow a view of what is important in human experience. To many, the revival of virtue ethics is a response to the failure of rule-governed approaches to morality.[5]

As a better alternative to rule-governed morality, virtue ethics must provide, among other things, an account of how one comes to act ethically in the absence of rules. Without completely rejecting rule-governed morality, Antonio Cua's exploration of the possibility of creative moral agency within moral practices gives us some idea of how our understanding of moral agency could go beyond rule-governed behavior. He demonstrates effectively how paradigmatic individuals achieve moral creativity within a moral practice structured by rules, combining respect for moral practice (including moral principles and rules) with adaptability in the face of changing circumstances.[6]

This article examines what is involved when a non-paradigmatic agent emulates paradigmatic characters. The common practice of adapting the thinking in early Confucian texts to fit some Western model of moral reason is problematic. Without totally denying the relevance of reason—at least some modified conception adapted to Chinese thinking—to Confucianism, I shall show that we can better understand the role of emulating paradigmatic characters in Confucian ethics by a closer examination of the imagination and emotion, which have been relatively neglected in favor of reason in Western philosophy. In understanding the imaginative and emotional aspects of emulating paradigmatic characters, we shall hopefully gain some insights into how virtue ethics might avoid some of the pitfalls of overly rule-governed, reason-centered approaches to morality.

The Paradigmatic Character of Confucius

Confucius is the most important paradigmatic character in the Confucian tradition. Though too modest to lay claim to sagehood himself, he was elevated to that exalted status by Mencius.[7] Mention of the

"the Sage" in later literature usually refers to Confucius, who was perceived as personifying the ultimate in sagehood, one whom all who aspire to the Confucian way should emulate. Such emulation began with Confucius' own students who contributed to the *Analects*, which gives us glimpses of Confucius at home and abroad; Confucius welcoming friends, greeting official guests, associating with students, drinking at communal feasts; Confucius participating in sacrificial and court rituals; Confucius in his encounters with enemies, with dubious characters; Confucius dealing with people from all walks of life, duke or peasant, madman or musician; Confucius playing the zither alone, singing along with others, accepting or rejecting gifts, eating, and sleeping. One surmises that his students recorded these vignettes because they found something to emulate in what they observed and considered worthy of passing down to future generations.

Many readers have been amused, intrigued, or baffled by Book 10 of the *Analects*, with its descriptions of Confucius' apparel—the exact kinds of materials used, the precise manner of wearing them—and his behavior—standing and bowing just so, walking with this or that gait or pace, gesturing just so, the detailed nuances of his expressions. We are told that Confucius "did not eat his fill of polished rice, nor did he eat his fill of finely minced meat."

> He did not eat rice that had gone sour or fish and meat that had spoiled. He did not eat food that was not properly prepared nor did he eat except at proper times. He did not eat food that had not been properly cut up, nor did he eat unless the proper sauce was available (*Analects* 10.8).

What are we to make of such passages, including one informing us that, "When in bed, he did not lie like a corpse (*Analects* 10.24)"?

Confucius' students would have available to them the context in which these behaviors were observed. Without that context, interpretations could only be tentative, but they need not be less thought-provoking and inspiring. In general, Book 10 is usually read as a record of ritual norms followed by Confucius. Certain behaviors should be avoided because they embody attitudes incompatible with a good character. Not eating his fill of delicacies such as "polished rice and finely minced meat" was probably a ritual norm that shows consideration for others sharing the meal. Indiscriminate eating manifests greed or morally irresponsible treatment of one's own body. Perhaps the lack of proper preparation and sauces shows a carelessness and lack of respect on the part of those preparing or providing the food that should not condoned.

Perhaps Confucius considered lying like a corpse an indication of slothfulness or a total physical abandonment that would be against a *junzi*'s moral character. Confucius' attention to demeanor in bed is

also evident in *Analects* 10.10, "he did not converse at meals; nor did he talk in bed." Virtue ethics requires a self-transformation so profound that it affects one's behavior even in the most private moments.[8] One's virtue may even govern one's dreams, as in *Analects* 7.5, Confucius remarks, "How I have gone downhill! It has been such a long time since I dreamt of the Duke of Zhou." We may think him too exacting in requiring people to be virtuous even in sleep, and prefer to read him as speaking hyperbolically to make a point: If our behavior during sleep could by some feat of imagination matter ethically, how much more important it is to behave in accordance with the rites and other Confucian virtues in our waking moments.

For such minutiae of Confucius' daily life to acquire philosophical meaning, or constitute ethical lessons, one needs to imagine those behaviors, to aesthetically appreciate what is so wrong about those behaviors that Confucius assiduously avoided them, as well as to discover the reasons that justify Confucius' behavior. Our difficulties in understanding these passages stem first from a failure of imagination. These descriptions may appear bizarre and ridiculous. On the surface, they seem at best archaic curiosities with little relevance to contemporary life, even if they are recognized as describing historically specific ritual behavior. They take on ethical significance only if we probe deeper the meaning and function of ritual action in the Confucian world, and explore the continued relevance of ritual even in the twenty-first century.[9] For our present purpose, we are more interested in what Confucius' students were emulating on these occasions.

