

Lin Yutang's Reshaping of Confucius's Image in *The Wisdom of Confucius*

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ABSTRACT

Confucius has been revered as a saint standing highly at the altar. However, with the New Culture Movement springing up in the early 20th century, Confucius' image was challenged unprecedentedly. In this collision of ancient and modern thoughts, Lin Yutang strives to promote the integration of Chinese and Western cultures, which is dedicated to helping people reconceptualize the image of Confucius. The most representative chapters of ancient Confucian classics were included in Lin Yutang's masterpiece of Confucianism—*The Wisdom of Confucius*. It stakes out a new terrain by creatively translating the quintessence of Confucianism to Western society with the interpretive style and everyday language. Through the analysis of *The Wisdom of Confucius*, the current study indicates that Lin Yutang has broken the rigid seriousness of the sage and highlighted that Confucius was not only an approachable and empathic humanist but also had a sense of humor and aesthetical interest. Besides, it is demonstrated that Confucius' profound thoughts on social philosophy. Lin Yutang's reshaping of Confucius help further promote the spread and reception of the image of Confucius in the Western world.

Keywords: *The Wisdom of Confucius*, Lin Yutang, The image of Confucius.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 20th century with the advent of the New Culture Movement. It brought a dazzling dawn to the "new youth" who were disenchanted and tired of the dwindling culture and ideas at the end of the Qing Dynasty. During this period, the cornerstone of Confucianism was eclipsed by misinterpretation and "new ideas." It finally fell from the altar and lost its mainstream status. Subsequently, the Confucian classics experienced unparalleled criticism and impact.

Confronted with the turbulent and clashing of new and old cultures, Lin Yutang (hence referred to as Lin) stood out in the contemporary Chinese literary circle with his wisdom and nationalistic attitude. He was a writer, scholar, translator, and linguist. He is a crucial player in the "Chinese learning introduced into the West" movement under the school of thought known as "Western learning introduced into China" in the twentieth century. Lin was born into a family of pastors, receiving a Christian education, and by continuing his studies

there, he was given the rich backdrop of further studying in the West. After returning to the motherland after graduation, he faced losing his cultural tradition. To eradicate the impoverishment in traditional Chinese culture, Lin was humble enough to turn to his masters for help and read extensively. In this process, he reexamined conventional Chinese culture and enormously admired Confucianism, which eventually committed the remainder of his life to study Confucius, becoming exceptionally close to its spiritual foundation. He, therefore, obtained the title "the disciple of Confucius in the twentieth century" (Tang Tao, 1988, p. 44).

In pursuing Confucius' footsteps, Lin devoted himself to reading the classics of traditional ideas, including *The Analects*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and *The Great Learning*. He did not, however, stand still and refuse to make progress in terms of old theories. In addition to positively abstracting the wisdom from the Confucian culture, Lin strived to construct a new image of Confucius in his mind and appropriately adopted and discarded the

spiritual heritage of Confucius. The Wisdom of Confucius selected in this paper embodies Lin's understanding of Confucianism. To creatively translate and interpret Confucius' ideas to the Western social structure, he selected the most representative chapter from various old works about Confucianism. His expressive style was wise, humorous, and elegant. In this book, Confucius broke the strict and rigid mask of the sage deified in the Han and Song Dynasties and returned to the form with blood, flesh, philosophy, and poetry to readers at home and abroad to spread the kernel of Chinese Confucian culture.

2. LIN'S RESHAPING OF CONFUCIUS AS AN EMPATHETIC HUMANIST

"Humanism," as the core concept in the process of social modernization in Western society, has prevailed in mainstream ideological trends for a long term. There is no permanent conclusion on "Humanism" since the change of times, whose meaning experienced various changes. However, when focusing on essential nature, humanism always emphasizes that humans should be the starting point and destination and regard people as rulers. It attaches importance to human essence, value, and mission, advocating safeguarding human dignity, rights, and freedom and cherishing and caring for human life.

