The Question of Conflict in Chinese Thought Specifically in Confucius: Some Psychoanalytic Considerations

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The central concern for us as psychoanalysts is the consistent, systematic exploration of inner conflict, especially of unconscious inner conflict. No matter how we try to define our work, it always comes down to the fact that the focus, the center of our interest during our analytic work at its best, lies on inner conflict. Everything else moves to the periphery; it is not irrelevant, but our inner orientation is so that we notice it as part of the surrounding field, not as the beacon that guides us.

The notion of inner conflict did not originate with Freud; its systematic use as explanatory device par excellence did. In his and even more so in our work, relevant explanation more and more moves away form the short cut attempts at reducting our inner life to certain large factors, like trauma, stages of libido development, narcissism, masochism, repetition compulsion. If these concepts are taken as explanations of causality, the clinician soon discovers that their usefulness stops precisely there where the problem begins. They are the beginning, not the end of the search. Instead, the stopping point of such exploration is inner conflict, specifically inner preconscious conflict that stands for, is derivative of, long range unsolved unconscious inner conflict. Thus psychoanalytic explanation rests in an understanding of conflict causality: the causes of what we

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observe are seen in many layers of inner conflict. Conflict does not simply refer to that between drives and ego, drives and superego, ego and outer reality, but also between opposite ego aspects, between discordant superego parts, and between different ideals and values, between sharply split loyalties, even between opposing drives, between ideas and affects. It is also not so that conflict psychology is synonymous with the exploration of oedipal issues or even with the structural model, as important both are for conflict psychology; both of them deal with special forms of conflict.

It is important to recognize—as I have worked out in a number of publications—that this analytic, particularistic, conflict-centered understanding of man represents one fundamental theoretical paradigm. It is antithetical to a holistic, synthetic, teleological paradigm. There is not more nor less truth to the one or the other—to the model of conflicting inner parts versus that of perfection and deficit. The synthetic holistic model, with its orientation towards harmonious and self-fulfilling growth, is the philosophical view of man underlying both Jung’s “analytic psychology” and Kohut’s self-psychology; with its focus on deficits and restoration it is more Aristotelian; the analytic model with its focus on parts and conflict, the model held by Freud and the classical psychoanalytic tradition, is more Platonic. The question is not: Which is more correct? but which is more useful in a given context, and that means: Which is more causally relevant in regard to the tasks posed? To conceptualize development, especially early development, the former model, really one of learning and adaptation, is more useful; to conceptualize severe developmental disturbances, this deficit model is more appropriate. If we want to work more as educators, that paradigm is more appropriate as central focus. The conflict model as peripheral. Not so when we work with neuroses and the more severe forms of psychopathology in intensive psychotherapy and especially in analysis. There conflict becomes the central focus; deficit, learning, the imagery and configurations of the whole self move to the periphery; they are not untrue, but become ever less
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useful for the task at hand. The two models or basic views of human nature are complementary to each other. If our focus is one the one, the other has to move to the periphery. The details of what has so moved outside of focus is eventually being omitted from view altogether, is not being perceived anymore, is, as it were, “denied”.

It is very fascinating to observe that these two complementary pictures of human nature, which dominate by and large the theory and practice of depth psychology of the last 100 years, find a counterpart in the image of man held respectively by the two high cultures on East and West, of the Greek-Jewish-Christian and secular tradition of the Occident versus the Chinese tradition that dominated the cultures of the Far East. What I mean with this I try to sketch with the following selection from work presented elsewhere in far more thorough ways.