Learning and Thinking

> The Master said, "Surely when one says 'The rites, the rites,' it 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?" (*Analects* 17.11)

Emulating paradigmatic characters is not merely imitating external forms of behavior. Observing and noting those forms are a first step. Gathering information is the beginning of learning. But imitation of others without understanding the information gathered is what makes learning *wang*, "bewildering" (*Analects* 2.15). To avoid bewilderment, one must think (*si*).

Philip Ivanhoe discerns two strands in Confucianism: one following Confucius and Xunzi in emphasizing learning, associated with "a religious reverence for the past, the sages and the records of their activities"; the other following Mencius in emphasizing thinking, associated with moral autonomy and the development of one's "innate

moral sensibility."[10] This distinction highlights a difference of emphasis that could have significant implications in certain contexts without implying that any early Confucian would advocate one to the exclusion of the other. Nor is learning necessarily more important than thinking, and perhaps Confucius emphasizes learning only because his audience paid insufficient attention to it. Neither emphasis on learning or thinking, insofar as it is at the expense of the other, is adequate—learning and thinking must go hand in hand for successful self-cultivation.

Thinking is not an afterthought added to make learning useful. Learning already involves thinking. We do not learn by gathering data in an intellectual-emotional vacuum with perfectly neutral tools. Even as we observe, read, or listen, we are already trying to make sense of the data; and the extent to which something observed, read, or heard becomes part of our understanding of the world depends on the extent to which we could make sense of it. Learning something successfully requires us to think about it in our own way, to find a place for it in the mental map created by our accumulated experience. Occasionally the map is also re-drawn in the learning process. But we do not start with a blank slate. We bring to our learning the various cognitive-emotional contents of our past experience. What we learn in any one situation depends on our past experience and knowledge. Confucius showed awareness of this in tailoring his teaching to each student according to his experience, ability, and character.

Learning and thinking do not stand in dichotomous relation to each other; they form a polarity wherein each enhances the other. Despite some relative differences of emphasis that contrast learning with thinking—contrasts which probably became starker later in the tradition—mutual implication and interpenetration of learning and thinking is more significant in pre-Qin Confucianism. Unless we understand this polarity, sages are likely to end up as mere pattern-cards providing only traditionalist constraints in Confucian self-cultivation.

Thinking about Paradigmatic Characters

What kind of "thinking" is involved in the emulation of paradigmatic characters? Could we assimilate it into some Western model of moral reasoning? The role of reason in Confucian philosophy is a hotly debated topic. Arthur Waley notes that the term *si* (思) does not mean "a process of logical reasoning, a sustained interior argumentation, full of 'therefores' and 'becauses'." Others deny that reason, as conceived in Western philosophy, is in any way central to Confucius'

method of discourse.[11] In contrast, David Soles attempts to show that Confucius employs both valid deductive arguments and reasonable inductive arguments, as well as engages in careful, tight conceptual analysis.[12] In Soles' view, rational considerations play a key role in Confucius' philosophy. Kwong-loi Shun discusses Mencius' conception of "moral reasons" and the problems it generates which are shared by other Confucians and some Western moral theories.[13] Heiner Roetz considers the role of reason unclear in Mencius' ethics, but argues that reason "is the true pivot of Xunzi's philosophy," which he terms "rationalism."[14]

The status of analogical reasoning, which Shun includes in his conception of "moral reasons," is sometimes suspect in Western moral philosophy, but it constitutes an important part of pre-Qin philosophical discourse in China.[15] Imposing any kind "coercive logic" of the West when assessing the role of reason in Chinese philosophy will only lead to misunderstanding. It is quite possible that rules of thinking may vary as a result of linguistic and experiential differences in cultures with vastly different histories. Even in Western philosophy, the concepts of reason and rationality remain contested, and there is no unanimous understanding of their role in morality.[16] If we construe moral reason very broadly as involving the giving of reasons in arguments, without being too restrictive in stipulating what counts as legitimate reasons and acceptable arguments about what should be done or what is good, then there is a place for it in Confucian ethics.

In the *Analects*, Confucius held up sage kings like Yao, Shun, Yu, and lesser mortals such as the King Wen, Duke of Zhou, Guan Zhong, Zang Wen Zhong, Liu Xiahui, Bo Yi, and Shu Qi who are nevertheless paradigmatic characters in their own ways, as exemplars his students should emulate. These characters from the past lived for Confucius and his students only in the stories circulating about them. Confucius' own career as a paradigmatic character was accompanied by the growth of stories about him. Some might be tempted to derive arguments of the following kind from these narratives about paradigmatic characters:

> One should emulate P.
> P did *x* in situation *y*.
> A situation similar to *y* obtains.
> Therefore one should do *x*.

