Title

Moral Perfection as the Counterfeit of Virtue

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4675507c

Journal

Dao, 22(1)

ISSN

1540-3009

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Publication Date

2023-03-01

DOI

10.1007/s11712-022-09866-4

Copyright Information

Peer reviewed

Confucian Ethics and Confederate Memorials

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ABSTRACT: As self-conscious curators and critics of moral history, the early Confucians are relevant to the contemporary debate over the fate of memorials dedicated to morally flawed individuals. They provide us with a pragmatic justification that is distinct from those utilized in the current debate, and in many respects superior to the alternatives. In addition to supplying this curative philosophic resource, the early Confucian practices of ancestral memorialization suggest preventative measures we might adopt to minimize the chances of establishing divisive and oppressive memorials in the future.

KEYWORDS: Confucian ethics, Confederate memorials, Iconoclasm

1. INTRODUCTION

When a memorial commemorates a person, rather than an historical event or a discrete accomplishment or action, it most commonly serves to honor, revere, or praise that person.[1] For one reason or another—whether a shift in our moral culture, the discovery of new biographical details, attention to marginalized views and experiences, or some other ground—a number of historical persons to whom past generations dedicated memorials of the commending variety are now seen to be racists, colonialists, war criminals, or otherwise deeply flawed persons. That the faults of persons can sully the preservation of their memorials goes some way towards explaining the contemporary debate over the fate of the memorials dedicated to Christopher Columbus, the enslaving "founding fathers" of the United States, "Bomber" Harris and the British airmen involved in the bombing of Dresden, the convicted war criminals deified at the Yasukuni Shrine, the politicians who supported South African apartheid, and so on.

There is, in particular, a growing body of philosophical literature concerning the proper response to the statues and symbols memorializing Confederate agents. In this literature arguments are given in support of one of three basic positions: preservation, removal, or modification.[2] Those who argue for preservation would have most Confederate statues and symbols preserved as they exist, without any modifications.[3] Removalists would have Confederate statues and symbols erased from the public landscape.[4] The third position—modification—admits of two basic varieties. The first type of modificationist, whom we might describe as "contextualists," propose a range of options, from the "supplemental contextualism" of adding placards or counterbalancing memorials, to the "relocation contextualism" of moving these memorials to gravesites, museums, or newly established statue gardens.[5] The second type of modificationists advocate for a more aggressive approach: "de-pedestalling."[6] If memorials normally serve to praise the subjects they memorialize, then de-pedestalling—whether performed by states, groups, or individuals—is a social act that attempts to achieve the opposite

outcome. Common examples of de-pedestalling include verbal denouncement of the memorialized person, and the partial destruction or vandalism of the physical memorial.[7]

While it might surprise those who mistake them for authoritarian traditionalists, the early Confucians can be quite helpful in our attempt to think through this issue. They were, after all, self-conscious curators of moral history and iconic persons, and were concerned with many of the normative and social functions performed by memorials. It is true that several of the objections to the iconoclasm of Confederate memorials may be adequately dispelled without any recourse to Confucian philosophy, and that different arguments can be given to support the de-pedestalling position a Confucian would likely endorse.[8] Yet there are a number of unique advantages to adopting a Confucian response to these objections along with a Confucian approach to iconoclasm in general, if only because the early Confucians did not attempt to justify iconoclasm independent of the effects of its practice. Were we to adopt a similar approach we would not only avoid many of the pitfalls associated with the alternative justifications of iconoclasm, we might also stand a better chance of repairing our communities—a goal that many in the contemporary literature regard as the proper criterion for an adequate position.[9]

2. THE JUSTIFICATION OF ICONOCLASM

When attempting to justify their respective stance on Confederate memorials—regardless of whether their position is to preserve, remove, or modify—scholars and other secondary stakeholders who are party to the contemporary debate offer one of three accounts of the necessary and sufficient conditions for warranted iconoclasm.[10] One such account is well illustrated by Eric Lamar, a licensed DC city guide. In an opinion piece published in the *Washington Post*, Lamar recounts the following scene:

