

The New Vision of Axiomatic Method and It's Interpretation for *The Analects of Confucius*

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Abstract: How to objectively understand the Confucian classics represented by the *Analects* is an important issue that needs serious study in the Chinese academic circle and also an unavoidable problem in Eastern and Western communication. Is it possible to use an axiomatic method to establish an objectified system of propositions for the *Analects* and find a clarified logic system in the Confucian thought reflected in the *Analects* as in Spizona's *The Ethics*? The axiomatic method is a mathematical and philosophical method, which is originally used in Euclid geometry. It is to deduce various meaningful propositions (or theorems) on the basis of a few definitions, basic assumptions and axioms, and they can in general form a deductive system. Clarified concepts and strict logic are the advantages of the axiomatic approach which help it gradually infiltrate into disciplines other than mathematics. By reviewing *Euclid's Geometry* and the axiomatic approach and their evolution, We expound the systematic construct of the axiomatic interpretation of the *Analects*, and adopt an axiomatic approach to establish a deductive system built upon the fundamentals of the *Analects*. That is, after giving some definitions and making some basic assumptions, we formulate some axioms, and prove the series of propositions contained in the *Analects* by reasoning. In this way, the logical system of Confucius' thought implied in the *Analects* can be brought to light. It is concluded that the inherent logic and thoughts of Confucius can be systematized and there is a logic system in the *Analects*.

Keywords: *Euclid's Geometry*, The Axiomatic Approach, *The Analects of Confucius*, Logical System, The Exchange of Different Civilizations

1. Introduction

The Analects of Confucius, also known as the *Analects* (or *Lunyu* in Chinese), is one of the Confucian classics compiled by the disciples of Confucius and some disciples of the first generation of his students. The popular version of *The Analects* consists of twenty chapters or books, which records the sayings and deeds of Confucius and his favorite disciples in the form of quotes and dialogues. It embodies the political, ethical and moral concepts and principles of education of Confucius. By taking an overview of the research and transmission of the *Analects* at home and abroad, we can conclude that what is prevailing are the researches featured with the traditional Chinese exegetics and annotations. Scholars' researches on the *Analects* are mainly focusing on

the discussion of its editors, nomination and year of formation, the evolution of different editions, its historical influences and epochal values and a few important annotated versions; consensus on many issues are yet to be reached.

Now, more and more Western scholars have become interested in Chinese culture and are eager "to use Chinese Culture as a new reference frame, that is a new 'other,' to reexamine their own culture." [1] However, in 18th -19th European philosophy, some philosophers thought that Eastern philosophies are nothing but primitive religions. Hegel said: Confucius is only a man who has a certain amount of practical and worldly wisdom-in which there is no speculative philosophies. [2] (pp. 119-120).

The axiomatic approach in interpreting *The Analects of Confucius* is to establish a deductive system built upon the fundamentals of the *Analects*. That is, after making some basic

assumptions and giving some basic definitions, the author (s) formulates a dozen of axioms, and proves through deduction the series of propositions contained in the *Analects* by logical reasoning. [3] In this way, the logical system of Confucius' thought implied in the *Analects* is brought to light and thus the interpretation of the *Analects* becomes systematic knowledge, which is analyzable and verifiable so that people both from the East and West can transcend their different cultural contexts to interpret and understand Confucianism in the same objective and rational way.

2. The Axiomatic Approach, the Axiomatic System and Their Evolution

One of the methodological features of ancient Greek philosophy is its adherence to the principle of reasoning. Its starting points are some universally acknowledged axioms which are then gradually developed into the axiomatic approach. This approach deduces various meaningful propositions (theorems) on the basis of the fewest possible basic concepts (basic assumptions or definitions) which in turn form an axiomatic system in general.

It is known to all that the axiomatic approach characteristic of strict clarity and powerful logic is frequently adopted in mathematical studies. Since 500 B.C., people have learnt from the practice to convert concrete diagrams to abstract geometrical concepts, studied their relationship and performed deduction by means of propositions. By systematizing the geometric propositions, Euclid accomplished the most glorious masterpiece in the history of mathematics. *Euclid's Elements* is regarded as the paradigm of successful and systematic application of the axiomatic approach based on the assumption that the reliable knowledge of all unknown objects can only be obtained by reasoning from the already known. [4] The process of pursuing knowledge starts from a few basic assumptions, definitions and axioms, from which new knowledge is deduced.