At the very least, such an argument might seem to counter any excuse that *x* cannot be done since it had already been done by at least one human being. This is reinforced by the Mencian claim that the sage and ordinary mortals are of a similar kind (*Mencius* 6A7). Still, there remains the problem of how paradigmatic characters are

identified or selected, and the similarity of situations is always open to debate. Some might claim that every situation is unique; others might end up with an over-abstraction of individual experience akin to that for which rule-governed moral theories have been criticized. The claim of species-similarity with sages notwithstanding, human history shows that what was not possible before may be possible later, and what was possible before may no longer be possible. Historical veracity of narratives about paradigmatic characters is neither necessary nor sufficient to justify emulating these characters in our own situations.

Narratives of Paradigmatic Characters

There is often disagreement about just what Confucius or other paradigmatic characters did or did not do. The problem is not simply a matter of establishing empirical facts about the past. Many narratives about paradigmatic characters of the Confucian tradition may turn out to be fiction. But would these narratives become useless if historians could somehow prove that the events described did not actually take place? Presentations of Confucian paradigmatic characters in literary narratives need not be less compelling or inspiring than historical records. Both kinds of narratives provide possibilities for experience, opportunities for imaginatively "trying out" meanings and realities.

Confucian sages and exemplary persons do not serve as real life illustrations of "a set of pre-existing truths"; studying their actions is not about acquiring moral knowledge of the "eternal patterns" of the Confucian way. Early Chinese philosophers were not concerned with epistemology—and that includes moral epistemology. They focused on authenticity instead of truth, sincerity instead of factual accuracy, contextual appropriateness amidst constant change instead of immutable standards and universal validity. Whether we should continue to emulate the paradigmatic characters as presented to us in these narratives depends not on absolute truth of the events, but on the authenticity of their interpretations of ethical experience.

Some might object to this as reducing historical narratives to literary narratives. I prefer to think that early Chinese texts about the past should be treated as both. Differences in truth-expectations notwithstanding, the two may not be as far apart as some people think. As Hayden White remarks, "When a great work of historiography or philosophy of history has become outdated, it is *reborn* into art."[17] Until the end of the Eighteenth century, history was a branch of literature in the West. The official histories of imperial China rely, almost exclu-

sively on literary sources to construct their account of the past.[18] This has led to skepticism about the accuracy of China's historical records. Some contemporary scholars studying Chinese historiography also doubt the objectivity of the traditional moralistic approach. Some accuse early Chinese thinkers, including Confucius, of "distortions" in turning history into "morality plays."[19]

Recent archeological finds indicate that the historical records are more accurate than the *yigu* (doubting antiquity) scholars had thought.[20] To see the "praise" and "blame" model of Chinese historical writing as precluding veracity is to impose a fact value distinction which has no place in traditional Chinese thought, and which moreover has come under attack by Western thinkers as well. While some historians cling to historical realism, others do not see historical narratives as transparent reproductions of the past. For the latter, history is a human construction.[21] More radically, some argue that the past is not related to readers in a "subject-object" confrontation in which knowing subjects stand against the past as a given and fixed object; the past is made and can be re-made through interpretations.

Chinese thinkers were often explicit and unapologetic about the normative characteristic of narratives about the past. At least from the time Mencius claimed that Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* which, when completed, "struck terror into the hearts of rebellious subjects and undutiful sons" (*Mencius* 3B9), Chinese scholars took for granted that narratives about the past judged rather than merely reported. Nor is the judgment merely about the past. It is those who revitalize the past in order to realize the present (*wengu er zhixin*) who could be teachers (*Analects* 2.11). Our concern with the past is addressed in an experience of understanding in which we engage in an open-ended dialogue with the past. What narratives of paradigmatic characters, whether as history or as literature, have to say to us is not some absolute truth, but depends on what we ourselves bring to the conversation.[22]

IMAGINATION AND UNDERSTANDING PARADIGMATIC CHARACTERS

There are often different versions of any event involving Confucian paradigmatic characters. The differences are not just about extraneous details but reveal the different horizons of the narrators bringing forth different meanings. A re-telling is not mere repetition. Every encounter with a narrative is an interpretive occasion. Interpretation involves an imaginative participation in the ethical experience of the narrative. This involves perceiving the situation as having certain meanings and qualities—a "perception akin to that by which

we perceive that the particular figure before us is a triangle," which Aristotle insists is involved in *phronesis* (practical wisdom) when distinguishing it from *Epistemé* (knowledge).[23] Our understanding of experience cannot be separated from our interpretation of the world. Paradigmatic characters are worthy of emulation because of the way one interprets them even as one sees, hears, or reads about them.