> I was guiding a group at Arlington Cemetery not so long ago when, during our conversation about the history of the place, I referred to the infamous occupant of the house on the hill as Robert E. Lee, Confederate general and traitor. A member of the group said that he was not a traitor, which led me to gently suggest that he was not only a traitor, but he also was the very textbook definition of one. To wit: a person who betrays a friend, country, principle, etc.[11]

He continues:

> Lee resigned from the Army to take up arms against his country during the Civil War in an act both traitorous and disgraceful. In doing so, he became directly responsible for the deaths of more than 700,000 combatants and civilians. At war's end, Lee knew he was a traitor. He applied for a pardon and amnesty and took the Oath of Amnesty in October 1865.[12]

While apparently indifferent to the question of whether Confederate memorials ought to be preserved or removed, Lamar is still in favor of iconoclasm:

> Statues? Leave'em up or take'em down, but always speak the truth. I don't need a statue of Lee to point out his disgraceful conduct, but if one is available, I'll certainly use it.

The iconoclasm he is proposing is modificationist in nature, and his defense centers on the demerit of the person memorialized. This merit-based justification regards wrongdoing on the part of the memorialized to be sufficient to warrant iconoclasm.

To be clear, a merit-based justification is not used only by iconoclasts, whether of the removal or modification stripe. George Schedler uses the same line of reasoning to defend the preservation of a good number of Confederate memorials.[13] Assuming, rather dubiously, that it is not entirely clear whether the agents of the Confederacy were racist, he reasons that allowing public perception alone to decide the matter is to necessarily and erroneously assume that the public is infallible in the determination of historical facts relevant to an historical icon's demerit. Schedler is at least right to point out that a merit-based justification will be retrospective in focus and ought to be interested in historical evidence relevant to our normative assessment of historical figures.

A second type of justification of iconoclasm is harm-based. It takes the social consequences of a memorial, divorced from the moral worth of the person memorialized, as sufficient to warrant iconoclasm. Dan Demetrious and Ajume Wingo, for example, provide a harm-based justification for their modificationist position.[14] The mark of an adequate response to controversial memorials is, they suggest, that it does something to steady "an increasingly fragile democracy."[15] The demerit of memorialized person is, they reason, irrelevant to achieving this outcome since no appeal to rational principles and facts—including, it would seem, those relevant to the determination of an historical figure's demerit—can "mollify enough disgruntled citizens to matter."[16] The "quotient of 'genuine' racist significance of a monument matters less," they conclude, "than the offense it causes our fellow citizens."[17] As "offense" is not grounded in the memorialized person's demerit, they are employing a justification that is not even partially merit-based.[18]

Finally, there is a third possible type of justification—one that considers both demerit and harm, and regards only their combination as sufficient to warrant iconoclasm.[19] This hybrid justification is aptly illustrated by Richmond Mayor Levar Stoney.[20] Interviewed shortly after the violent protests in Charlottesville over the proposed removal of that city's Lee monument, he wonders if it might be time to consider removing the Confederate memorials that line the streets of his city. He imagines that if he could ask his late grandmother, she would find them offensive and deserving of removal. What sets Mayor Stoney's appeal to offense apart from the offense utilized by Demetriou and Wingo is that, in the case of the Mayor's grandmother, she experienced the full force of the Jim Crow south and, no doubt, witnessed the erection of several of these memorials. Her offense can thus be cashed out in terms of the demerit of the persons memorialized as well as their memorializers. Still, Mayor Stoney regards demerit insufficient to warrant the removal of these monuments—there are also, he says, the social costs of iconoclasm to consider. "The vestiges of Jim Crow live with us every single day … they're still here."[21] And they are not, he says, limited to statues. They also live on in the disparities in public education and housing, as well as attempts at voter suppression. And the funds it would take to remove these memorials would be better spent addressing the *other* vestiges: "I've always said that when it comes to the taxpayer dollar, it will go to our children and the disenfranchised before it goes to removing monuments."[22] Mayor Stoney's reasoning is thus hybrid in nature: he considers both demerit and harm, and regards only the combination of the two as sufficient to warrant iconoclasm.[23]