The view of inner life as conflict is intrinsic to the Western intellectual tradition. We find prototypes for it already in the Homeric epics: In the Odyssey, when Odysseus is about to stab the Cyclops Polyphemos, he stopped: “...the second thought stopped me (heteros de me thymos eryken)”, the recognition of their own inability to remove the giant boulder from the entrance. And then there is the beautiful passage in the Iliad, 11. 402 ff: Left alone by the other Greeks in the middle of battle, Odysseus “spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: ‘Ah me, what will become of me? It will be a great evil if I run, fearing their multitude, yet deadlier if I am caught alone; and Kronos’ son drove to flight the rest of the Danaans. Yet still, why does the heart within me debate on these things? Since I know that it is the cowards who walk out of the fighting, but if one is to win honour in battle, he must by all mean stand his ground strongly, whether he be struck or strike down another.”

Ancient Greek tragedy revolves around the pivot of the tragic choice—the necessity to decide between the opposing commitments to two enormously important values, ideals, loyalties. Many symbols or metaphors in Greek tragedy reflect this consciousness of inner conflict—e.g.
the “blue clashing rocks” or “Symplegades” of Euripides’ Medea, the repeated use of the term “diphrontis”, “of two minds” in the “Libation Bearers” of Aischylos and in the “Hippolytos” of Euripides. It appears to refer with particular poignanty to what I have referred to as the shameguilt-dilemma. Yet more generally, these presentations of the fatal consequences of tragic choice refer to the unresolvability of such basic, existential conflicts of conscience, i.e., that in this absolutely, extremely posed form, as it is put to the protagonists and lived out by them, it never can be resolved once and for all, that there cannot be a final, right, perfect solution, but that only the “measure” represented by the Chorus, the “moderation”, the acceptance of both parts of conflict, and with that of the paradox inherent in human life, is compatible with the survival of individual and society, of the culture and its ideals (the Gods). This “measure” however entails the insight of “wisdom” that the opposite parts of inner conflict complement each other, i.e. that the understanding of inner life as conflict has to encompass the reconciliaion of the hitherto clashing forces—the drives, emotions, values, loyalties—in form of complementarity. I believe it is this what recently Anton Kris has presented in the duality of convergent and divergent conflict (cf. also Rangell 1963).

The consciousness of inner conflict accompanies Western thought and creativity throughout its history. Speaking in the Phaidros of “the soul being like the combined force of the winged pair of horses and the charioteer”. Plato describes how “the bad horse pulls the chariot down” and then adds: “And then there is pain (ponos) and extreme conflict (agon eschatos) inflicted upon the soul” (246/247).

In the Talmud we hear: “A man should always incite the good impulse to fight against the evil impulse (léolam yargiz adam jetzer tov al yetzer hord). For it is written: Fight, but do not sin (rigezu wéal techetu [Ps. 4. 5] If they overcome it, fine! If not, they should study the Torah. For it is written: Speak with your hearts (imru bilvavchem)” (Berakot, 5a).

Before our modern age, however, such inner conflict has been, to my
knowledge, nowhere more keenly expressed and reflected upon than by Augustinus in the Confessiones, even in its unconscious dimensions: “So stood two wills of mine in conflict with each other, one old, the other new, one carnal, the other spiritual, and in their discord they wasted out my mind. Its duas voluntates meae, una vetus, alia nova, illa carnalis, illa spiritualis, confligebant inter se, atque discordando dissipabant animam meam (8.5).” “This was the controversy I felt in my heart, about nothing but myself, against myself. Iata controversia in corde meo non nisi de me ipso adversus me ipsum” (8.11).

He even commented upon the complementarity between these opposite parts of his self: “Hence it is that there be two wills, for that one of them is not entire: and the one is supplied with that, wherein the other lacks.” (8.9). He gives an etiology for such an inherent inner discord—for the existential nature of man’s conflict—in the Civitas Dei: God commanded Adam and Eve obedience because the fulfillment of their own will in opposition to that of their Creator’s is destruction (14.12). It was a fitting punishment for their own disobedience that they suddenly were compelled to notice the disobedience of their own genitals, and with that the disobedience of their desires, the lack of control over their bodies; all mental activity, all reasoning becomes overrun (14.16). This powerlessness, this loss of control in the face of the overpowering force of the sexual parts necessarily fills man with shame, even of the sexual act is permitted and specifically engaged in for the procreation of children; even in front of one’s own children it therefore has to be treated with secrecy (14.18). “Human nature, then, is without doubt ashamed of this lust; and justly so, for the insubordination of these members, and their defiance of the will, are the clear testimony of the punishment of man’s first sin” (14.20).