Like Aristotle's *phronesis*, one is not dealing with something universal and eternal in interpretation, but with something particular and changeable. Mainstream Western conception of reason favors the universal over the particular, the abstract over the concrete; imagination favors the particular over the universal, the concrete over the abstract. The preference for the particular and concrete is evident in the meaning of "thinking" in early Confucian texts. In introducing his translation of the *Analects*, Arthur Waley claims that *si*—what is usually translated as "thinking"—in its origin meant "observing outside things. . . . It came to mean to fix attention not only on something exterior but also on a mental image."[24] Waley probably goes too far in reducing thinking to a kind of "focusing" of attention. The process of *si* includes a wide range of psychological and even psychosomatic experiences. The thinking involved in emulating paradigmatic characters includes the projection of mental images, that is, an exercise of the imagination.

Despite being held in disrepute for much of Western philosophy's early history, imagination, as the ability to form mental images, was acknowledged as having a role in thinking. From the Renaissance, the distinction between good and bad imagination became more and more important. David Hume, distinguishing between "the trivial suggestions of fancy" from "the general and more established properties of imagination," makes imagination arguably the most important, certainly the most pervasive faculty of the mind in his science of man.[25] For Hume, imagination provides us the ideas with which to think. For Kant, imagination enables us to synthesize the manifold of sensation so that our experience in the world could be understood.[26] Imagination provides the bridge between the bare data of sensation and intelligible thought. It enables us to perceive an object as a particular separate from others, and to recognize it as something of a kind. Kant also takes us a step further in going beyond associationist conceptions of imagination. Imagination is not only reproductive; it is also productive. What is imagined need not be analyzable into constituent elements that are mere copies of previous impressions or ideas.

Imagination has been mostly subordinated to reason in the history of Western philosophy. For the early Greeks, whether as *eikasia* or *phantasia*, imagination's corporeal origin meant that it was considered

unreliable, suspect, and mistrusted as it is seen as pandering to the passions and the appetites.[27] Later, Francis Bacon complains that when men's minds become "inflamed," "it is all done by stimulating the imagination till it becomes ungovernable, and not only sets reason at nought, but offers violence to it." Pascal names imagination "the mistress of falsehood and error."[28] Dr. Johnson's *Rasselas* has a chapter "On the Dangerous Prevalence of Imagination" which insists that "all power of fancy over reason is a degree of insanity." Imagination has been associated with madness from the time Plato described poetic creation as an act of divine madness; the eighteenth-century history of imagination was the history of madness.[29] The tide against the imagination turns when the Romantics like Coleridge elevate imagination to the means of rescuing the human race from the mind-body dualism that has plagued it for centuries. Imagination becomes the way to reunify man with nature, to return by the path of self-consciousness to a state of higher nature, a state of the sublime where senses, mind, and spirit elevate the world around them even as they elevate themselves. William Wordsworth considers imagination "reason in its most exalted mood," while William Blake thinks that "Man is all imagination."[30]

Besides receiving its due in literature and other arts, the role of imagination in the construction of narratives in historiography has also been recognized by some historians.[31] Rudolf Makkreel argues that a good historian participates in her subject matter through an "orientational imagination," makes her account convincing with "the determinate synthesis of the hypothetical imagination," and uses her "reflective imagination" to articulate "the vague sense of connectedness already experienced in the lived world into more specific structures" that can be subjects of reflection. As Isaiah Berlin remarks, imagination is a "prerequisite for history"; "otherwise the past is dead."[32] Imagination is necessary to interpretation not just in historiography but in every area of human endeavor. Some contemporary Western moral philosophers argue for the need to supplement reason with the imagination in an adequate account of moral experience.[33] Psychologist Jerome Bruner asserts that the mandate of human sciences today is to show "in detail how, in particular instances, narrative organizes the structure of human experience—how, in a word, 'life' comes to imitate 'art' and vice versa"—narrative genres provide "a guide for using mind."[34]

To treat paradigmatic characters merely as the basis for some kind of argument—whether deductive, inductive, or analogical—about what we should do in any particular situation will not account for their special importance, and indeed their power, within the Confucian tradition. Rational argumentation is secondary to the *presentation* of

paradigmatic characters to move us to emulate them. Imagination is crucial to the process of understanding because it is able to give more weight to particularities and because of its closer relation to the emotions and desires. The unique personality of Confucius emerges to move and inspire readers who get beyond superficial readings of the *Analects*. This acknowledged world classic retains its power today not because we are able to elicit hidden logical arguments in the laconic passages, but because we could recreate Confucius and his communities of students in our imagination so that we could understand their ethical experience and thereby broaden our ethical horizons.