This hybrid justification reveals the stark nature of the purely merit-based and purely harm-based criterion for warranted iconoclasm—that the merit-based criterion risks ignoring the

social harms of memorials, just as the harm-based criteria risks ignoring serious wrongdoing on the part of the memorialized. Helen Frowe, for example, begins with a merit-based approach but quickly owns that to focus solely on a question of demerit could lead to dangerous social outcomes, and so tempers her approach. The duty of the state to remove memorials dedicated to wrongdoers is, she says, a defeasible duty—one that is defeated if it is likely to "spark a violent riot that would risk unjust harm to lots of people."[24] As for the potential problems with endorsing a harm-based justification, we can start by pointing out that merit-based considerations explain the difference between being offended with cause and without. Thus, if harm is alone sufficient to justify iconoclasm, all varieties of perceived harm caused by these memorials will be rendered morally indistinguishable—regardless of whether it is the serious harms of bigotry and groundless disrespect, or simply a feeling of offense without any clear moral basis. The deciding factor may be nothing more than a subjective response or an ungrounded public reaction. Not only is this to decide the question of the fate of memorials in an irrational and arbitrary fashion, it is also likely to produce unjust and disproportionate critiques of memorialized persons. To regard mere offense as sufficient harm to justify iconoclasm—when taking offense may be the consequences of an overly sensitive disposition or even a person's bigotry—could also condition the ills of "total iconoclasm" (that is, the removal of all public memorials) and, by extension, a significant reduction in the freedom of expression, at least when such expression occurs in the form of a memorial.[25] The various ills linked to merit-based and harm-based justifications would seem to recommend adopting a hybrid justification except for the fact that with its bias in favor of preserving memorials that cause social harm or that memorialize persons with significant moral faults, just so long as both problems cannot be attributed to the same memorial, it comes to possess the combined pitfalls of the alternative approaches.

Despite the differences between these three theories of warranted iconoclasm—including the pitfalls, or combination of pitfalls, unique to each of them—they all assume something that engenders an additional set of problems. Every one of these justifications is committed to a conceptual and normative distinction between harms and demerits, such that questions of demerit can be answered without raising questions of harm, and vice versa. The harm-based justification might permit an undeserved iconoclastic action or utterance on the basis of its results, and the merit-based justification might allow iconoclastic actions or utterances even though they prove to be socially destructive; in neither case are the matters of merit and harms morally linked. As for the hybrid justification, by rejecting the iconoclasm of memorials that are not freighted with both demerit *and* harm, yet treating demerit and harm as two separate questions, this model of justification implicitly preserves the normative separation between demerit and harm.

The social consequences of our evaluation of historical figures—that is, the social consequences of our evaluations—are by no means identical to the harms of memorials. Evaluations of historical figures may have social consequences even when no memorial is involved, and some memorials may have beneficial rather than harmful social consequences. Yet social consequences and harms overlap. Both refer to the consequences linked to an evaluative act, whether that act is iconoclastic in nature or rooted in the evaluative act that memorials constitute—and continue to constitute so long as they are supported with public funds and located, unmodified, in public spaces. This overlap between the social consequences of our evaluations and the harms of memorials implies that to conceptually and normatively distinguish demerit and harm—as every one of the three justifications does—is to necessarily assume that our evaluations of persons need not consider the social consequences of these evaluations in order to be fully informed.[26] Put another way, the conceptual and normative distinction between

harms and demerits presupposes that a fully informed evaluation need only concern the agent in question—their actions, intentions, dispositions, and so forth—and need not be concerned with how the evaluation itself might impact others. This is an agent-focused understanding of evaluation that allows merit or demerit to be assigned irrespective of the consequences of that assignment. Barring new conduct of a living person, or newly discovered information of a deceased person, informed evaluations—so understood—can claim to be both stable and singular.[27] If we are right in thinking that a given historical person was a sage, for instance, then that person will never stop being a sage and everyone ought to regard this historical person as a sage. By implication, if Lee and Jackson are now seen as despicable persons because of their defense of slavery, there ought to be common agreement that they were *always* villains—not just for our generation but for all interceding generations. In addition to supporting this sort of stability, an agent-focused evaluation engenders the view that there can be a single, correct evaluation of a given historical figure—even if we know that we are often mistaken in our evaluations for want of relevant biographical information or because we might implement a faulty standard.[28] Assuming evaluations can be stable and singular, however, produces pernicious effects.