In these excerpts the conflict is sharply delineated: the primary concern is the conflict between the sexual desires (and member) and the will led by reason and with that by Godly command. The loss of control over these desires and their executive organs is inherently a cause for shame. Yet this
loss of control is in itself already the punishment for a deeper, prior conflict: the conflict between the with to follow one’s will and the obedient submission under God’s command. The first conflict is a shame conflict, the second, deeper and antecedent conflict is one leading to guilt, a guilt to be punished by that loss of control. The assertion of power and independence (potestas voluntatis) is by itself evil; it leads to the secondary evil, “the punishment” by the omnipotence of lust.

Looking back to the Talmudic sources, we see the same doubleness, although not as sharply divided: whenever there is talk about the Yetzer haRá—the Evil Inclination—it always refers to sexual desire and lust; but this lust also is always equated with rebellion against God.

Yet farther back, in Platon, the negative part f human nature that pulls the soul perniciously “down” and “apart” is sensuality altogether—the attachment to the body and its desires—against the autonomous power of Reason and with that against the “vision” of the ideas.

The Augustinian view came to dominate the value system of the Western world for about one millennium: Sexual lust was the Evil par excellence, prideful assertion of will power, even in the service of Reason, ran a close second. The power of the faith in this value hierarchy is not completely broken even to-day.

When we turn now to the Chinese tradition we find something quite different. “Harmony was seen as the great norm of both the natural and social worlds; confucianism and Taoism were equally philosophies of balance, whether man’s counterpoise was society or the natural cosmos. Imbalance would have meant man against man, man against nature, in either case a separation between the self and the ‘other’. But Confucianism and Taoism, each in its way, meant union, oneness, the concord and stasis of the eternal pattern” (Levenson & Schurmann, 1969, p 113). “Conflict between Confucianism and Taoism was abortive, a) because they had a common theme, harmony, and b) because that common theme, harmony, implied a philosophical deprecation of conflict” (ibid., p 116).
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"By now it should be evident that basic among Chinese thought patterns is the desire to merge seemingly conflicting elements into a unified harmony. Chineses philosophy is filled with dualisms in which, however, their two component elements are usually regarded as complementary and mutually necessary rather than as hostile and incompatible. A common feature of Chinese dualisms, furthermore, is that one of their two elements should be held in higher regard than the other. Here again, therefore, we have an expression of the concept of harmony based upon hierarchical difference, such as we have already seen in the Chinese view of society" (Bodde, 1953, p 54).

This does of course not imply that there is no awareness of conflict or that there is a relative absence of social, historical or psychological conflict. Rather it appears that there is an overriding concern to shift the focus of attention away from conflict, to the point of denying its emotional relevance. Why Chinese culture and tradition, in spite of its inner orientation, its greatly creative and expressive inwardness, seems so peculiarly inimical to psychoanalysis may very well lie in this deep and abiding antipathy to inner conflict. This means also a different approach to ethical and psychological choice.

In discussing this issue, Fingarette (Confucius—the Secular as Sacred, 1972, p. 22) refers to two passages in the Lun Yü (論語) the "book of the discussions (or sayings)" of Kung Tae (孔子) (Kong-Fu-Zi, Confucius): "You love a man and wish him to live; you hate him and wish him to die. Having wished him to live, you also wish him to die. This is doubt" (huo 惑—Legge: "delusion") (12.10). "For a morning's anger to disregard one's own life, and involve that of his parents;—is not this a case of doubt (delusion)" (12.21). "In such conflict, the task is not posed as one of choosing or deciding but of distinguishing or discriminating the inconsistent inclinations. Furthermore, in each passage, we have no doubt about which inclination is the right one when we have discriminated one form the other. In short, the task is posed in terms of knowledge rather than
choice. *Huo*, the key term in the passages, means here ‘deluded or led astray by an un-li (禮) inclination or tendency’. it is not doubt as to which to choose to do’ (pp. 22/23).

