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REVIEW

Michael Hunter. *Confucius Beyond the Analects*. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Reviewed by
Edward Slingerland*

As the title suggests, Michael Hunter's *Confucius Beyond the Analects* aims to debunk the traditional view of the received *Lun yu* as the most authoritative source of early Confucian teachings associated with the historical figure of Confucius. Hunter makes the case that our received *Lun yu* was assembled in the Western Han, probably around the time of the accession of Emperor Wu in 141 B.C.E. He further demonstrates that patterns of Kongzi references in our received corpus, as well as textual parallelisms, suggests that there was no authoritative written source of early Confucian teachings that circulated in the pre-Han period. Pre-Han authors drew widely from a variety of written sources when invoking Kongzi, whereas texts dating to the latter part of Wu's reign tend to focus on our received *Lun yu*, suggesting the relatively sudden appearance on the scene of a newly canonical text. Most radically, he further argues that the material found in our received *Lun yu* was *composed* in the Western Han; the content and arrangement of this text reflects the particular needs and interests of the Western Han compilers, rather than being an expression of a Warring States (let alone early Warring States) tradition associated with Confucius and his disciples. "Wherever it came from, whenever it was compiled," Hunter argues,

> the *Lunyu* ultimately owes its special status not to generations of devoted *dizi* who recorded and transmitted Kongzi's teachings for posterity (as posited by the traditional view) but to the emperor, statesmen and scholars of the Western Han dynasty who first promoted the *Lunyu* over competing Kongzi texts and established it as an indispensable resource for the training of Han imperial princes (p. 165).

Therefore, the traditional view of the *Lun yu* is best seen as "an invented backstory for a text whose status by the late Western Han had become unassailable" (p. 165).

* Edward Slingerland 森舸瀾, University of British Columbia; email: edward.slingerland@ubc.ca.

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The first claim is neither novel nor controversial, although Hunter does a fine job of reviewing evidence of canonization of the *Lun yu* in the Western Han, its use in political legitimization, and its clear status as the source of Confucius's thought by the Eastern Han. His second point is also not unprecedented, but to my knowledge this book serves as the most comprehensive and careful argument for it to date in English-language scholarship.[1] Perhaps most interestingly, Hunter's work represents a surprisingly rare, and welcome, effort to apply digital humanities techniques to our study of the early Chinese corpus. As I have argued elsewhere, although fully searchable digital editions of the early Chinese corpus have been available for some time now, scholars in our field have rarely treated them as anything other than merely faster, more convenient versions of the bulky print concordances under which our office shelves used to groan.[2] Hunter leverages the affordance provided by digital formats to perform some basic keyword-counting analyses and quick and comprehensive comparisons of textual parallels in our received corpus, uncovering a much broader "Kongzi literature" than we typically acknowledge.

He does a good job of using these techniques to bolster the argument that, not only was there nothing like our received *Lun yu* circulating in pre-Han China, but there was probably no authoritative source for the Kongzi movement at all. His ability to demonstrate, for instance, that, in the pre-Han period, phrases contrasting the importance of "transmitting" vs. "innovating"—typically and famously associated with *Lun yu* 7.1—was a generic saying not yet firmly owned by Kongzi (p. 30) is an excellent demonstration of the usefulness of working with digital corpora. I have been particularly frustrated by the fact that, despite the digital resources at our disposal, sinologists continue to make explicitly or implicitly quantitative claims ("most of," "the vast majority," "it is very rare to see") without ever actually providing actual quantities. To Hunter's credit, he backs all of his quantitative claims with numbers, and this allows him to effectively make his case about the absence of an authoritative, written source of early Confucian teachings.[3]

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1. Mark Csikszentmihalyi, "Confucius and the Analects in the Han," in *Confucius and the "Analects": New Essays*, ed. Bryan Van Norden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 134–62.

2. Edward Slingerland, *Body and Mind in Early China: Beyond Orientalism and the Myth of Holism* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming); Edward Slingerland, Ryan Nichols, Kristoffer Nielbo, Carson Logan, "The Distant Reading of Religious Texts: A 'Big Data' Approach to Mind-Body Concepts in Early China," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 85.4 (2017), 985–1016.