One such effect stems from the common preference to settle upon a simple, rather than complex, moral evaluation of others. While we are often unwilling to face the faults, and thus the moral complexity, of our heroes, we seem particularly interested in vilifying others—of focusing only on their worst traits. Villains make convenient objects of blame, they elevate our self-worth by comparison, and they are natural targets of outrage and sustained focus—something social media, with its economy of attention, has learned to exploit. While assuming our evaluations of others might be stable and singular is not likely to be the cause of our foolish preference for moral simplification, it enables this foolishness to reach new depths since evaluations we regard as stable and singular will enshrine this simplification. This inclination towards simplification is behind arguments that if we ought to eliminate the memorials to Robert E. Lee we surely must also eliminate the memorials to George Washington.[29] While both figures are significantly flawed, they are not—however—equally flawed.[30] In fact, there is a lot that is worthy of admiration and emulation in the example of Washington. To focus only on their shared endorsement of slavery, and to reduce Washington to his worst traits without any recognition for his various merits, is to erroneously render Lee and Washington morally equivalent, and risks promoting total iconoclasm. A second pernicious effect of assuming our evaluations of others might be stable and singular is that we will tend to resist counter-evidence and will find ingenious ways to defend our preexisting assessments.[31] But this is to risk rendering one's evaluations dogmatically unfalsifiable and to thus forfeit any attempt to honestly evaluate others. Finally, the assumption that evaluations of others might be stable and singular makes violence—something we have already witnessed in the public debate over these memorials—all the more likely when an evaluation of an iconic figure is in dispute. The assumption simultaneously renders alternative assessments incompatible, and prevents us from pacifying social tensions with an appeal to moral relativism.

When it comes to the justification of iconoclasm, the early Confucians offer us a unique alternative. It is fair to describe the Confucians as traditionalists. They defer to the wisdom of tradition to navigate their contemporary ethical issues, and each of the early Confucians regard the celebration of the canonical figures curated by their moral tradition as definitive of what it is to be a "Confucian" (*Ruzhe* 儒者).[32] Yet, despite their traditionalism, they are not categorically opposed to iconoclasm; they may trust their moral tradition, but that trust can be defeated.[33] One

way to discern what they regarded as a defeater of their trust in traditional icons is to compare *Lunyu* 3.21 and 3.22:

> Duke Ai asked Zaiwo about the wood used as the altar pole for the god of the soil. Zaiwo responded, "the people of the Xia made use of pine, the people of the Shang made use of cypress, and the people of the Zhou made use of chestnut [*li* 栗]. It is said that they (sc. the Zhou) wanted to instill fear [*zhanli* 戰栗] in the people."
> When the Master [sc. Kongzi] heard about this [sc. Zaiwo's response] he said, "One does not advise against affairs that are reaching completion. One does not remonstrate over affairs that are already underway. One does not find fault with what is already past [*ji wang bu jiu* 既往不咎]."[34]

> The Master said, "Guan Zhong was a utensil of limited utility!"
> Someone asked, "Are you saying Guan Zhong was frugal?"
> The Master replied, "Guan had three residencies, each with its own staff—where in all this do you get the idea he was frugal?"
> "This being the case, might Guan Zhong at least have understood ritual propriety?"
> The Master replied, "The ruler of the state erected ornamental stone blinds before his gates; Guan Zhong did the same. For a couple of his friends the ruler had a stand for holding inverted drinking goblets; Guan Zhong also had a stand for holding inverted drinking goblets. If Guan Zhong understood ritual propriety, who does not understand ritual propriety?"