I interject here that the decisive word *huo* (惑) which does not appear rarely in both Confucius and Lao Tae is usually translated as “doubt, suspicion, deception”. Yet as symbol it is composed of *huo* (惑) and *xin* (心). *Huo* (惑) means “either, or, if”, *xin* (心) is “heart, mind”, the common radical associated with any emotional, or generally mental processes. The *huo* used in this context can therefore etymologically be rendered as the “Either-Or of the Mind”, the “Or of the Mind”. Fingarette is right that there is hardly anywhere an explicit formulation of inner conflict, and yet, it seems to me that the repeatedly emerging “doubt”, *huo*, is something like a symbol for suppressed, hidden, veiled conflict.

This means, Fingarette continues, that “we must recognize at once that the absence of a developed language of choice and responsibility does not imply a failure to choose or to be responsible … the task is posed in terms of knowledge rather than choice” (pp 18–22). For Confucius man is not tragic since he is not determined by the inner crisis of choice, decision and guilt, but oriented towards action and towards the concentric circles of obligations surrounding him.

Analytically speaking the center of gravity has entirely shifted away from the choosing and deciding *ego* and to the absolutely (unconditionally) certain and commanding *superego*. The side of the drives (yü 欲) is not often mentioned; they have to yield to the dictates of conscience. Since the ego itself is the site of inner conflict, its complete subordination under the inner authority of conscience amounts to a kind of *invalidation of inner conflict*.

This statement is predicated on the a priori assumption that inner conflict is indeed and indispensable part of human nature. It is a methodological premise—neither provable, nor refutable—not merely of the psychoanalytic understanding of human nature, but of the Western under-
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standing of Man in general.

In the Confucian tradition the source of all morality lies in Xīào (孝), the reverence towards the parents, and in Dì (弟), the respect towards the older brothers. Conscience, reason and sympathy can only grow and of this one root. Thus it is put at the near-beginning of the Lun-Yū, in the words of You, one of the disciples of Kung Tse: "They are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending against their superiors. There are none, who, not liking to offend against their superiors, have been fond of stirring up confusion. The superior man pays attention to the root. Is the root firm, the Way grows. Reverence towards the parents and respect towards the sibilings, they are the root of being human (rén [仁])" (Lun-Yū, 1.2).

Rén (仁), this central virtue of Kung Tse, is often quite imperfectly translated as benevolence; humaneness, humanism, humanity ("Menschlichkeit" or even better "Mitmenschlichkeit"), would probably be better translations. The root of Rén is seen in Xiao and Di, in respect and reverence towards those higher up in the family hierarchy, i.e. those who are older.

Yet that this stress on reverence could lead to severe inner conflict is not being explicitly noticed: the confrontation with what Jaspers calls Kunt Tse’s “great dilemma” ("die große Alternative", p. 167): “to withdraw from the world into isolation or to live with the human beings together in the world and to give it [the world] from”. Kung Tse replies: “It is impossible to associate with birds and beasts, as if they were the same with us. If I associate not with these people,—with mankind,—with whom shall I associate? If right principles prevailed through the empire, there would be no use for me to change its state” (18.6).

Yet this conflict having been resolutely decided, there are deeper, for less obvious dilemmas speaking through the thought, expressed by the profound seriousness of Kung Tse’s coviction.

If we try to gain a deeper understanding of what such underlying, but
hidden, unspoken conflict may be, it might be quite useful to start off with that feeling of shame which we found already very prominently displayed in Augustine as the hallmark of conflict and which we could have observed no less in the Talmud and with Platon, as one indicator of inner struggle. This is true more so since shame and equivalent terms are in Chinese tradition so far more prominent than guilt or sin, although these are not altogether absent either (e.g. in 3.13, 20.1, as zuì [罪]).