3. One minor quibble is that the captioning of the figures is hit or miss. For instance, Figure 1 on p. 13 consists of circles representing texts that serve as sources of Kongzi

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Overall, Hunter does a convincing job of showing that, in the absence of an authoritative *written* record of the teachings of Confucius in the pre-Han period, "Kongzi" was relatively free to function "as a kind of genre or discursive space, a set of formal and thematic parameters within which early authors articulated their own ideas and pursued their own agendas" (p. 18), as well as a "universal commentator" (p. 54) and general authority across a broad range of early Chinese texts. His attempt to undermine the connection between Confucius and the state of Lu is, despite a long argument and a plethora of diagrams (pp. 63–76), ultimately unconvincing, but does bolster the argument for Confucius as a uniquely well-traveled sage with universalist aspirations.[4] He is certainly right that, across a wide range of early Chinese texts, figures like "Kongzi" and "Laozi" were capable of functioning as "two different registers of intellectual discourse" rather than "flesh-and-blood masters" (p. 102), with Kongzi typically invoked to defend the study of traditional cultural forms (p. 137).

Hunter's comprehensive survey of textual parallels in early texts presents some of the clearest evidence to date for a Western Han origin of our received *Lun yu*: the majority of Kongzi quotations from the late Western Han or after parallel the received *Lun yu*, and often cite the *Lun yu* itself. When it comes to texts that likely pre-date the *Shi ji*, however, the *Lun yu* itself is almost never mentioned, and the vast majority of their Confucius quotations do not parallel the language of the received text (pp. 86–87). This strongly suggests that "the decades spanning the completion of the *Huainanzi* in ca. 139 BCE and the compilation of the *Shiji* toward the end of Emperor Wu's reign marked a turning point in

material. The significance of their relative size remains a complete mystery until we are told on p. 45 that "the area of each circle is proportional to the total number of characters a text devoted to quoting, representing, and/or discussing Kongzi"—a key fact that belongs in the original figure caption. We are also never told the meaning of the dashed circles alongside the main figure, representing the *Laozi*, *Shijing*, *Shujing* and *New Testament Gospels*. Presumably the size of these circles represents total number of characters in these texts, to give us a comparative sense of the size of the broader Kongzi literature, but their existence is never actually explained.

4. To give just a couple examples, Hunter notes that, in a *Xunzi* anecdote, Confucius refuses to answer a disciple's question about ritual practice in Lu until it is rephrased as a question about ritual in general, which he sees as evidence of Confucius's cosmopolitan, origin-less nature (p. 68). This begs the question of why the disciple thought it sensible to focus on Lu in the first place. Similarly, when reporting Confucius's comment on a temple fire in Lu, Hunter sees the fact that the *Zuozhuan* authors go out of their way to mention that Confucius was in Chen at the time as evidence of "a reluctance to portray Kongzi unequivocally as a man of Lu" (p. 73). A simpler and more reasonable explanation is that these authors knew that readers would otherwise *assume* that Confucius was in Lu at the time, which in turn supports the traditional link between Lu and Kongzi.

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the influence of the *Lunyu*, a shift corresponding with the first mentions of a *Lunyu* text" (p. 87). Another important pattern Hunter uncovers is a contrast with Laozi attributions, which in early texts "overlap far more consistently with the text of the received *Laozi* than Kongzi attributions overlap with the *Lunyu*" (p. 93), which makes it likely that something like our received *Daodejing* took textual form, and achieved wide circulation, well before our received *Lun yu*.

In Chapter Four ("Searching for a Pre-Han *Analects*"), Hunter carefully walks the reader through pre-Han texts, beginning with the *Huainanzi*, which was presented to Emperor Wu in ca. 139 B.C.E. There he finds some *Lun yu* parallels, but also non-*Lun yu* Kongzi sayings that are also presented as authoritative. "Signs of the *Lunyu*'s influence," he then goes on to demonstrate, "become even fainter as we move further back in time" (p. 212). *Lun yu* parallels are entirely missing from early Han archeological texts and very scarce in even such encyclopedic sources such as the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. Significantly, *Lun yu* parallels make up only about 10 percent of Kongzi references in the looted Warring States Shanghai Museum corpus, "a ratio consistent with other pre-Han texts" (p. 217). Noting that neither the *Mencius* nor the *Xunzi* display any definitive, textually fixed record of Kongzi's teachings, Hunter concludes that "pre-Han authors were ignorant of, or indifferent to the *Lunyu*'s claim on this material" (p. 230). In a "Digression" chapter near the end of the book, he argues that one possible source for our received text is the court of Liu De (r. 155–130/129), who might have commissioned it as a gift for the accession of Emperor Wu. While rather speculative (and, again, not an entirely novel theory), this is not completely implausible.