Even when we encounter a paradigmatic character "in the flesh," the experience is not self-evident, but requires opening up to yield meaning and reality. Instead of viewing everything superficially from a fixed perspective, the one actually occupied, one needs to imaginatively shift perspective—most importantly, one needs to put oneself in the situation of the paradigmatic character in order to understand her virtues and how they are exercised in that situation. A good interpretation requires us to imaginatively participate in that experience. For emulation of paradigmatic characters to be relevant to contemporary virtue ethics, for the process to be successful, flexible yet not overly permissive, we need to understand and appreciate why a paradigmatic character acted the way she did by making narratives "come alive" for us. We need to imagine what her emotions and attitudes were on that occasion, what she was responding to, what purposes she had in mind. Only then could we understand paradigmatic characters sufficiently to emulate them in a different set of circumstances. Imagination is required to extend understanding into practice. An adequate understanding of the paradigmatic character's actions implies the ability to act as the latter would act in new circumstances, since the original set of circumstances will not be repeated *in toto*. Imagination of what will happen, including what one will feel, how one will go about an act, and what reactions, consequences will be forthcoming, contributes to the judgment of when and how to emulate.

Successful Emulation: From Understanding to Practice

According to Gadamer, "all understanding is self-understanding."[35] Understanding paradigmatic characters and the situations in which they exemplify ethical living results in a transformation of oneself. To understand a paradigmatic character requires one to imagine and reason so that one is able to appropriate the meaning and quality of the situation and make them one's own. One "makes them one's own"

only when one is able to apply them appropriately in different situations. This is possible because in the process of understanding, one learns to discern and appreciate certain meanings and qualities—this cultivates one's sensibilities, one's abilities to discern and appreciate these meanings in future. Furthermore, the *productive* imagination enables us to move from simply discerning and appreciating to creating values.

Emulation of paradigmatic characters will have an effect on our ethical thinking and action only if it reaches our "hearts-minds (*xin*)." In Confucian philosophical psychology, *xin* is the center of a person in which understanding is found and from which practice proceeds. *Xin* governs our person and conduct. It comprises consciousness, thought, emotions, desires, as well as dispositions. The "unifying thread" of Confucius' teaching, the notion of *shu*—usually translated as reciprocity, also as deference—could be understood as an empathic process of "making one's heart-mind resemble" that of an other so that one would "not do to others what one would not others do to oneself."[36] A similar process is involved in successful emulation, wherein one also "makes one's heart-mind resemble" the heart-mind of the paradigmatic character.

The closest Chinese equivalent to intending or willing something, *zhi*, is "setting one's heart-mind" on something. Confucius' self-cultivation begins with setting his heart-mind on learning; his highest ethical accomplishment is "to follow what his heart-mind desires without overstepping the line" (*Analects* 2.4). He advises his students to "set their hearts-minds on the way" (*Analects* 7.6). He praises Yan Hui because the latter could go for several months without his heart-mind departing from the virtue of *ren* (*Analects* 6.7). Cultivation of the person (i.e., developing an ethical character) is a matter of seeking, preserving, and nourishing one's heart-mind constituted by the virtues.[37] According to Mencius: "[The Confucian virtues,] *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, are rooted in the heart-mind, which manifests itself in one's face, giving it a sleek appearance. It also shows in one's back and extends to one's limbs, rendering their message intelligible without words" (*Mencius*, 7A21).

The Chinese notion of *xin* problematizes any dualism of body and mind, feeling and thinking. While Western philosophical thought has often been prejudiced against both imagination and emotion, and mistrusted them for their corporeal origins, early Chinese thought is much more comfortable not dividing body and mind, or separating thinking and feeling. Emotions differ from sensations, which can be reduced to the psychical transposition of a physical stimulus, in having cognitive-evaluative as well as affective constituents. Confucian thinking (*si*) not only combines imagination and reason, but also

includes emotions. In both the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, *si* used in the sense of "thinking of" is an emotion of longing, incorporating within itself a value judgment that something is desirable as well as a desire to obtain or achieve it.[38]

Emotions have an important place in Confucius' ethics. The *Analects* begins with a passage about the delight of practicing what one has learned, the joy of entertaining friends who come from afar, and not being frustrated despite lack of recognition by others as a mark of the exemplary person (*Analects* 1.1). Rites must be practiced with respect, mourning with grief (*Analects* 3.26). Confucius also speaks about other emotions such as fear, anxiety, resentment, dislike, shame, anger, awe—having appropriate emotions is constitutive of the ethical life.[39] Confucianism, at least Confucianism of the pre-Qin period, gives more weight to emotions relative to other moral theories. This is characteristic of virtue ethics. To Aristotle, a virtue is a disposition towards both emotions and actions (1109b30). It is not enough that one acts as a *phronimos* would act in any situation, one must act with the appropriate emotions (1104b3–8). While some moral theories require emotions to be subordinated to reason for moral action, virtue ethics gives the emotions a positive and fundamental role in the ethical life.

There is a trend in contemporary Western philosophical psychology towards cognitivism in its theories of emotion that tends to be related to defense of the rationality of emotions.[40] Instead of pushing emotions towards reason, an exploration of the relation between emotions and the imagination would be more profitable in understanding the role of emulating paradigmatic characters in virtue ethics. Imagination stimulates emotions.[41] A passion is "a sensual motion of our appetitive facultie, through imagination of some good or ill thing."[42] If we accept imagination as having a role in perception itself, then its connection with emotion is not at all mysterious. How we feel about a situation certainly depends on how we perceive it, and vice versa. Unless we perceive someone's action as being virtuous, one would not feel the admiration, respect, and the desire to emulate him or her.