Many Western scientists model after Euclid to expound their own theories, illustrating how they deduced their conclusions from a few basic assumptions, definitions and axioms. Euclid's influence on Newton was most noteworthy in that the latter's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* was written following the geometric form of the former's work. Newton established an integrated system of mechanics, namely, "classical mechanics" by integrating the celestial mechanics and terrestrial mechanics. [5] The establishment of this theoretical system should be largely ascribed to the application of the axiomatic approach which makes the Newtonian mechanical system clarified and perfect, a system that has been regarded as the paradigm of the beauty of science.

Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher, thinks that the axiomatic approach, which has been applied successfully to geometry, can also be used to establish his "ethics system." Therefore, in *The Ethics* he makes use of the deductive approach that starts from axioms and ends up in propositions.

Einstein believes that the axiomatic approach is needed for the construction of the skyscraper of physics because experiments cannot completely and definitely solve physical problems. His "Special Relativity" starts with two basic assumptions: the principal of relativity and the principal of invariance of light speed, and, on the basis of which, Einstein deduced propositions such as the shrink ruler effect, the time dilation effect, and the mass enhancement effect. Einstein also thinks highly of the importance of the axiomatic approach, pointing out that the development of modern science depends on two research methods: 1) the axiomatic thinking, 2) the replication of experiments. In sum, clarified concepts and strict logic are the advantages of the axiomatic approach which help it gradually infiltrate into disciplines other than mathematics and physics.

The axiomatic approach tends to be strict and delicate, which was started by Hilbert, a German mathematician, who in the late 19th century clearly stated the logical requirements and principles of the axiomatic approach, namely, compatibility, independence and completeness. [6]

- i. Compatibility: this requirement means that in an axiomatic system, it is forbidden to prove one proposition and at the same time to prove its negative proposition.
- ii. Independence. This requirement means that in an axiomatic system, each axiom should exist independently and cannot be deduced by other axioms.
- iii. Completeness. This requirement means that all propositions in the system can be proven to be either true or false by judgment, or all those propositions that reflect the theoretical content as a whole can be deduced from the axiomatic system.

When we try to establish an axiomatic system for a theory, it is hard to meet the requirement of completeness that "all those propositions that reflect the theoretical content as a whole can be deduced from the axiomatic system." However, if the propositions deduced can cover most of the theoretical content, then improvement can be made gradually on this basis.

3. The Framework and Inference System of the Axiomatic Interpretation of the *Analects*

To interpret the *Analects* by the axiomatic approach, we set the logical starting point of our research at the stage of quantitative changes of the contradiction, a stage where the contradictory changes remain within a relatively stable extent. We intend to illuminate the essential nature of the doctrine of the mean and the central role it plays in Confucian philosophies via an attempt to render the original meaning with meticulous references to the consensus of existing researches. Moreover, diagram trees are used to depict the framework of the axiomatic system of the *Analects*, The trunk symbolizes definitions, basic assumptions and axioms, the main branches signify propositions deduced and inferred

according to those basic assumptions and axioms, the twigs stand for corollaries derived from those propositions, and the

leaves represent explanations related to propositions and corollaries. [7]