When referring to "Chinese Humanism" during the New Culture Movement, most radical intellectuals considered that no such ideology had appeared in Chinese history. Consequently, these "new youth" highly held the new banner of so-called Western humanism, promoted its spirit, and deemed it a sharp weapon to create new morality and culture. Then, they criticized the traditional Confucian ideologies and constantly expanded the team of "Criticizing Confucius and Opposing Confucianism." However, Lin, inspired by Nietzsche's "Reevaluation of All Values" (Qian, 2019), advocated that people should comprehend the image of Confucius and think logically about Confucianism, valuing its spiritual brilliance and the meaning of traditional culture. Hence, in *The Wisdom of Confucius*, Lin challenged the numerous scholarly commentaries inherited over thousands of years, broke through the boundaries of Eastern and Western ideologies, uncovered the sacred veil of so-called "Saints," and proposed that Confucius was a humanist emphasizing human values and "Approach Feelings." His doctrines are of universal

significance, whose universal value was his humanistic ideologies

2.1 *Confucius as Approaching-Feeling Wise Man Not Saint*

In the eyes of traditional Chinese people, Confucius is renowned as "An Exemplary Teacher for All Ages." Yan Yuan, a disciple of Confucius, deeply admired was "You turn up your head and look at it, and it appears so high; you try to drill through it, and it appears so hard; it appears to be in front of you, and all of a mysterious it appears behind you" (Lin, 2021, p.46). In the following historical river, Confucius was gradually recognized and promoted as the "Chinese God." Those scholars in the Han and Tang Dynasties, neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming Dynasties, sinologists in Qing Dynasty, and modern neo-Confucians even tended to whitewash the image of Confucius to fulfill the standards of the "Saint." Eventually, Confucius, who existed in our daily life and had human emotions and desires, was obscured. The image of Confucius, respectfully enshrined in an inaccessible temple, was highlighted. What is noticeable is that Lin creatively thought that the concept of Confucius and post-generated Confucian culture could not be equated and judged. Therefore, when compiling *The Wisdom of Confucius*, he selected some language materials closely related to Confucius' life in the introduction to compensate for and enrich the image of Confucius, which attempted to remove people's preconceived and distorted impression of Confucius and Confucianism at the beginning and also break the image of Confucius as a "Perfect Person."

In this book, Lin (2021, p.46) vividly described Confucius as "gentle but fierce, awesome, yet not harsh, political and completely at ease." He also emphasized that "Confucius often clearly said that he was not a saint, and he was just tireless in learning and teaching other people" (ibid, p.47). Moreover, to make readers comprehensively perceive that Confucius was a "living person," Lin carefully selected some examples showing Confucius' closeness to human feeling. For instance, Confucius was capable of singing and also competent in playing musical instruments. He recompiled the *Book of Songs* and promoted the development of music. In addition, Confucius paid attention to weekday clothes' style and color matching, such as he preferred the correct sleeve to be shorter than the left sleeve (ibid, p.51). All the

above life details clearly showed Confucius's "humanization."

Since acknowledging that the image of Confucius was secular, Lin further elaborated on Confucius as an "approaching-feeling" person. Lin (2015) noted that the spirit of approaching feeling was the highest and most reasonable ideal of human culture, and the person who favored was the highest form of educated people. No perfect person exists in the world, and he can only strive to be a reasonable creature. In Lin's eyes, Confucius, who was close to others, meant that he had ordinary feelings and nature, straightforward, non-pretentious, or repressive. In preparing *The Wisdom of Confucius*, he found that *The Analects* was the most concentrated expression of Confucius' spirit of closeness and thought these so-called maxims were evidence of Confucius' spirit of "approach feeling." As a result, to enable Eastern and Western readers to understand this spirit, Lin broke the original *The Analects* style and summarized the main idea for each section to use as the title based on comprehension of the content of the original book, such as Confucius' emotional and artistic life, dialogue with his disciples, wisdom quotations, humanities, and true manhood, supporting readers to feel that Confucius is a brave, frank, and fearless character in daily life. For example, in the section of The Emotional and artistic life of Confucius (Chapter V, *The Analects*), when Yan Hui died, Confucius wept bitterly, and his followers said, "You are all shaken up. Confucius said, "Am I all shaken up? But if I do not feel all shaken up at this person's death, for whom else shall I ever feel shaken up?" (Lin, 2021, p.252) Confucius felt sad from his inner heart after losing his talents, highlighting his general feelings as an ordinary person and showing his common feelings of emotions come first.