With regard to a fair number of his arguments, Hunter is traversing already well-trodden ground, although—to his credit—this is so apparent only because of his careful and broad scholarship and acknowledgement of previous work on the topic. Some minor stylistic decisions distract from the flow of the book. Hunter's decision to leave *dizi* untranslated, for instance, is very inconsistently applied (he finds himself frequently referring to "students" or "followers" in both the discussion and rendering of book titles), and is reminiscent of the kind of needlessly idiosyncratic and pseudo-rigorous practices of E. Bruce and A. Taeko Brooks, as in their substitution of a preceding 0 for "B.C." or "B.C.E."[5] Such affectations are pseudo-rigorous in that they gain us nothing in terms of historical accuracy or analytic force: whether we use the

5. E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Sayings of Confucius and His Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Edward Slingerland, "Review: Why Philosophy Is Not 'Extra' in Understanding the *Analects*," *Philosophy East and West* 50.1 (2000), 137–41.

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numeral 0 or the letters B.C.E., we are still grounding our dating in the supposed birthday of Christ. Similarly, both "student" and "follower" are perfectly defensible renderings of *dizi* (as is "disciple," for that matter, Henry Rosemont Jr.'s protestations notwithstanding [p. 3, note 5]). At the same time, such decisions reduce intelligibility and project a false sense of enhanced fidelity or scholarly integrity.

The main weakness of the book, however, is Hunter's failure to genuinely engage with what is, in my view, the most compelling argument for continuing to treat our received *Lun yu* as a reasonably accurate record of early Warring States teachings associated with the disciples of Confucius: the complete absence of awareness of philosophical and religious terminology and conceptions that appear to have become standard by the late Warring States.[6] As we now know from recently discovered archaeological and looted texts, by 300 B.C.E. or so philosophical and religious debate takes place against the background of certain shared concepts, assumptions and debates, including:

- the idea that biological species are born with innate natures (*xing* 性), endowed by Heaven (*tian* 天), that generate species-specific emotional-affective reactions (*qing* 情) to material things (*wu* 物) in the world;
- debates about how the nature of human beings is related to morality (*ren* 仁, *yi* 義) or culture (*wen* 文);
- a model of the *xin* 心 as a locus of rationality, reflection, decision-making, and category-formation only loosely associated with a specific part of the physical body;

6. Hunter mentions in passing my review of Brooks and Brooks ("Why Philosophy Is Not 'Extra'"), where I first advanced this argument against Brooks and Brooks' accretion model of the *Lun yu*, as well as Paul R. Goldin's similar arguments in a long-delayed, but apparently forthcoming, volume: Paul Goldin, "Confucius and His Disciples in the *Analects*: The Basis for the Traditional View," in *Confucius and the Analects Revisited: New Perspectives on Dating, Composition, and Authorship*, ed. Michael Hunter and Martin Kern (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). He does not engage our arguments other than to dismiss them in a sparse footnote near the end of the book with the cryptic observation that using philosophical concepts to date the *Lun yu* is an example of falling "into the trap of applying implicitly *Lunyu*-centric models to the assessment of *Lunyu* centrism itself" (p. 315, cf. note 1). It is hard to know what is meant by this claim as it stands. Based on personal communication, I assume that the point is that the perceived absence in the *Lun yu* of what we think of as "late" Warring States ideas and terminology is itself dependent on a traditional chronology that assigns certain texts to the "late" period. As I will argue below, however, an argument based on presence or absence of philosophical ideas or terms need not assume the traditional chronology, or even that our received early Chinese corpus was assembled any time before the Western Han. It establishes a pattern that needs to be explained somehow, with a chronological explanation merely being the most natural and least convoluted option.

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- a technical approach to language or "names" (*ming* 名) in which they are seen as Aristotelian-style categories or species labels corresponding to natural categories (*lei* 類) or things (*wu* 物, *shi* 實) in the world; "reference" has its own technical term (*zhi* 指), and the appropriateness of name application is determined by "discrimination" or "disputation" (*bian* 辨/辯);
- the idea of *qi* 氣 as a physiological-mystical force animating all living things, and possessing some sort of the connection to Heaven or the Way;
- an embodied, physiological conception of the human being, including discussions of the physical body (*shen* 身, *ti* 體, *xing* 形), the individual organs (especially the sense organs) and body parts, and *qi*;
- a tendency to discuss self-cultivation in physiological terms, as well as employing physiological observations—such as of the countenance (*se* 色) or pupils of the eye—to aid in character judgment;
- (as pointed out by Paul R. Goldin[7]) a rich metaphysical model, including a sense of the Way (*dao* 道) as a cosmic principle, the interplay of cosmic principles such as yin and yang, and "spirit" (*shen* 神) as an important cosmological force also potentially present in individuals.