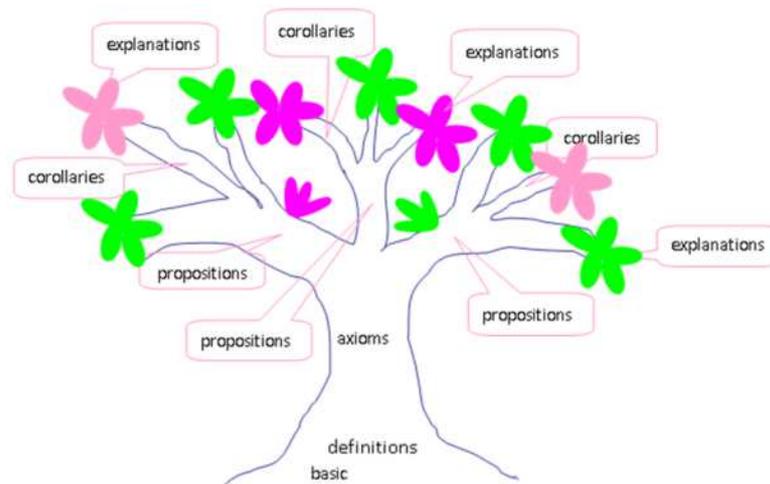


Figure 1. Diagram tree.

Then six assumptions, seventeen definitions of notions and seven axioms are given with corresponding explanations, which offer a logical substantiation for subsequent propositions and corollaries.

3.1. The Basic Assumptions

- i. Everything is a unity of opposites of contradiction $G = (G', G'')$. Contradiction develops according to the law of reciprocal transformation of quantitative into qualitative changes and the law of the negation of the negation.
- ii. (Degree of contradiction) The development of contradiction G is observed through the degree of contradiction: the unit of time is T (When the *Analects* is specifically discussed, T is assumed as 1 year). Suppose M is the observer of G , it offers a pair of real numbers (dG', dG'') between $[0, 1]$ in the development of G , where $dG'' = 1 - dG'$. We say that real number dG' is the "degree" of contradiction G , which relies on the state of G , time T and observer M , expressed as a function $dG' = dG'(t, G, M)$.
- iii. (Stable degree of contradiction) For contradiction G , if there is a time period $(t^*, t^* + NT)$ (N is a sufficiently large natural number), it has the following properties: any two times t', t'' in this period and any two observers M', M'' , except a very small number of people, are randomly selected; the value difference between the two degrees is very small, expressed as a function $|dG'(t', G, M') - dG'(t'', G, M'')|$, which is very small. We assert that contradiction G has a "stable degree" within this period of time; and the time period is "stable time" for contradiction G , and any state for contradiction G within this period is said to be "stable" or "mean" state.
- iv. Let H be the set for the adults of a certain community with labor division. Supposing the contradiction $C = (C', C'')$ be "the basic motive of one's social behavior" P in H , C' refers to the "natural" (or "one's instinct") of motive, and C'' refers to the "sociality" (or "interactivity").

- v. For a certain individual P , when the contradiction $C(t, P)$ for the above motive has its stable period and state (or the mean state), we say that the mean state of contradiction C for P 's motive is P 's state of "righteousness."

If, among H , except a very small number of people, the motive of contradiction $C(t, P)$ for all individuals P has a common stable period, and the difference of degree for the contradiction C that any two different individuals P', P'' correspond to is also very small (i.e., $|dC'(t, P') - dC'(t, P'')|$, the value is very small within any common stable period). Under this condition, the state of righteousness of any individual P among H is said to be in the "harmonious" state of the group H and is denoted as $C(H)$.

Through social division of labor, the two different groups, the governing A and the governed B are formed in a community H . If both A and B exist in a "harmonious" state, and the difference between $dC(A)$ and $dC(B)$ is small, the community H is said to be in a state in which the Way prevails, otherwise the Way doesn't exist. When the Way does not prevail, the society is in disorder and the society H is in a "Non-Way" state, and then the society is undergoing a qualitative change. In most other cases, the "Non-Way" state is in the unstable quantitative change.

- vi. The way of thinking of a social being is divided into two categories: rational thinking and irrational thinking. Subject to rationality, the forms of the former include induction, deduction, and analogy, etc.; controlled by emotion, the forms of the latter include intuition, insight and belief, amongst others. Rational thinking exercises control and regulation over irrational thinking, but the latter also drives rational thinking. The former can be turned into the latter through emotion and personalization, or vice versa through logic and generalization.