2.2 "The Measure of Man Is Man"

Through analyzing of words and deeds of Confucius, Lin took off Confucius's cloak of "Sage" and let him return to real life, becoming following humanist emotions come first. What kind of humanistic philosophy did Confucius, as the founder of Confucian culture, contain in his ideology? Lin (ibid, p.41) answered with "Jen (True Manhood)," which can be called the theoretical cornerstone of Confucianism. To some extent, the history of Confucianism was the history of the interpretation of "True Manhood." In *The Analects*, "True Manhood" appeared more than hundreds of

times. When Confucius talked about "True Manhood," his interpretations were different in objects and environments, involving aspects of the order of human relations, moral standards, etiquette, and quality, which can be concluded that "True Manhood" has a rich connotation. However, the polysemy of connotation did not represent the dissociation of nature. After sorting out Confucius' complicated ideology, Lin reinterpreted "True Manhood" in *The Wisdom of Confucius*. He (ibid, p.41) indicated that "True Manhood" focus on "People," which is a specific answer to "The Measure of Man is Man" based on the theory of human nature, which was consistent with the principal concept of "Humanism."

Specifically, Lin interpreted "True Manhood" as a state of mind that people pursue and obtain, a feeling that people feel when in a quiet mood, and a feeling that people rely on Jen (true manhood). Thus, the "True Manhood" here was its purely natural state. It is not difficult for an individual to approach "True Manhood." As long as he kept improving his "Personal Cultivation," he was upright and good at words and deeds. In this way, people can find their true selves and at the same time feel at ease and naturally conclude the reciprocity (Shu), namely, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you" (ibid, p.43). Hence, the realization of "True Manhood" was a process of constantly cultivating the inner self. This process also reflects the essence of Confucius' philosophy, who was indifferent to irrelevant theology and metaphysics, only thought that "the standard of human is human," and encouraged people to devote themselves to the true meaning of life they have confirmed. "We do not know yet about life. How can we know about death" (ibid, p.43)? It was also evidence of Confucius' love of life and the world.

Furthermore, "True Manhood" meant "Loving Others." This compassion can be relative to all people and all things in the universe, which is the "Ideal Realm for the Development of Humanity" (ibid, p.42). Lin thought "True Manhood" was a great and noble moral value. It is a spirit of tolerance, loyalty, and forgiveness, which includes self-love, self-esteem, and respect for others. Its implication is close to Christian philanthropy or modern humanitarianism. It emphasizes the love of human life, praises human values, safeguards human dignity, improves human status, cares for human happiness, and guarantees human freedom. There is an extensive and profound meaning of "True Manhood" in Confucius' ideology. When

translating “True Manhood,” he abandoned the traditional translation way like “Benevolence” or “Goodness” but interpreted it as “True Manhood” to highlight the philosophical significance of “Humanity.” In addition, “True Manhood” was divided into “True Man,” “Man Character,” “Kindness,” and “Moral Principles” in different contexts (ibid, p.42).

3. LIN’S RESHAPING OF CONFUCIUS AS A PLATONIC SOCIAL PHILOSOPHER

From 800 BC to 200 BC, rationalist thought shone on the world and contributed to the first breakthrough in thought. Jaspers (2018) referred to these centuries as the “Axis Age” and proposed that “human beings have been surviving upon everything that was thought and created during this period.” During this period, the East and the West almost simultaneously met the “prophets” of their respective cultures. Confucius and Plato, as the ideological giants respectively in this period, attracted the world’s attention. Following Lin’s reinterpretation of Confucianism, Confucius’ era background, personal experience, and the social ethics he advocated are similar to Plato’s. Accordingly, Lin attempted to break down the prejudice and isolation related to Confucius and Confucianism in the Western world by comparing the two sages’ thoughts about social order, hierarchy, and education and to re-examine the universal values and modernity contained in Confucianism through the mutual appreciation of Chinese and Western cultures.