There are a small number of texts in our received corpus that betray no awareness of this intellectual milieu (let's refer to it as "Environment X"), even when they make arguments that could be much more powerfully or clearly made by employing these concepts. Let's call them Group A: notably, the *Lun yu*, the "synoptic" chapters of the *Mozi*, and (arguably)[8] the *Daodejing*. All of our other nominally pre-Han texts, including the archaeological and looted texts we know to be late Warring States, are clearly products of Environment X. Let's call them Group B: the *Mengzi*, *Xunzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Lüshi Chunqiu*, etc. Significantly, Group B texts refer to Group A texts (or at least figures associated with Group A texts), but never vice versa.

The standard explanation for this pattern among those of us who teach early Chinese thought is that the various materials in Group A texts, if not the textual arrangements themselves, date from the early Warring States, before these concepts became widespread. Hunter does not clearly lay out an alternative hypothesis,[9] but we can attribute one to him that is

7. Goldin, "Confucius and His Disciples in the *Analects*."

8. The received text of the *Daodejing* does evince some awareness of the Environment X conceptual world.

9. His one oblique attempt to present a very partial response is a passing comment that our received *Lun yu* probably omits any reference to raging debates about human nature because the topic was "too controversial" (p. 308) for the vanilla Confucius the

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consistent with his other expressed views. This would have to hold that, although all of these texts were assembled in the Western Han by scholars steeped in Environment X, these editors deliberately selected or composed material for the Group A texts that studiously avoided any awareness of Environment X, in order to give these texts the appearance of greater antiquity. This would, however, be to attribute to Western Han textual scholars a conception of anachronism that is, as Goldin has noted, itself wildly anachronistic.[10] While it is not too much of a stretch to imagine these Western Han forgers avoiding obvious blunders, like references to later historical figures or events, there is no evidence that any pre-modern Chinese thinker felt that they were being anachronistic, or altering earlier theories, by putting into the mouths of their cultural heroes (be they Kongzi, Laozi or Mozi) plausible philosophical theories—"plausible" being unconsciously determined by exposure to Environment X.

The absence of Environment X influence in our received *Lun yu* is particularly hard to square with Hunter's claim that his postulated Western Han text was composed with "accessing character" as a central theme (pp. 253–256), a response to the challenges of recruiting candidates for positions in the imperial court. Hunter goes so far as to suggest that the *lun* of the *Lun yu* might be read "in the sense of 'assessing' individuals for office, in which case we might read its title as *Sayings on Assessing [Others]* (**lun ren zhi yu* 論人之語)" (p. 256). As texts such as the Guodian *Wuxing* demonstrate, physiology-based character assessment was a concept available to late Warring States Confucians and is widely employed in the received *Mengzi* and *Xunzi*.[11] If character assessment were indeed the driving force behind compilation of the Western Han *Lun yu*, why are these extremely valuable and practical concepts—seemingly custom-made for the challenge of choosing qualified imperial functionaries—absent from the text?

This issue of conceptual absence or presence is where more sophisticated digital humanities techniques might have proved useful for Hunter's analysis. While word counts and passage collations are helpful, I have also argued that realizing the full benefits of "distant reading" involves going beyond doing the same things our intellectual ancestors did, or could have done, only faster.[12] It requires us to see that the unique

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compilers were aiming for. This is unconvincing, especially considering the decidedly non-vanilla nature of our received *Lun yu*'s Confucius.

10. Goldin, "Confucius and His Disciples in the *Analects*."

11. Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

12. Slingerland, *Body and Mind in Early China*; Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London: Verso, 2013).

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affordances provided by digital texts allows us to "read" them in new ways. Collocation analysis allows us to look at semantically significant co-occurrences of key terms across the corpus as a whole or in groups of texts. Topic modeling picks out terms that tend to cluster together, identifying "topics" that may reflect stylistic quirks, unusual grammar usage, or clearly-demarcated concepts.[13] Among the other advantages of such techniques, they allow us to get at conceptual content on a massive scale in way that simple passage counts or documentation of textual parallels cannot. For instance, Nichols and colleagues used topic modeling to demonstrate stronger conceptual affinities between the *Lun yu* and the *Xunzi* than the *Mengzi* with either text, affirming existing theories that, conceptually, the *Mengzi* is something of an outlier in the early Confucian corpus.[14] In an earlier, methodologically more basic study, team-based qualitative coding was used to show, among other things, that as we move from (traditionally dated) pre-Qin texts to (traditionally dated) late Warring States or early Han texts, the semantic range of *xin* 心 appears to shift from "heart" (a vague, generic, bodily locus of emotions and cognition) to "mind" (a specialized locus of higher cognition, only loosely associated with the body).[15] There are perhaps other ways to explain this pattern than the traditional chronological schema; it would be helpful for Hunter's case to hear what they might be.