Contemporary philosophical discussions of the relation between imagination and emotion sometimes revolve around how fiction and imaginative thinking could produce actual emotion.[43] Emotions are responses to mental events as well as external events. The imagination could engage actual emotions, as when a good actress actually feels the emotions of the character she is portraying. This relation between imagination and emotion is important to the process of self-cultivation. For the experience of emotions through imagining nurtures the dispositions toward those emotions, as much as frequent

practice of certain acts nurtures the dispositions towards those acts. For emulation to be more than superficial imitation of exterior aspects of an act, one must not only act, but also *feel* as a paradigmatic character would feel in a situation. Confucius located the ethical failure in his student's objection to the ritual norm of three years mourning not in a deficiency of reason, but as a case of *buren*, which D.C. Lau translates as being "unfeeling."[44] The spontaneity Confucius showed at the height of his ethical accomplishments means that he could act virtuously without thinking, but he could not do so without feeling: The spontaneity is a matter of "following his *heart's desire*" (*Analects* 2.4, italics added). Getting the emotions right is therefore critical to successful emulation of a paradigmatic character.

Getting the emotions right is also a step towards getting the action right. Confucius considers administrative injunctions and punishments an inferior way of governing because then people "will stay out of trouble, but will have no sense of shame." In contrast, leadership by excellence (i.e., virtues) will develop a sense of shame in the people who will then "reform themselves" (*Analects* 2.3). One might read this as simply stating the importance of emotions as well as actions in virtuous living, or one might go one step further to link the emotion with the action: The people order themselves *because* they have a sense of shame. Shame renders mere avoidance of punishments unsatisfactory. Even if no one else knows what one has done, one's own awareness of having done wrong keeps that unpleasant, even painful, emotion alive. The only way to avoid that emotion of shame is to refrain from doing anything wrong.

Some emotions are motives for actions, for they incorporate certain desires. Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, and Hume include desire among the passions of the soul.[45] The Chinese traditionally includes desires as one of the seven "*qing*," together with the emotions of joy, anger, grief, fear, love, and hatred.[46] Logical reasoning and impersonal reflection may be insufficient to prod one into action. Hume famously asserts that reason can only be the "slave of passions" when it comes to determining conduct. Michael Stocker seeks a cure for the "schizophrenia" of reasons and motives afflicting modern ethical theories in the emotions.[47] We need not go to the extreme of denying reason any role to appreciate the importance of emotions in ethical motivation. Even for someone like Kant, it is arguable that the moral law has such power in his philosophy only because it is one of the two things that "filled his mind with awe." Knowing what is one's duty will not necessarily result in doing one's duty; one must have a respect for duty to be motivated to act dutifully. Awe and respect are both emotions.

The belief that emotions have an important role in governing our actions goes back a long way. Elizabethans, for example, believed that objects of imagination are communicated to the heart—generally accepted as the seat of emotions—which is thus aroused to irascible (avoiding) or concupiscible (desiring) reasons for action, which may or may not actually take place.[48] Most contemporary philosophical and psychological studies still admit some kind of "action tendency" or "motivational state" as constituents of the emotions, even though it is difficult to defend a clear-cut conceptual or causal relation between any emotion and specific action. Nico Frijda defines "emotion" as action readiness resulting from situation appraisal.[49] Even though there is much we do not understand about the actual process, there is plenty of evidence that the emotions constitute an important link in our interaction with our environments. The world acting upon us, and sometimes our own mental activities, gives rise to emotions which prompt us to act in further interaction with the world. Our emotions incline us to take steps to either change the environment or change ourselves, or maintain the status quo, depending on whether the emotion in question is painful or pleasant. How we eventually act may not be determined completely, but the inclination is not therefore negligible.

Emulating paradigmatic characters play a key role in the Confucian approach to cultivating the virtuous character. I have tried to show that it is not a rule-governed activity—its emphasis is not the exercise of reason, but the education of the imagination and emotions. It has not been possible within the confines of this article to present a complete philosophical psychology of emulating paradigmatic characters, though such an endeavor would certainly be most enlightening. I am well aware that I have raised more questions than I have answered; but unless we ask the appropriate questions, we will not find any good answers.

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Endnotes

1. An example is *Analects* 17.21. Unless otherwise stated, cited translations are adapted from D. C. Lau, *Confucius: the Analects* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1979). Instead of Lau's translation of "heart" (*xin*) and "gentleman" (*junzi*), I translate *xin* as "heart-mind" and follow the translation *junzi* as "exemplary person" in Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998). Ames and Rosemont translate *xin* as "heart-and-mind." Pinyin instead of Wade-Giles is used for names and romanization of Chinese char-

acters. Subsequent citations from the *Analects* will be included in the main text for easy reference.