It is hard to imagine that the obvious tension between these two passages—with Kongzi apparently admonishing Zaiwo in the first passage for doing the very thing he does in the next—was lost on the editors of the *Lunyu*. And while these passages may represent an inconsistency in the text, it is also possible—and the interpretive principle of charity would argue it is not merely possible, but most probable—that these two passages were associated in order to highlight the differences between how Zaiwo and the Master engage in 'finding fault with what is already past.'

In Kongzi's own estimation, Zaiwo was eloquent to a fault and also suffered from laziness and moral apathy.[35] All three characteristics are on display in *Lunyu* 3.21. The paronomastic explanation (from *li* to *zhanli*), for instance, shows his quick tongue. His laziness and moral apathy are illustrated by the way he offers this criticism of the Zhou thoughtlessly—without concern for the pragmatics of his utterance. Duke Ai is, after all, the direct descendent of Zhou rule; with his iconoclastic remark about the Zhou, Zaiwo is forgetting his ritual place and carelessly insulting the Duke. In *Lunyu* 3.22, on the other hand, Kongzi does not engage in the iconoclasm of Guan Zhong thoughtlessly, but appears to be intent upon dissuading an unnamed party from admiring Guan Zhong, whose style of rulership prioritized the use of brute force over the influence of ritual propriety. While Zaiwo's remark is carelessly iconoclastic, Kongzi is careful that his iconoclasm is not only ritually permissible, but also serves to edify or cultivate others by dissuading them from following Guan Zhong's poor example. These two features— ritual propriety (*li* 禮) and nourishing the admirable in others (*cheng ren zhi mei* 成人之美)—are recurring features of early Confucian iconoclastic remarks.[36] Their commitment to what is ritually appropriate to different relationships is why their iconoclastic remarks are cloaked in allusions when spoken to a ruler, but offered plainly and directly to their students.[37] And the

iconoclastic remarks of the early Confucians tend to target canonical figures who prioritized hegemonic power, loyalty to the state, or mastering the art of opportunism over the requirements of ritual propriety.[38] By denouncing such figures, and disabusing those who would wrongly admire and emulate them, Kongzi and Mengzi aim to edify their listeners. Given the role ritual propriety and edification play in the iconoclasm of the early Confucians, we might surmise that they would regard iconoclasm justified when it serves to edify others and can be performed in a manner that is ritually appropriate, or—inversely—if it can be performed in a manner that is ritually appropriate and failure to engage in iconoclasm serves to bring out the worst in others.

Despite the early Confucians' reliance upon the conditions of ritual appropriateness and edifying consequences in their approach to iconoclasm, they do not employ a harm-based justification of iconoclasm. Evaluations of others must not only be edifying, they must also be informed. When Kongzi engages in iconoclasm, as when he seeks to overturn the praise often afforded to Guan Zhong, he can supply details about Guan Zhong's life to justify his iconoclasm.[39] The Confucian appreciation for informed evaluation can be further attested by Kongzi's recommendation that one watches the actions of others, determines their motives, and examines where they dwell content if one wishes to really know them.[40] He even says that "When it comes to other people, I am not usually given to praise or blame. But if I do praise people, you can be sure that there has been an investigation (*shi* 試)."[41] Presumably, the same is true when he criticizes others.[42] As the need to investigate is predicated upon at least the possibility of getting our evaluations wrong, it precludes a purely harm-based justification.