How, then, are we to understand the place of our received *Lun yu* in our account of early Chinese thought? Hunter argues that the shorter, fragmentary versions of widely cited anecdotes in the received *Analects* have to be seen as later "extracts" from fuller accounts, such as those we find in *Lüshi Chunqiu* or *Xunzi* (e.g. pp. 256–257, 265, 275–280). His rationale for this claim is that the shorter versions often make no sense without the context provided by the longer versions; therefore, they must have been excerpted by later editors who could assume that their readers were familiar with the "original" written versions. A much more plausible source of the otherwise missing context is, in my view, a tradition of oral teaching, which filled in the context and explained the

13. See Slingerland, *Body and Mind in Early China*: Ch. 4 for an introduction; Ryan Nichols, Edward Slingerland, Kristoffer Nielbo, Uffe Bergeton, Carson Logan, Scott Kleinman, "Modeling the Contested Relationship between *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Xunzi*: Preliminary Evidence from a Machine-Learning Approach," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77.1 (2018),19–57, doi: 10.1017/S0021911817000973; and Slingerland et al., "The Distant Reading of Religious Texts" for some applications to pre-modern Chinese materials.

14. Nichols et al., "Modeling the Contested Relationship between *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Xunzi*."

15. Edward Slingerland and Maciej Chudek, "The Prevalence of Mind-Body Dualism in Early China," *Cognitive Science* 35 (2011), 997–1007.

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significance of Confucius' otherwise cryptic comments. None of this was written down in extended narrative form until the late Warring States and Western Han turn to a more exclusive reliance on written texts. This is entirely in keeping with early characterizations of the "Confucian" (*ru* 儒) school, such as we find in the *Hanfeizi*, which, as Hunter notes, describe "a milieu in which people, not texts, are the primary keepers of a teacher's memory" (p. 14). It was only with the advent of hyper-literacy that it becomes urgent to write down the original sources and then supplement them with written commentary—stand-ins for the oral context. I thus agree with Goldin's suggestion that "the *Analects* were recorded in order to prevent Confucius's teachings from disappearing at a time when thoroughgoing social and political changes threatened old-fashioned methods of transmission, such as oral transmission from master to disciple."[16]

The relevant "threat" that prompted this desire to record early teachings in writing is the shift to an intellectual milieu where people work alone in libraries or personal studies reading texts instead of gathering in traditional master–disciple groups. An additional threat is the late Warring States and early Han appearance of fleshed-out, literary-style versions of anecdotes merely alluded to in early Warring States oral Kongzi traditions that seek to portray Confucius in a bad light or make points that the Western Han compilers of this early Warring States material feel are unwarranted or incorrect. These editors were also almost certainly working with existing smaller textual units that were already fixed in form and content: the editorial disorder of our received *Lun yu* is difficult to reconcile with the idea of single redaction of isolated passages by a single editor or group of editors in the Western Han. While Hunter rightly dismisses accretion models as the only explanation for internal inconsistency in the received *Lun yu* (e.g. 238–239), he also notes that existing evidence, especially such finds as the Dingzhou manuscript, points to "variable arrangement … but relatively stable content" (p. 239) of different *Lun yu* versions or proto-*Lun yu* texts circulating in the pre-Han period. The Western Han creators of our received *Lun yu* were therefore likely working with a *fait accompli* when it comes to the material put together in at least Books 1–10, and maybe up to 15 (As many observers have noted, Books 16–20 have many characteristics, stylistic and conceptual, that indicate a later composition.)