3.2. Definitions

- D1. (*xue, xi, si*) By "*xue*," literally meaning "learning, to

learn or to study,” we refer to the understanding and comprehension of the traditional value, development law of things and process of technical operation through various symbols, sounds and actions. By “*xi*,” literally meaning “to practice, to put into practice,” we refer to all kinds of practical activities in learning and interpersonal communications.” By “*si*,” literally meaning “thinking, reflection, deliberation,” we refer to the processing of what is gained through learning.

D2. (*li, yue*) By “*li*,” literally meaning “courtesy, etiquette, rites or rituals or ritual properties,” we refer to the code of conduct appropriate for the Way established on the basis of the interpersonal relationship in the community, concerning the relationship among men, ghosts and gods as well as between man and nature, including the external systems and rituals, and sentiments of prudence and civility. By “*yue*,” literally meaning “music,” we refer to a vehicle of expressing feelings in a natural and sincere way, which embodies the resonance of rhythm among people or between man and nature.

D3. (*ren*) By “*ren*,” literally meaning “benevolence, humanity or lenient authoritative conduct,” we refer to the state of mind and behaviour of a group of people who, starting with love based on consanguinity, can restrain themselves by learning, extend love to others and do everything according to rites, and therefore have developed the consideration (or forgiveness) of and respect for themselves, for others, for the society and the nature. This kind of feeling belonging exclusively to man is the very nature of “benevolent heart” by which man distinguishes himself from an animal. As a result, the enhancement of benevolence (*ren*) will promote the harmonious growth of man’s natural feelings for each other in their social interactions. He will regard his practice of benevolence (*ren*) as his mission and the objective law of the universe, which is called the “benevolent state” (*ren jing*).

D4. (*xiao*) By “*xiao*,” literally meaning “filial piety,” we refer to the fundamental practice of benevolence, whose main ideas are the parent-child love, gratitude and the family heritage based on consanguinity.

D5. (*zhong*) By “*zhong*,” literally meaning “loyalty, faithfulness, or doing one’s best,” we refer to honesty and the corresponding behaviour with which people do their best for others and the community.

D6. (*xin*) By “*xin*,” literally meaning “trustworthy, making one’s word good, trustworthiness in one’s words,” we refer to the attitude and behaviour with which one individual treats other people and the community honestly, does no wrong onto them and keeps his promise.

D7. (*yi*) By “*yi*,” literally meaning “righteousness or justice,” we refer to one’s sense of duty and responsibility for others and the community and the corresponding actions.

D8. (*xing qing*) By “*xing qing*,” literally meaning “disposition or temperament,” we refer to the psychological state which is formed after a long-term adjustment through rational thinking but dominated by irrational thinking.

D9. (*zhi*) By “*zhi*,” literally meaning “knowledge, realization, understanding, wisdom, and cognition; to know, to realize, to understand, to discern, to be aware of,” we refer to not only the ability of understanding and judgment of the

external information but also the internal feeling for traditional values.

D10. (*wen*) By “*wen*,” literally meaning “culture; to inscribe, to embellish,” we refer to the exercise, form and learning that reflect traditional values and cultivation.

D11. (*jiao*) By “*jiao*,” literally meaning “teaching,” and “education,” we refer to the practice to impart knowledge and to improve one’s behavior according to the gentlemanly standards.

D12. (*li, quan*) By “*li*,” literally meaning “establishment, or to be established, to take one’s stand,” we mean that if a man has full understanding of rites and observes them, he is said to be established or have taken his stand. By “*quan*,” literally meaning “flexible, flexibility,” we mean that if he has further grasped the essence of rites and can observe them and adjust his behaviour according to the situation, he is said to be flexible (*quan*).

D13. (*junzi*) By “*junzi*,” literally meaning “gentleman, man of honor, or superior man,” we refer to the person with a high status (a member of the governing class) acquired through the system of rites, whose opposite is the “small man” or “commoner.” Sometimes, *junzi* also refers to the man of sound virtues.

D14. (*tian ming*) By “*tian ming*,” literally meaning “decree of destiny or mandate of heaven,” we refer to the inevitable contingencies in one’s fate and his mission in the universe.