The importance the early Confucians set by informed evaluations does not, however, mean that they regard accurate evaluations as sufficient to justify iconoclasm. Theirs is not a merit-based approach either. As we saw in the case of Zaiwo, iconoclastic remarks can be ritually and consequentially inappropriate even when they are, quite possibly, informed and accurate. On at least one occasion Kongzi even goes so far as to provide an inaccurate evaluation of Duke Zhao of Lu rather than run contrary to what is ritually appropriate.[43] The early Confucians are quite clear that truthfulness—at least when it comes to disclosing another's faults—is not always a virtue.[44]

Seeing that the early Confucians regard both informed evaluations and edifying results as necessary conditions for engaging in justified iconoclasm, we might be inclined to interpret them as employing what we have described as a hybrid justification. The problem with this interpretation, however, is that it is precluded by the early Confucian understanding of what makes an evaluation properly informed. As we have already mentioned, the hybrid justification (along with the other two justifications) presupposes an agent-focused conception of evaluation, or how merit is assigned. There are, however, two significant hurdles to attributing this conception of informed evaluation to the early Confucians. The first hurdle—which, to be fair, may not be insurmountable—stems from the early Confucian idea that persons are often morally complex, even when they are significantly flawed. When Kongzi and Mengzi evaluate historical figures they tend to point out both good and bad aspects.[45] Kongzi describes Guan Zhong as a utensil (*qi* 器) without a sense of ritual propriety, yet also praised the man as someone who was consummate (*ren* 仁) because he, indirectly, helped preserve the ritual culture of the Zhou dynasty.[46] A similar pattern emerges in Mengzi's estimation of Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui. Bo Yi was so fastidious that he would avoid a fellow villager if the other's hat were awry. Rather than take up an official position under a corrupt ruler, he went into hermitage and died of starvation.[47] Liuxia Hui was, in many respects, Bo Yi's opposite. He would take up posts under sullied rulers, and socialized with everyone. Legend has it that he once saved the life of a woman by warming

her with his own body.[48] Mengzi refers to both Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui as sages (*shengren* 聖人)—which is to say, persons whose example ought to teach and inspire others—but also describes the former as narrow-minded (*ai* 隘) and the latter as irreverent (*bugong* 不恭) and concludes that exemplary persons (*junzi* 君子) will not follow either example.[49] Early Confucian evaluations appear to be selective (as in the case of Kongzi's evaluation of Guan Zhong), and to make use of generalizations (as in the case of Mengzi' evaluations of Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui). From the perspective of anyone pursuing an agent-focused evaluation, it would be hard not to see such selectivity or generalizations as contributing to ill-informed evaluations. Because simplicity elides certain features of a person, its rhetorical force provides the listener with an inaccurate depiction and evaluation. Likewise, Mengzi's broad or sweeping assessments of others—as either extreme cases whom exemplary persons will never follow, or as sages that are moral teachers for a hundred generations—glosses over the moral complexity of those whom he is evaluating. When the early Confucians are evaluating others it does not appear that agent-focused accuracy is their chief concern.

How the early Confucians go about assessing exemplary persons introduces a second hurdle to seeing them as employing an agent-focused approach. Given that sages are understood by the tradition to be normatively superior to exemplary persons, there is no way that Mengzi could describe Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui as sages worthy of being followed and as role models exemplary persons will not follow, and be accurate both times. While an agent-focused conception of informed evaluations would render his assessments of Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui inconsistent, Mengzi avoids that outcome by regarding what we might call the perlocutionary force of evaluations as a necessary dimension to informed evaluations.[50] As he puts it,

> Hearing of Bo Yi's conduct, devious men will become upright and timid men will find their resolve; hearing of Liuxia Hui's conduct, stingy men will become generous, and parochial men will become liberal.[51]

What Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui each did may be deemed appropriate *and* inappropriate; how one evaluates them cannot be determined solely by their conduct, but must also take the impact of their examples upon others into consideration. For the early Confucians, evaluations are informed only when they are edifying, which is to say that agent and audience are both factors of an informed evaluation. Given the diversity of personalities, and the moral development of individuals over time, informed evaluations will be correlative and temporary rather than singular and stable.[52] The sages canonized by the moral tradition offer personal examples that are on the extreme end of the moral spectrum. As a result, for most individuals, most of the time, the sages are exemplary—their personal example ought to inspire others to emulate them. The early Confucians, however, recognize a contingency to the canon—that even sages are not always properly regarded as exemplars. Mengzi says as much in the case of Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui. He also admits that while there are other sages besides Kongzi, he prefers to follow Kongzi's personal example.[53] Kongzi expresses a parallel sentiment when he states a preference for sage Shun over sage Tang since Tang came to power through a violent overthrow of the tyrant Jie, while Shun came to power without any use of force.[54] They may both be sages, but of the two Shun is Kongzi's preferred exemplar.