If we go through the statements on shame they almost always refer in my view to the betrayal of honesty and sincerity or genuineness in the performance of any kind, including of course of the ritual.

"Fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect—Zuo Qiu Ming was ashamed of them. I also am ashamed of them. To conceal resentment against a person, and appear friendly with him—Zuo Qiu Ming was ashamed of such conduct. I also am ashamed of it" (5.24). "The ancients held back their words. They were ashamed that they themselves would not reach them [their words]" (4.22). Similarly: "The noble person is ashamed if his words exceed his actions" (14.29). "The Master said to [his favorite pupil] Yan Hui: When of use, then to act; when dismissed, then to hide; only you and I understand this" (7.10).

"Xian asked what was shameful (chi). The Master said: 'If the state is on the right way, [one should have an] income; if the state is not on the right way [one has an] income—this is shameful' (14.1). Similarly: 'When a country is well governed, being poor and low is shameful. When a country is not well governed, having wealth and honor is shameful' (8.13).

Shame reflects failure, weakness, loss of control, as it was so emphatically made clear by Augustine. Here too it is, as it were, the shift of the center of gravity from what we know as the ego of choice, of decision, of will to those parts of the superego which underlie the sense of shame, a shift from choice and decision to the unquestioned subordination under inner authority, yet an inner authority which upholds outer relations, commitments and customs. Still even so, it is the inner attitude, the right
mind set, not the external form alone, which counts. The words and the
things have to coincide—the reason for the famous postulate of the
"rectification of names", zhēng míng （正名）(13.3). Outer form is the last
touch given to perfection. "Man without human-heartedness [rén], what
has he to do with the rites of propriety [li]？ Man without human-
heartedness, what has he to do with music?" (3.3). This very strong view
of inner authority and persistent integrity under the guidance of the inner
ideal is particularly pertinent for the ruler: "He who exercises govern-
ment by means of his virtue may be compared to the polar star—keeping
his place, and all the stars turning respectfully towards him" (2.1).

However, the question after the inner consequences of obedience to the
inner command, to the ideal postulated, and of disobedience just not seem
to pose itself. Rather its failure becomes an issue of reeducation, as we
saw before. "The metaphor of an inner psychic life, in all its ramifications
so familiar to us, simply isn't present in the Analects, not even as a rejected
possibility" (Fingarette, p 45).

And yet there are also places in the Lun Yü that appear to contradict
such a general assertion: "The Master said: 'It is all over. I have not seen
anyone who could look at his own faults and inwardly accuse himself!"’ (5.
26). Legge adds in his commentary: "one who brings himself before the bar
of his conscience."

The metaphor is unambiguously that of an inner trial, of an especially
poignant form of inner conflict—analytically of that between superego
and self, whereby the ego sides with the superego, indeed is actually
submerged in it. It is interesting however that this observation is made in
a negative and lamenting form—as if this inner court proceeding, this
"holding court over oneself", as Ibsen called it, would be quite beyond
human nature. In 12.4: "The noble person is without depression and
without anxiety… When he examines himself within and finds no evil,
why would he have to be depressed or anxious?"