D15. (*dao*) By “*dao*,” literally meaning “the Way,” we refer to the state of good social order and innocence of the people as well as the relevant theories concerning the state.

D16. (*zheng*) By “*zheng*,” literally meaning “politics, government, governance, administration, rule or policy, etc.,” we refer to the activities and ideas by which the administrators regulate the power and interests to achieve and maintain the prevalence of the “Way” in the society.

D17. (*xing*) By “*xing*,” literally meaning “law, punishment,” we refer to the penalties inflicted by coercive means on those people who have violated the laws and decrees stipulated by the governing class.

3.3. Axioms

A1. Most people are not much different in their natural endowments. By making self-adjustment (self-cultivation) when faced with contradiction in their social behavior, they can approximate “righteousness” within a certain period of time.

A2. Self-adjustment to “righteousness” can bring pleasure. The closer to it, the greater role temperament plays.

A3. A man’s value lies in the fact that he can assume his social duty on his own initiative according to the principles of benevolence and rites. His value is judged by the society according to the doctrine that “those who are good like him and those who are bad dislike him” as well as by his “conscience” based on benevolence.

A4. To practice benevolence is a gentlemanly behavior. Benevolence is conferred first to his kinsmen, and then to his neighbors, and by extension to all the humans and even Mother Nature.

A5. A gentleman, as the inheritor of tradition, assumes responsibility to enhance self-cultivation for the promotion of the society so that it approximates the Way.

A6. Governance is carried out by the governing through their exemplary model of “virtues,” the regulation by “rites” and the coercive force of “laws.”

A7. All social members are equal in receiving education, and the main purpose of education is to cultivate men into gentlemen.

4. Some Examples of the Propositions and Their Proofs in the Axiomatic Interpretation of the *Analects*

In the research of the axiomatic interpretation of the *Analects*, we divide the *Analects* into the four chapters and deduce more than 120 propositions and relevant corollaries from the basic assumptions, definitions and axioms. Some examples of the propositions and their proofs are as follows.

4.1. On Virtue Cultivation

This chapter formulates 37 propositions on virtue cultivation from the *Analects* and gives proofs to them.

P1-1. The meanings of the “Way” and its realization depend on man’s efforts.

Quote from the *Analects*:

The Master said, “It is Man who is capable of broadening the Way. It is not the Way that is capable of broadening Man.” (Book 15) [8]

Proof---According to the basic assumption, “the prevalence of the Way” (youdao) is the outcome of man’s adjustment of the motives in his conduct. If he adjusts them and extends them to set both the governing and the governed in a harmonious state, then we call it a society where the Way prevails. Therefore, the Way is a consensus derived from man’s long-term social interaction and an intensive reflection of man’s needs to live together under the restrictions of environment. Man comes to learn what “the prevalence of the Way” means and facilitates its gradual realization. During the pursuit of “the prevalence of the Way,” many specific virtues emerge on the basis of “benevolence” and “rites.” Therefore, the meanings of the “Way” and its realization depend on man’s efforts.

P1-2. To practice benevolence is the goal of a gentleman’s life.

Quote from the *Analects*:

The Master said, “Never for a moment should the gentleman desert benevolence. He clings to benevolence whether in moments of haste or in times of hardship.” (Book 4) [9].

Proof--- According to A5, a gentleman’s responsibility is to promote the society close to “the prevalence of the Way” by improving his self-cultivation. Further, a man’s value lies in the fact that he can assume his social duty on his own initiative according to the principles of benevolence and rites (by A3). To a gentleman, therefore, the practice of benevolence is his goal of life.

4.2. On Governance

This chapter formulates 28 propositions on governance from the *Analects* and gives proofs to them.

P2-1. The relationship between “virtue” and “law” is “virtue precedes law.”

Quotes from the *Analects*: [10]

The Master said, “Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves.” (Book 2).

The Master said, “While the gentleman cherishes benign rule, the small man cherishes his native land. While the gentleman cherishes a respect for the law, the small man cherishes generous treatment.” (Book 4).