As Hunter acknowledges, recently discovered Warring States texts such as the Shanghai Museum's *Ziyi*, *Zhong Gong*, and *Junzi Wenli* appear to be "sources for relevant *Lunyu* entries," and it is possible that

16. Goldin, "Confucius and His Disciples in the *Analects*."

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"the author of the Shanghai Museum materials and the compilers of the *Lunyu* drew from a common repertoire of Kongzi texts and *traditions*" (p. 222; emphasis added). The common traditions from which they drew probably included oral ones. "Kongzi" or "Kong Qiu" was certainly free to function as a stock figure, a "convenient shorthand" (p. 159) for traditional authority or mouthpiece for other thinker's views, as we see, for instance, in the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. Even there, however, we feel the constraints of specific and deeply entrenched views of the character of Kongzi's teachings and even the personalities of the individual disciples as they are portrayed in the received *Lun yu*. For instance, only an author familiar with the identification of Zigong with ritual uptightness, and his dismissal by Confucius as a "vessel," would choose him as the figure to be humiliated by the Daoist masters at the funeral of their friend in Chapter Six.[17]

Hunter's central argument is that we should no longer read the received *Lun yu* as "the most authoritative Kongzi text from the Warring States era and, thus, as a foundational work of pre-imperial Chinese thought" (p. 11). As he himself acknowledges (p. 314), however, none of the evidence that he presents rules out the possibility—I would say, the likelihood—that our received *Lun yu* does consist mostly of early Warring States material, assembled in the Western Han but reflecting an early Warring States mentality, that present a more-or-less coherent philosophical view that is distinct from that found in, say, the *Mengzi* or the *Xunzi*.[18] We might therefore be completely justified in continuing to see the *Lun yu* as the most accurate record of the historical Kongzi's teachings, and therefore as a natural starting point for any account of pre-imperial Chinese thought.

The most important and lasting contribution of Hunter's book is as a lucid and clearly argued contribution to the "revisionist" movement aimed at breaking the tyranny of the received corpus on the manner in which we engage with early Chinese thought. Despite advances in our technical and historical knowledge, we tend to remain tightly bound by editorial decisions made in the Western Han. When interested in getting at "the" thought of Confucius, we take as a package everything in our

17. Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 86.

18. Several of the supposedly smoking guns that Hunter sees as evidence of the *Lunyu*'s suspiciously mysterious origins are not, in fact, terribly hot. These include the compilers of the text's failure to explain "where their text came from and how it should be read" (4), or the fact that the Han imperial librarian Liu Xiang (79–8 B.C.E.), in claiming that the *Analects* consists of teachings recorded by Confucius's disciples, does not explicitly explain *how* he knows this (5). There is nothing unusual about either of these facts.

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received *Lun yu*, including the weird snippets in Book 20 and obviously later material in Books 16–20. This is still a reasonable approach if we are interested in how this specific redaction of the text has been received and interpreted over the millennia.[19] In our philosophical work, however, most scholars (especially those who identify more as Chinese philosophy specialists, as opposed to sinologists, in which camp I would count myself) have remained handcuffed, often unconsciously, by this particular, idiosyncratic and historically indefensible constellation of passages when trying to reconstruct the thought-world of early Warring States "Confucian" thought, for lack of a better term. (And neither *Ru* nor "erudite" is a better term.) Where Hunter excels is in making the case for moving beyond this mindset. As he rightly observes, taking seriously the notion that our received *Lun yu* was assembled in the Western Han forces us to question the coherence of our notions of "Warring States philosophy" or "pre-Qin thought" as opposed to imperial thought, and particularly our sometimes explicit, but often implicit, notion of "the Warring States as a 'Golden Age' in contrast to the 'philosophical dark age' of the Han" (p. 318).

Hunter's convincing demonstration that before Emperor Wu's reign "no source of Kongzi material was felt to be uniquely trustworthy or authoritative" (p. 314) has important implications for how we think about and teach early Chinese thought. The fact that thinkers such as Mengzi and Xunzi were probably working with a much broader and diverse Kongzi literature than is reflected in our received *Lun yu* should alter our sense of the Kongzi they thought they were defending. More attention should be paid to non-*Lun yu* sources of Confucius material, which tend to be ignored in the standard *Analects-Daodejing-Mozi-Mengzi-Zhuangzi-Xunzi-Hanfeizi* narrative that dominates the teaching of the history of early Chinese thought (including my own). Even if our received *Lun yu* does consist mostly of genuinely early Warring States material, before the conceptual innovations evident in the *Mengzi*, *Xunzi* and Guodian and Shanghai Museum texts, we need to be aware of the possibility that the selection and arrangement of this material was shaped by Western Han concerns. Even if it fails to support its most radical conclusions, this book performs a valuable service to the field in undermining the "inevitability" (p. 1) of beginning our treatment of early Chinese thought with the received *Lun yu* and forcing us to realize that the history of early Chinese thought is more messily tangled than we typically acknowledge.

19. See Edward Slingerland, *Confucius: Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2003).

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