3.1 The Advocate of Rationalized Society

Regarding ideal human lives, during the pre-Qin era, Confucius proposed the concept of “Tat’ung”, meaning a harmonious society in which everyone loved each other following the restoration of ritual and music (Lin, 2021, p.37). “Li” represents the pre-Qin Confucian ideal of “Tat’ung” and the discipline of maintaining social order. “Li” originated in the ancient past. Initially, it was a sacrificial ceremony hosted by Wuzhu (a witch doctor), gradually evolving into a complete set of rituals through long-term development in the Western Zhou Dynasty (Lin, 2021, p.38). By the time of Confucius, its meanings had changed and covered more comprehensive content. Based on the needs of society, Confucius praised Western Zhou period culture and endorsed traditional etiquette, believing that the hierarchies and behavioral norms

formulated by the Duke of Zhou were the best systems. He developed a more mature idea of etiquette by absorbing and criticizing the ritual of the Zhou Dynasty. Afterward, He points out the term “Tat’ung”. Li” consists primarily of three aspects. Lin (2021, p.39) explains that in a narrow sense, it is a “ritual” or “propriety,” but in a broad sense, it only means “good manners”; in the highest philosophical sense, it is “an ideal social order.” Hence, the Chinese character “礼” (Li) cannot be put in English precisely.”

Above all, “Li” refers to people’s behaviors and deeds that exist objectively in all social and political life and subtly affect people’s behaviors. Confucius adhered strictly to “Li” in his everyday life. Based on *the Analects* recording, he was as respectful as if the ancestors and gods were at the sacrifice. Confucius said, “If I am not present at the sacrifice, I do not think I sacrifice at all” (ibid, p.42). In addition, “Li” refers to understanding etiquette (moral norms) in interpersonal communication and abiding by etiquette norms. “No man is an island” (Donne, 2006), and people are naturally bound to have certain connections with one another, which may lead to interpersonal contradictions. Confucius believed that “Li” was necessary to bring harmony to society and that people could become civilized and achieve social peace. “Li” is not a constraint; instead, it requires a person to behave and do things moderately, to get along with others better, and to reflect their moral values better.

The ultimate purpose of “Li” is to turn the “Tat’ung” into a world of embracing benevolence and filial piety between fathers and sons, mutual respect between brothers, courtesy between kings and subjects, and respect between husband and wife (Yang, 2001). A harmonious society should be an organism united into an orderly whole through organizational structure, respect for the elders and children, and cooperation. In this way, a country, and even the “world,” will naturally be a harmonious world full of benevolence. Confucius deeply explained that in the “Tat’ung,” people living in harmony and caring for each other do not depend on submission to laws but instead on the subversion of one’s emotions; namely, “Li” needs to take “true manhood” as its spiritual connotation. “Tat’ung” represents a highly standardized external expression of society and a highly humanized internal expression of society by re-establishing the order of “Li” and internalizing external regulations into emotions. As Lin (ibid, p.37) mentioned in *The Wisdom of Confucius*, “Confucius was almost an

anarchist, believing as his highest political ideal in a society of people living in moral harmony which should make government itself unnecessary.”

A century after Confucius conceived the optimal world “Tat’ung,” Plato (2007, p.27) proposed the famous “Kallipolis” in *The Republic*, considered the earliest example of an ideal social system in European history. Plato and Confucius differ to some extent regarding social, political, and ideological status, but they are alike in pursuing the ideal of a harmonious society. Athenian city-state disputes were in chaos and turmoil during the protracted Peloponnesian War when Plato was born. *The Republic* shows his philosophical beliefs concerning social order and harmony in troublous times. Plato first expounded “Kallipolis” (an ideal city-state) and then determined that an “ideal city-state” should possess wisdom, bravery, temperance, and justice. Both Confucius’s and Plato’s ideas of governing the country pursue a model of political governance with morality.