2. Lee Sang-Im, "The Unity of Virtues in Aristotle and Confucius," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (1999); Yu Jiyuan, "Virtue: Confucius and Aristotle," *Philosophy East and West* 48 (1998); Chad Hansen, *Duty and Virtue* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1996); Alasdair MacIntyre, "Incommensurability, Truth, and the Conversation Between Confucians and Aristotelians About Virtues," in E. Deutsch, ed., *Culture and Modernity* (Honolulu, HI: University Of Hawaii Press, 1991).

3. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1981).

4. Daniel Statman, *Virtue Ethics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 7. See also Roger Crisp, *Virtue Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 623.

5. G.E.M. Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1–19; Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970); Michael Stocker, "The Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," *Journal of Philosophy* 73 (1976): 453–66; Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: U.K., 1985), chapter 10.

6. Antonio Cua, *Dimensions of Moral Creativity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), especially chapters 3–5.

7. D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1984), 5B1. Subsequent citations from the *Mencius* will be in main text.

8. This does not mean that Confucius objected to all relaxation or more casual behavior. In the same passage, we find that "when at home alone, he did not kneel in a formal posture as though entertaining guests" (*Analects* 10.24). Ritual norms have their respective appropriate occasions and should not be applied indiscriminately.

9. Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius—The Secular As Sacred* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972); Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and The Defense of Ritual Mastery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

10. Philip Ivanhoe, "Thinking and Learning in Early Confucianism," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 17 (1990): 473–74.

11. Arthur Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1938), 46; Fingarette, *Secular as Sacred*, 65–7; Angus C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago and La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1989), 33.

12. David Soles, "Confucius and the Role of Reason," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 22 (1995): 249–61.

13. Shun, Kwong-Loi, "Moral Reasons in Confucian Ethics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16 (1989): 317–43.

14. Heiner Roetz, *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 223.

15. Shun, "Moral Reasons," 322. Cf. Roetz, *Confucian Ethics*, 203, 225. Contrary to Shun's definition, Roetz defines reason so that it excludes analogical reasoning.

16. Wu Kuangming, "The Spirit of Pragmatism and the Pragmatic Spirit," in *The Recovery of Philosophy in America*, eds. Thomas Kasulis and Robert Neville (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 74; Kurt Baier, *The Rational and the Moral Order* (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1995).

17. Hayden White, "Historicism, History, and the Figurative Imagination," *History and Theory* 14 (1975): 67.

18. On the relation between history and literature, see Lionel Gossman, "History and Literature: Reproduction or Signification?" in *Between History and Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Philip Ivanhoe, "Chinese Theories of History," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward Craig (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), 449.

19. Han Yu-shan, *Elements of Chinese Historiography* (Hollywood: W.M. Hawley, 1955), 24–25; Charles Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 13.

20. Liu Xiaogan, "Confucianism: Texts in Guodian Bamboo Slips," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. A. S. Cua (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 152.

21. Joseph Margolis, "Prospects for a Radical Theory of History," *The Monists* 74 (1991): 268; See also Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983). Cf. Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991); see also Gossman, "The Rationality of History," in *Between History*.
22. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).
23. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1142a25–30 in Jonathan Barnes, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); David Hoy, *The Critical Circle: Literature, History and Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 55–61.
24. Waley, *The Analects*, 44.
25. Mary Banwart, *Hume's Imagination* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 30; Mary Warnock, *Imagination* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), parts I and II.
26. David Hume, *A Treatise on Human Nature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), especially book I, part I; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996), especially "Deduction of the Pure Concepts of Understanding." See also Warnock, *Imagination*, part I.
27. Murray Wright Bundy, *The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1927).
28. "Of the Dignity and Advancement of Learning" in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding (London: 1889–1892), 4:406; Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* (Paris: Seuil, 1962), 54.
29. G. S. Rousseau, "Science and the Discovery of Imagination in Enlightened England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 3 (1969): 123. See also Leon Edel, *Stuff of Sleep and Dreams, Experiments in Literary Psychology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).
30. *The Prelude*, bk. xiv.190, ed. Andrew George, *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1932), 218; *Annotations to Berkeley's* Siris, in *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David Erdman (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 654.
31. Jerzy Topolski, "The Role of Logic and Aesthetics in Constructing Narrative Wholes in Historiography," *History and Theory* 38 (1999): 198–210; White, "Historicism."
32. Rudolf Makkreel, "Reinterpreting the Historical World," *The Monist* 74 (1991): 161–62; Isaiah Berlin, "Giambattista Vico and Cultural History," in *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*, ed. Henry Hardy (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1991), 64.
33. Alison E. Denham, *Metaphor and Moral Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000); John Kekes, "Pluralism, Moral Imagination, Moral Education," in *Education in Morality*, eds. J. Mark Halstead and Terence H. McLaughlin (London: Routledge, 1999); Mark Johnson, *Moral Imagination: Implications of Cognitive Science for Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
34. Jerome Bruner, "The Narrative Construction of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1991): 21, 15.
35. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "On the Problem of Self-Understanding," in *Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 55.
36. *Analects* 4.15. The character is a combination of the radical *xin* "heart-mind" and *ru* "alike."
37. *Mencius* 6A6, 7A1, 7B35.
38. *Analects* 2.2, 4.17, 9.31, 16.10; *Mencius* 2A9, 5B1, 6A6.
39. Cf. Peter Strawson, "Freedom and Resentment," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 48 (1962): 187–211; Charles Taylor, "Self-interpreting Animals" in *Human Agency and Language, Philosophical Papers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 45–76.
40. John Deigh, "Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions," *Ethics* 104 (1994): 824–54.
41. William Rossky, "Imagination in English Renaissance: Psychology and Poetic," *Studies in the Renaissance* 5 (1958): 63.
42. Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London: 1604), 8.
43. Mette Hjort and Sue Laver, *Emotion and the Arts* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Richard Moran, "The Expression of Feeling in Imagination,"