Ji Kangzi asked Confucius about governance, saying, “What would you think if, in order to move closer to those who possess the Way, I were to kill those who do not follow the Way?” Confucius answered, “In administering your governance, what need is there for you to kill? Just desire the good yourself and the common people will be good. By nature the gentleman is like wind and the small man like grass. Let the wind sweep over the grass and it is sure to bend.” (Book 12).

Proof---The implementation of governance mainly relies on the exemplary role of “virtue,” the normative role of “rites” and the mandatory role of “law” (by A6). According to A1, most people can achieve the state of “righteousness” by means of self-cultivation, but a few people still cannot do that or in some cases they cannot. Therefore, the exemplary role of “virtue” and the normative role of “rites” should precede the mandatory but indispensable role of “law” as an auxiliary means.

P2-2. It is the basic principle to appoint one official just by his merits.

Quotes from the *Analects*: [11]

Duke Ai asked, “What must I do before the common people will look up to me?” Confucius answered, “Raise the straight and set them over the crooked and the common people will look up to you. Raise the crooked and set them over the straight and the common people will not look up to you.” (Book 2).

Raise the good and instruct those who are backward and they will be filled with enthusiasm. (Book 2).

While he was steward to the Ji family, Zhonggong asked about governance. The Master said, “Set an example for your officials to follow; show leniency towards minor offenders; and promote men of talent.” (Book 13).

Proof---A6 states that governance is carried out by the governors through their exemplary role of “virtues,” the normative role of “rites” and the coercive force of “penalties.” And according to P2-5, the exemplary role of “virtue” and the normative role of “rites” are primary and the mandatory role of “penalty” is secondary. The moral examples serve to promote adherence to “filial piety,” “loyalty,” “tolerance,” “trustworthiness,” “righteousness” and so on, and understanding of the spiritual essence of “rites” and “music.”

So, the governors should appoint officials just by their merits.

4.3. On Learning

This chapter formulates 27 propositions on learning, teaching and education from the *Analects* and gives proofs to them.

P3-1. The ultimate goal of learning is to pursue the “Way” (*dao*).

Quote from the *Analects*: [12]

Zixia said, “Just as the various craftsmen stay in their workshops to perfect themselves in their craft, so the gentleman may improve himself in the Way through learning.” (Book 19).

The Master said, “He has not lived in vain who dies in the evening, having been told about the Way in the morning.” (Book 4).

The Master said, “If anyone can, while dressed in a worn-out gown padded with old silk floss, stand beside a man wearing fox or badger fur without feeling ashamed, it is, I suppose, You. Neither envious nor covetous, how can he be anything but good?” Thereafter constantly recited these verses. The Master commented, “The way summed up in these verses will hardly enable one to be good.” (Book 9).

Proof--- According to the basic assumptions 5 and A1, most people do not differ too much in their natural endowments. They can make self-adjustment (or self-cultivation) through learning when faced with contradiction of basic motives of social behavior, practice and thinking (rational and irrational), and within a certain period of time, approximate the state of “righteousness”(yi). Understanding traditional values, the gentleman can harmonize the relationship between the governing and the governed. And by adjusting their behaviors people can approximate the state of the Way. Therefore, the ultimate goal of learning is to pursue the “Way.”

P3-2. The gentleman learns for the nation’s affairs, sets high goals, but does not seek luxurious material life.

Quotes from the *Analects*: [13]

The Master said, “While the gentleman cherishes benign rule, the small man cherishes his native land. While the gentleman cherishes a respect for the law, the small man cherishes generous treatment.” (Book 4).

The Master said, “The gentleman seeks neither a full belly nor a comfortable home. He is quick in action but cautious in speech. He goes to men possessed of the Way to have himself put right. Such a man can be described as eager to learn.” (Book 1).

The Master said, “The gentleman devotes his mind to attaining the Way and not to securing food. Go and till the land and you will end up being hungry, as a matter of course; study, and you will end up with the salary of an official, as a matter of course. The gentleman worries about the Way, not about poverty.” (Book 15).