3.2 *The Construction of Ideal World*

“Tat’ung” and “Kallipolis” set a precedent for human pursuit and conception of an ideal society in traditional Chinese and Western cultures. They are valuable treasures in the history of human thought. It is indisputable that both ideas place great emphasis on hierarchy in order to achieve harmony in society. In practicing a harmonious society, “Li,” that Confucius relied on, virtually emphasized the hierarchy. In *The Wisdom of Confucius*, Lin (2021, p.287) mentioned that “Confucianism aimed at the restoration of a rationalized feudal order.” In other words, “Li” refers to restore the ancient feudal order with a clear hierarchy of ranks.

“A rationalized feudal order” is the idea of correcting the social hierarchy that was already a “confusion of concept and entity” employing the “Right Name” (ibid, p.40). “Right Name” is proposed by Confucius in response to the historical situation of abnormal social order in the Spring and Autumn periods. As the Zhou dynasty declined with the collapsed rite system, the ruler lost power and only an undeserved reputation. The unscrupulous monarch accompanying the minister and others obtained power and interests that did not match their name through various means and adopted “etiquette” that did not match their status. Given the “confusion of name and reality” in political ethics, the solution is to use the “Right Name.”

The “Right Name” idea begins with the harmonious relationship between fathers and sons, then kings and subjects, to interactions among people and peace among states (Liang, 2021). To achieve the “Right Name,” hierarchy must be maintained primarily. That is, everyone should have a name corresponding to the status with which he or she lives and a corresponding position in the light of the name he or she has. As Confucius said, “The king should be like a king, the ministers like ministers, the fathers like fathers, and sons like sons” (Lin, 2021, p.114).

Similarly, Plato’s concept of justice is like the “Right Name” in some respects. As Plato indicated in *The Republic*, “Justice” is the primary value of civil ideology and the essence and underlying principle of city-state governance. From the perspective of the internal relations of the city-state, it is in the form of a hierarchical organization. According to the principle of the division of labor in the city-state, he divided the social organization into three classes: “Rulers,” “Guardians of Auxiliaries,” and “farmers and other workers” (Plato, 2007, p.156). Plato argues that social justice is achieved when the three classes do their work, maintain their order, cooperate, and do not interfere with each other. Whenever there is a clear division of labor and order in a city-state, it is called somewhat a city-state of justice. As a result, the so-called city-state of justice entails that the three classes that make up the city-state all perform their duties and achieve happiness, which also reveals that justice in “Kallipolis” is a harmonious and orderly combination of wisdom, courage, and temperance.

3.3 *“On Education”*

As mentioned above, Confucius and Plato constructed a blueprint for an ideal harmonious, and stable society. In order to realize it, Confucius traveled around the states, and Plato sailed Sicily, both of whom had political serendipity that did not go much further. They simultaneously took education as the first principle and conceived it as a critical tool of governance and a strong guarantee of a harmonious society. There are similarities between their educational ideas, primarily in educational purposes and methods. Confucius believed that “a piece of jade cannot become an object of art without chiseling, and a man cannot come to know the moral law without education.” (Lin, 2021, p.342). He asserted “Tat’ung,” and the key to putting it into practice is whether it could

create a group of an “intellectual upper class and a government by example” that could “cultivate yourself and put individuals at ease” (ibid, p.209). Virtuous talents are cultivated by education. Confucius confirmed the importance of education in cultivating the upper class and ruling talents by advocating that “learning can become an official” and “recommend the capable.” Lin (2021, p.196) explored the Confucian view of education and seems to think that education is set up for “the intellectual upper class” to govern the country for the monarch in the future or assist the monarch in serving the world. Thus, when discussing education, the aim is always to govern the country.” It is similar to Plato’s goal of cultivating a “philosopher king” (ibid, p.45), which is the highest goal of education. To achieve “Justice” in the State, Plato regarded education as a critical state governing method. He defined the purpose of education as educating citizens and cultivating the supreme ruler of the city-state; the former is to cultivate citizens with “character and moral and aesthetic judgment” that would meet the needs of “Kallipolis” (Plato 2007, p.135), and the latter is to cultivate a philosopher king. The latter is more critical as it decides whether the state can be established. Their ideological and political education focuses on educating people and lays the foundation for their political beliefs.