Philosophical Review 103 (1994): 75–106; David Novitz, *Knowledge, Fiction and Imagination* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 79–88; Peter Lamarque, *Philosophy and Fiction* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983), chaps. 4 and 5.

44. *Analects* 17.21. In the passage, Confucius agreed that Zai Wo need not follow three years' mourning if during the stipulated three years, he could enjoy the things forbidden by mourning rites. In daily use, the term *buren* is frequently used to mean "numbness."

45. William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980), chap. 11; N. H. J. Dent, *The Moral Psychology of the Virtues* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), chap. 3; Anthony Kenny, *Action, Emotion and Will* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 100.

46. Cf. Chad Hansen, "*Qing* (Emotions) in Pre-Buddhist Thought," in *Emotions in Asian Thought*, eds. Joel Marks and Roger Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 181–211.

47. Michael Stocker, "How Emotions Reveal Value and Help Cure the Schizophrenia of Modern Ethical Theories," in *How Should One Live*, ed. Roger Crisp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

48. Wright, *The Passions*, 45.

49. Leonard Berkowitz, *Causes and Consequences of Feelings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chaps. 5–7; Jon Elster, *Alchemies of the Mind: Rationality and the Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 246; Lyons, *Emotion*, chapter 9; Nico Frijda, *The Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 71, 257.

Chinese Glossary

buren	不仁	wang	罔
chengren	成人	wengu er zhixin	溫古而知新
junzi	君子	xianren	賢人
li	禮	xin	信
qing	情	xin	心
ren	仁	yi	義
ru	如	yigu	疑古
shanren	善人	yong	勇
shengren	聖人	zhi	智
shu	恕	zhi	志
si	思		

As a form of virtue ethics, Confucian ethics focuses on cultivating virtuous attributes of a man of virtue. The major Confucian virtues include benevolence, righteousness, ritual propriety, wisdom, trustworthiness, filial piety, loyalty, and reciprocity (Ip, 2009;Woods & Lamond, 2011;Yu, 2007). ...Â Success of the Confucian virtue ethics position is also seen by scholars in that it helps to teach early Confucian ethics at Western universities, as it "will allow a beginning student swift access to pull together the seemingly disparate accounts found in the Analects, and thereby grasp the overarching moral tenets of the Confucian tradition" (Santiago 2008).

The pre-modern Confucius was closely associated with good government, moral education, proper ritual performance, and the reciprocal obligations that people in different roles owed each other in such contexts. When Confucius became a character in the intellectual debates of eighteenth century Europe, he became identified as Chinaâ€™s first philosopher. Jesuit missionaries in China sent back accounts of ancient China that portrayed Confucius as inspired by Natural Theology to pursue the good, which they considered a marked contrast with the â€œidolatriesâ€ of Buddhism and Daoism. Keywords: Aristotle, epistemic virtues, epistemology, virtue, virtue epistemology, virtue ethics. Over the past thirty or so years, since the publication in 1980 of Ernest Sosaâ€™s seminal paper â€˜â€˜The Raft and the Pyramid,â€™â€™ a debate has developed over whether epistemology might beneï¬t from reï¬‚ection on that broad movement in moral philosophy which has come to be known as â€˜â€˜virtue ethics.â€™â€™1 As someone inclined to view the increasing specializa- tion in philosophy with.Â Those I shall call paradigmatic virtue ethicists tend not to stop with the virtues alone when advocating the life of virtue or acts of virtue. Consider Aristotle again. Virtue Ethics: The development of a virtuous character Kantian Ethics: The development of a good will Consequentialist Ethics: No central activity is specified. This is an open question to be decided in terms of what would maximise the best outcomes. In what follows, I shall justify and elaborate these claims and then provide an evaluation of these theories interpreted in this way. Consequentialism will be seen to have very little to offer in the reduced form which captures its essence. It also cannot be enriched by combination with features from Virtue Ethics and Kantian Ethics as Pettit sugg