Proof--- According to A5, the gentleman is the inheritor of the tradition, whose duty is to enhance his self-cultivation so as to achieve the prevalence of the Way in the society. So the gentleman must set high goals, and concern the state affairs. And by P3-1, the ultimate goal of learning is to pursue the Way,

therefore, the gentleman restrains himself in line with the norms of the Way, and keeps contented with the Way even in poverty.

4.4. On Temperament Cultivation

This chapter formulates 27 propositions on the harmonious interaction between morality and temperament from the *Analects* and gives proofs to them.

P4-1. It is essential for a gentleman to properly restrain his desire for material comfort.

Quotes from the *Analects*: [14]

The Master said, “The gentleman seeks neither a full belly nor a comfortable home. He is quick in action but cautious in speech. He goes to men possessed of the Way to have himself put right. Such a man can be said to be eager to learn.” (Book 1).

The Master said, “He who seeks only coarse food to eat, water to drink and a bent arm for pillow, will without looking for it find happiness to boot. Any thought of accepting wealth and rank by means that I know to be wrong is as remote from me as the clouds that float above.” (Book 7).

The Duke of She asked Zilu about Confucius. Zilu did not answer. The Master said, “Why did you not say something to this effect: he is the sort of man who forgets to eat when he works himself into a frenzy over some problem, who is so full of joy that he forgets his worries and does not notice the onset of old age?” (Book 7).

Proof---According to A6, the gentleman is the ruler or governor, whose main administrative idea is “rule of virtue” acknowledged by the majority of people. For this purpose, the gentleman must show his care for the multitude. By D3, the enhancement of benevolence will promote the harmonious growth of man’s natural feelings for each other in their social interactions. Therefore, the gentleman must properly restrain his material enjoyment so as to maintain the same living standard with the majority.

P4-2. A gentleman has a strong fondness of “virtue.”

Quotes from the *Analects*: [15]

Zigong said, “Poor without being obsequious, wealthy without being arrogant. What do you think of this saying?” The Master said, “That will do, but better still ‘Poor yet delighting in the Way, wealthy yet observant of the rites.’” (Book 1).

The Master said, “I have never met a man who finds benevolence attractive or a man who finds un-benevolence repulsive. A man who finds benevolence attractive cannot be surpassed. A man who finds un-benevolence repulsive can, perhaps, be counted as benevolent, for he would not allow what is not benevolent to be inflicted on his person.” (Book 4).

When those above love the rites, none of the common people will dare be irreverent; when they love what is right, none of the common people will dare not to submit; when they love trustworthiness, none of the common people will dare not to show their true colors. (Book 13).

Proof---According to A5, a gentleman, as the inheritor of tradition, assumes responsibility to enhance self-cultivation for the promotion of the society so that it approximates the Way. And by A6, governance is carried out by the governing

through their exemplary model of “virtues,” the regulation by “rites” and the coercive force of “law,” so the gentleman has a strong desire for virtue. The more perfect the gentleman’s “virtue” cultivation is, the happier he feels. What brings happiness is what one is fond of. Therefore, the gentleman has a strong fondness of “virtue.”

5. Conclusion

The Analects is such a classic that we need to study and restudy by different methods, from different perspectives, in different fields and on different levels. Systematic and logical thinking as nurtured in scientific culture is just what Chinese culture lacks. Therefore, it is quite necessary for us to give an axiomatic interpretation of the Chinese classics. [16]

The purpose of this research is to try to understand and interpret the *Analects* in an axiomatic way, which is derived from Baruch Spinoza, the Dutch philosopher, who has made a successful analysis and interpretation of *Principles of Philosophy* and *Ethics* just by the axiomatic approach. It is proven that a systematic and logical thinking system can be created for the *Analects* in this way. It is also proven that the *Analects* is not only what Hegel described as a book with a “good, sophisticated and moral teaching,” but also a book that has consistent core ideas within a logical thinking system. More importantly, this approach can be used for a systematic understanding, analysis and interpretation of traditional Chinese culture so as to make up for the shortage in the methods of academic research. We hope to explore a path for the modern transformation of Confucianism, to promote the exchange of different civilizations in the world, so that people can understand Confucianism in an objective and rational way.

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