In terms of educational methods, Confucius and Plato advocated heuristics. Confucius believed that “going over what he has already learned gains some new understanding” (Lin, 2021, p.277) and proposed that learning should be done by thinking, “reading without thinking gives one a disorderly mind, and thinking without reading makes one flighty” (ibid, p.277), as he said. In addition, he suggested that students should think independently rather than learn rigidly without understanding. In this manner, students will gradually develop skills in thinking independently and solving practical problems. Also, Confucius emphasized the importance of practicing knowledge, believing that acquiring knowledge without putting it into practice would be of little significance, regardless of how much one learned.

4. LIN’S RESHAPING OF CONFUCIUS AS AN ARTIST

The pursuit of beauty is an eternal theme of human life, and art, offering nourishment and cultural essence in human evolution, is one of the forms of this pursuit. Lin is adept at observing

everything with aesthetic intelligence and trying to live a “beautiful” life. Accordingly, in his work, Confucius is not as rigid, flat, and routine as a medieval religious figure; instead, he is depicted as a mild humanist in the Renaissance with a profound artistic background. As recorded in the *Analects*, Confucius spent his life “aiming at the truth and depending on virtue and then “relying on the good and delight in the arts” (Xu Y, 2012, p.46).

4.1 Confucius’s View on Art

The term “art” did not appear in the pre-Qin era, and its concept was developed since the Eastern Han dynasty, referring to “the combination of skills (also known as tricks) and numerology” (Wang, 2017, p.8). It is different from the definition of modern Western art as perceived by the “new youth” of the New Culture Movement. However, it cannot repudiate that ancient China never had the representation and connotation of art simply because the art referred to by the ancients is not in line with the concept of art today. Seen from the development of ancient Chinese traditional art, Confucius had his ideas about art, even though he did not directly use the word “art” to refer to it. But he has always expressed ideas about art through similar or related concepts.

The artistic life of Confucius was reflected in his daily activities. Art shows spiritual connotation through materials, making life delicate and meaningful rather than simply satisfying the primary desires or seeking gains and avoiding harm for survival and reproduction. *The Analects* records Confucius’ attention to details in life, like spiritual connotations and artistic feelings. For example, in the aspect of dresses, “Confucius would not use navy blue or scarlet for the binding and collar of his dress. In summer, he would wear underclothes beneath the thin (transparent) coarse or fine linen gown” (Lin, 2021, p.253). As for diets, for him, “rice could never be white enough, and mince meat could never be chopped fine enough” (ibid, p.253). There is a rich food culture in China, and Lu cuisine, one of the four major cuisines in China, has deep roots within Confucianism, bringing rich nutrition while providing pleasing food.

More importantly, Lin (2021, p.49) signified in A brief estimate of the Character of Confucius in *The Wisdom of Confucius*: “This man, who sang and played musical instruments and edited *Book of Songs* with accompanying music, was an artist.” It is recorded that Confucius mastered the skills of many instruments (such as qing, ch’in, seh, and

hsuen) and reached a very high artistic level. He was skilled, deeply understood the Music's meaning, and could share the same feeling with the composers. In one instance, "once such a person, Ju Pei, wanted to see Confucius, and Confucius sent word to say he was not at home. When Ju Pei was just outside the door, Confucius took up a string instrument(seh) and sang 'in order to let him hear it' and know that he was really at home" (Lin, 2021, p.48). Another instance: Confucius was singing with some other men and liked the song; "he always asked for an encore and then joined in the refrain" (Lin, 2021, p.50).