"The Master said: 'I was 15, and my will was bent on learning. I was 30,
and I stood firm [li: to stand]. I was 40, and I had no doubts. I was 50, and
I knew the law of Heaven—tian ming. I was 60, and my ear was obedient
[ahun: to follow, obey]. At 70, I could follow my heart’s wishes without
overstepping the measure” (2.4). It is the consciousness of absolute value
—tian ming (天命)— which is for Confucius the same as the truth: through
learning one achieves stability and the solution of doubts and suspicious.
Out of this resolution of conflict, “being without doubt” (bù hūo （不
guò）), the inner unity and solidity develops, so that in one’s actions he obeys
“knowing the decree of Heaven” and reaches the unity of wish an con-
science—“not overstepping the square”. Put in the psychoanalytic frame of
concepts, inner conflict and with that the idea of the choosing and deciding
ego is avoided, denied. In its place we find an ego which is completely
aligned with a system of inner values of intensest authority character.
This inner authority, a very strong form of superego, on the one side
demands strict and abiding obedience towards outer authority and exacts
lasting reverence and loyalty towards such authority. This obedience to
outer authority is however not unconditionally so: it sanctions the overth-
row of authority that has violated the truth and thus lost the Mandate of
Heaven, tian ming. “Zi lu asked how a ruler should be served. the Master
said: ‘Do not deceive him,’ and resist him!” (14.23).

On the other side it depersonalizes such outer authority structure in
behalf of transcending values held inwardly, autonomously: “The noble
person, in the world, does not set his mind either for anything, or against
anything: what is right he will follow” (4.10). These transcending values
are vested in the ideals of the sage kings of antiquity and represented now
in the forms of the ritual. Therefore he calls himself “a transmitter and not
a maker, believing in and loving the ancients” (7.1).

The cardinal postulate however of this obeisance to authority, of this
submision of oneself to the eternal values—the identification of the ego
with the superego—is that of honesty or sincerity: of being fully at one with
the demand of conscience—what Kung Tse mentioned as the unity be-
tween wish and "not overstepping the square". "The man, who in the view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who in the view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget arnold agreement however far back it extends—such a man may be reckoned a complete man" (14.13). Any shortcoming in this unity is a failure, a deficiency or lack that, as any other such perceived defect, is a source of shame, not of guilt—a lacuna, rather than a transgression of the rights of others. All the ethical demands are then subsumed under this identity of ego and ideal.

The one great question I see emerging form that, although one which I have not found posed in the corpus of writings I have studied up to now (limited as this study is!), is this: Does not there exist a deep contradiction between the central position, even seeming absoluteness, of the value put in an attitude of honesty and sincerity, and the necessity to limit one's own self and one's desires in the commitment to community and antiquity resolutely? Is this contradiction not so that its expression in terms of inner conflict is a necessary consequence of that postulate of honesty? And if one postulates such absolute "straightness", such unconditional correspondence of words and thoughts, how can one then omit this issue of inner conflict? Is it not so that such omission perverts the very ideal postulated, that it leads to a contradicito in adieicto, that sincerity without the centrality of inner conflict is a self-contradiction? This is a paradox that turned into a major problem in the West only with Rousseau.

The answer for Kung Tse lies there that reverence or respect, especially for ones ancestors, was a value even superseding that of honesty and straightness. As a matter of fact, the two are conflated: reverence was straightness or uprightness, zhi. The conflict is swept under the rug. Yet many times the emphasis lies on honesty in the sense of loyalty towards one's autonomous inner postulates maintained also in opposition against the loyalty towards outside powers, even of the highest authority. "The noble person is not a utensil" (2.12). So the stress on honesty is not absolute, but conditional: namely as an expression of the complete identity

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of action and words (ego) with the inner authority (superego) demanding adherence to a system of hierarchical structure and timeless rules.

So far I have put aside the important question with the yú (欲), the “desires”, which have to be put aside, really consist of. Do they refer in the same intensity to sexuality ans sensuality as in the Western tradition? It is clear at once that the obsession with the sin of sexuality disappears altogether; it is simply not being mentioned, just as inner conflict is not. That does of course not man that it is not an issue, but form with I can see in the original sources of antiquity it is not explicitly mae into a problem. Yet how about that other eminent “counter-value” we hit upon: disobedience? This is certainly often mentioned in form of rebellion, uproar, disorder; “meng Yi Zi asked about filial piety. The Master said: It is not being disobedient” (2.5).

Moreover loyalty, zhōng (忠) is continually stressed: “Hold loyalty and honesty for the guiding principles” (1.8,12.10).

And still, if I think about the entire tenor of the Lun Yu, I think the great inner enemy is the with for power, for self-assertion against established outer authority, and most specifically in the form of competition with such authority. “Yan Yu asked about rèn. The Master said: ‘To subdue one’s self (kè ji (克己)) and return to propriety, is rèn…” (12.1) Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi, 朱熹, 1130–1200), the great Confucian philosopher of the Song-Dynasty, comments; “Kè ji is not subduing and putting away the self, but subduing and putting away the selfish desires in the self” (quoted in Legge’s commentary to this passage in the Lun Yu, p 156). All the Confucian virtues of respect and reverence seem to be the strictest opposites of aggression in competition, in the striving for triumph of the social self against others. I do not find much direct, explicit evidence, in the sense of “Don’t compete!” We may surely take 3.7 in that sense: “The noble person does not compete.” If he has to compete, e.g. in archery, he bows to the other and lets him ascend firat and forfeits his right to drink (the forfeit cup). Even in competition he remains noble.
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The entire emphasis on "filial piety" and "brotherly duties" throughout is like one clarion call against the basic two rivalries within the family. All of Government in fact, all of society is based on these two, xiao and di (cf. e.g. also 2.21).

"The noble person is respectful and tactful, then all within the four seas will be his brothers" (12.5).

Throughout I have avoided making a connection of Kung Tse's views with his own life. We know not very much beyond what we have read in the Lun Yu, and from there we learn mostly about his determined, but unsuccessful attempts to implement his ideals in official positions. Si-Ma Oian reports however that his father had died very soon after the child's birth (according to some, when he was 3 year old?) and that his mother had hidden the truth from her son where his father had been buried. "As a child, Confucius liked to play with sacrificial vessels, setting them out as if for a ceremony. After his mother's death, as a precaution, he had her coffin entombed in Wufu Lane. Then the mother of Wan Fu of Zou told him the whereabouts of his father's grave, and he had his mother buried with her husband at Mount Fang. Confucius was still wearing the belt of mourning when he went to a feast for gentlemen given by the Ji clan. Yang Hu turned him away, saying, 'The Ji clan is entertaining gentlemen: you are not included.' At that Confucius withdrew."

To what extent was the yearning for the great fathers of antiquity a restoration of the lost and idealized father, his intense dedication to learning and to the ideal of the jänzi, the noble person, an effort to reestablish his destroyed (idealized) identity, and the devotion to the ritual and undoing of his own aggressive wishes and a reaction formation against them—the aggressive wishes against mother, siblings, other "fathers", an unruly, arrogant, unprincipled society? An undoing perhaps also of the suffered loss of his father? To what extent did such an intense need to idealize both elder figures and self serve the defense against profound aggressive wishes of a vindictive and a competitive nature? Does not the

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legend of his childhood reflect the same doubleness of obedience to an idealized elder and the struggle for truth and honesty that looms behind the conflicts of conscience inferred from the magnitude and explication of the ethics of shame in the traided utterances? Was not the entire magnificent structure of his ethics an attempt to come to terms with this set of personal conflicts? And to what extent does it transform, partly sublimate, partly repress, the underground struggle in Chinese tradition between the needs of the individual versus the overriding demands and requirements of the community—family, clan, province, state, empire? It is clear that the great danger for such a society is not sexual lust, but the assertion by the individual of his authority and will power, his competitive strivings. Yet all in all; the inner conflict has to be resolutely hidden, so strongly disguised in fact that we have only the cracks in the building as a whole to go on for the inferences given—mostly in the form of the hidden contradiction between reverence and honesty, ultimately even between Li and Ren, these two ultimates, these a priori foundations on which the entire building rests. These contradictions, especially the one between respect and truth, and the existence of inner contraries altogether, turn into the main issue, or at least one of the major problems, for Lao Tse. His answer is therefore dramatically different. Yet that is the topic for a separate study.