Hence, it bears noting that Music is pivotal in Confucius' daily life. The extraordinary achievements Confucius made in musical practice enabled him to understand Music's meaning and develop his artistic concept. According to his conception of art, "music" is characterized by emotions. He said,

"Music rises from the human heart when the external world touches the human heart. When touched by the external world, the heart is moved and expresses itself in sounds. These sounds echo or combine and produce a rich variety, and when the various sounds become regular, we have rhythm. The arrangement of tones for our enjoyment in combination with the military dance, with shields and hatchets, and the civil dance, with long feathers and pennants of ox-tails, is called Music." (Lin, 2021, p.361).

This quote is the compilation taken at the beginning of the chapter "On Music" in The Wisdom of Confucius. This saying has significantly impacted the history of Chinese Music thought and explained the occurrence principle and the essential characteristics of Music. The sages regard Music as happiness and entertainment, which is inextricably linked with emotions. People's happiness will be expressed through sound and movement when they are delighted in their hearts. Music provided Confucius with spiritual satisfaction and emotional resonance. It is not only the beautiful tune and lyrics but also because of the aesthetic experience it brings.

Confucius' understanding of Music is not limited to the enjoyment of skills and senses but also penetrates deeply into the spirit, eventually becoming a symbolic carrier of morality which plays a vital role in developing individual personalities and social ethics. In ancient Chinese culture, Ritual and Music were often combined, making Music somewhat subordinate to ritual.

Confucius suggested, "Education begins with poetry, strengthened through proper conduct and consummated through music" (ibid, p.275). He regarded Poetry, Ritual (li), and Music as a process of individual development, convinced that Music represents the realm of developing aesthetic personality and has transcendent artistic connotations. Confucius founded private education, and one of its significant features is music education, which is to place Music above ritual. It is precise because he profoundly understands that ritual is external, artificially prescribed behavior. Music, as a part of art, can cultivate temperament and shape personality from a perspective of inner transcendence. The influence of ritual on the development of personality and temperament is more about external and obligatory restrictions, while Music induces intoxication and generates invisible energy. As the saying goes, "Music comes from the inside, while rituals come from the outside" (ibid, p.365).

4.2 The Humorousness of "Singing in the Rain"

Humor is an art, a feature of aesthetics, and a way to express emotions. Throughout history, humor has always been a popular form of entertainment. The original meaning of humor differs significantly from what it refers to today, whether in China or the Western world. The word "humor" existed in ancient China and was first found in Qu Yuan's *Nine Chapters of Huaisha*: "In front of me, there is no Yo Mo." But "幽默(Yo Mo)" here is not humor (Wen, 1956). "幽默 (Yo Mo)" can be interpreted as silence. In modern China, "humor" in the modern sense was imported from Britain. It is generally believed that Lin was the first to translate "senses of humor" with the Chinese character "幽默(Yo Mo)." He published two articles in the *Morning Supplement* in May and June 1924, *Soliciting Translation of Essays and Advocating "Humor"* and *A Discussion of Humor*, advocating the transliteration of English "humor" as "幽默 (You Mo)," and reforming the stereotypical tone of eight-legged essay to a lively and humorous article that pleases readers. According to Lin (2000), humor is a form of psychological activity that is calm and far-reaching, unaffected by political, class, society, or other factors; it expresses the brilliance and wisdom of the individual spirit, reduces depression and tension in reality, bringing inner spiritual harmony and implicitly stimulates people's thoughts about transforming society, national character and life.

Although the word “幽默(You Mo)” is a purely phonetic word, it is surprising that the translation does not have the sense of alien words for Chinese people, as if its significance has been deeply rooted in the semantics of Chinese. Lin as a humorist, proposed to find humorous words, deeds, and characters from Chinese classical literature (culture) and shape the Chinese humorist. During this journey, he gained a deeper understanding of the humor inherent in Confucianism, particularly the humor of Confucius. He stated, “There is very first-class humor in the *Analects*” (Lin, 2000, p.67). In *The Wisdom of Confucius*, he established the image of Confucius as a Chinese humorist through a systematic presentation of Confucius’s life. Upon combing the relevant texts about humor throughout the book, it seems that Confucius’ humor can be divided into broad and narrow senses. Humor, in the narrow sense, is a kind of art of words that can induce readers to smile knowingly. This smile is neither smirking nor cynical but a sweet smile that is very modest, caused by feeling knowing, intellectually and emotionally (Wang, 2018, p.55).

In *The Wisdom of Confucius*, Lin (2021) lists Confucius’ swearing, jokes, and witty words, creating a lively image that is different from the traditional one but is still appealing to modern readers. For instance, Confucius criticizes lazy people who never think about what to do: A man who does not ask himself, “What to do? What to do?” I do not know what to do with such a person (Lin, 2021, p.52). “What to do?” in a short sentence is repeated three times while cleverly linking with “does not say to himself ‘what to do’ “and “I do not know what to do,” forming a contrast of similar forms but different meanings. From the meaning of the sentence, people may think that a great educator like Confucius would have a way to educate such lazy people, but they did not expect that he had no choice but to say that there was no way so that people may smile by the humor.

Witty words often give people a taste of life and philosophical thinking when making them laugh. Lin (1924, p.1-2) deemed that humor, in a broad sense, is a kind of “unruffled attitude” that lies behind this language style, or “a true, tolerant, and sympathetic view on life.” Lin believes that genuine humor can be found in Confucius’ detached life, which emphasizes a casual and calm attitude to life and a survival art that transcends suffering, making people detached in prosperity and calm in adversity. Confucius’ attitude toward life that is still optimistic and “singing in the rain” (Lin, 2021, p.53) despite repeated setbacks and failures is

what Lin finds most appealing. Lin (ibid) told a story:

“Once Confucius and his disciples had lost track of each other. The disciples finally heard from the crowd that there was a tall man standing at the East Gate with a high forehead resembling some of the ancient emperors, but that he looked crestfallen like a homeless wandering dog. The disciples finally found him and told him about this remark and Confucius replied, “I don’t know about my resembling those ancient emperors, but as for resembling a homeless, wandering dog, he is quite right! He is quite right!”

Confucius was knowledgeable and ambitious, but he needed help to display talents in his state, and he also encountered many difficulties on his disaffected and displaced journey to other states. Be that as it may, when stuck in exhaustion and daze, how many of us can admit, as Confucius did, that we are like a homeless dog delightedly? Confucius used humorous laughter to deal with embarrassment, and his profound self-mockery showed the vitality of life, all of which reflected the comic consciousness of a humorous person.

5. CONCLUSION

As the most influential ideological and cultural system, Confucianism has long dominated Chinese spiritual and moral concepts. However, Confucianism and its founder Confucius faced harsh criticism throughout the New Culture Movement. Under this historical context, Lin presented subversive interpretations of the stereotypical image of Confucius stemming from his life experience. In *The Wisdom of Confucius*, based on the original texts and guided by the horizontal contrast between Chinese and Western cultures, Lin compiled and interpreted Confucian classics like the *Analects*, *Liki*, and the *Life of Confucius in Shiki* by Ssuma Ch’ien using a standard translation approach. He removed the irrational part of the exposition on Confucius by contemporary scholars and reinterpreted the image and thoughts of Confucius to reflect his cultural standards.

In Lin’s work, Confucius is no longer a purposefully deified “Saint” in the mainstream ideology of feudal society. He restores the image of Confucius to a mortal in line with human nature and human feelings, emphasizing his humanist characteristics. Contrary to what was often believed in Western culture, Confucius was not only a wise

man who offered a motto but rather a social philosopher like Plato. They advocated enhancing human nature in order to create the ideal society. They held that morals and education, not force or the law, should be relied upon for a better society. Lin also explores the aesthetic connotation of Confucius's ideas on music as a highly aesthetic artist and his humorousness and open-mindedness under challenging circumstances. In today's globalized cultural environment, the reimagined and recharacterized image of Confucius in Lin's *The Wisdom of Confucius* still holds tremendous value. It actively introduces Confucianism to the West and demonstrates its relevance today.

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