Given their correlative understanding of evaluation, and its fusion of merit and social consequences, the early Confucians are clearly employing a justification of iconoclasm that is distinct from the three we have already discussed. Unlike the merit-based justification, the

Confucians require iconoclasm to be edifying and ritually appropriate; unlike the harm-based justification, the Confucians encourage our evaluations to be informed. But, unlike the hybrid justification, the Confucian justification does not first distinguish between informed evaluations and edifying results, and then demand that an iconoclastic action or utterance involve both. The practical difference between a hybrid justification and the Confucian justification comes to light when we ask whether the justification is bound up with an attempt to secure stable and singular evaluations. The hybrid justification may make iconoclasm much more difficult to justify, but it is still utilized by those who act under the assumption that justified evaluations must be "informed"—with an agent-focused, non-correlative understanding of that term. When one allows edification to inform one's evaluations, however, the goal can no longer be stable and singular evaluations. With correlative evaluations there is perpetual leeway in how one describes and evaluates others. Bo Yi and Liuxia Hui can be both sages and extremes; likewise, Lee and Jackson—anyone, in fact—might, at least potentially, be exemplary for some and despicable for others. This, however, does not commit us to moral relativism as it is hard to imagine how someone like Robert E. Lee, for example—as an enslaver, racist, white nationalist, unchristian Christian, and perhaps even a foolish strategist—could offer anyone something worth emulating.[55]

By not attempting stable and singular evaluations, the Confucian approach maximizes the diversity and inclusivity of our memorials, while still allowing us to be critical of Confederate memorials. Furthermore, the Confucian justification of iconoclasm is necessarily wedded to the practice of iconoclasm—*whether* we ought to be iconoclasts depends on *how* we will practice our iconoclasm. This particular difference, along with the correlative understanding of evaluation, renders the Confucian justification of iconoclasm distinct from the other three; it also liberates the Confucian approach from the problems faced by the other approaches, namely the unmerited iconoclasm that can be justified on a harm-based approach, the socially destructive iconoclasm that can be justified on a merit-based approach, and the double fault of the hybrid approach.

3. THE CASE FOR DE-PEDESTALLING

Turning now from the Confucian justification of iconoclasm to their stance on memorials dedicated to deeply flawed persons, we would do well to ask whether any of the possible responses—preservation, removal, or modification—could be both edifying and ritually appropriate. Regarding edification, some of those in favor of preserving Confederate memorials argue that these icons can in fact nourish what is admirable to us—that Confederate icons can inspire some of us to be courageous, loyal, and to exhibit other such virtues associated with the gendered conception of Southern honor.[56] There are, however, a couple of problems with this argument. First, the violence that has erupted in the public debate has come predominately, if not exclusively, from those in favor of the continued memorialization of Confederate figures.[57] If this is the lesson some take from these icons—namely, that physically assaulting one's opponents is an acceptable avenue by which to resolve disputes (a view, incidentally, endorsed by the historical Confederates)—it would seem that these icons do not edify everyone, but for some, at least, nourish what is repugnant in them. Second, even if we set aside the question of whether the Confederate icons can edify more than a few persons, it remains the case that these icons express undeserved bigotry and contempt—as Demetriou and Wingo, and Bell have shown—and arguably also perpetuate what Iris Young refers to as structural violence and

cultural imperialism.[58] Given the oppressive and, in general, anti-edifying consequences of these memorials, the Confucian would have grounds to reject their preservation.

Once preservation of these memorials is seen to be inconsistent with the requirement of edification, the question becomes whether any of the remaining iconoclastic options could be practiced in a ritually appropriate manner. The early Confucian inclusion of ritual propriety as a precondition of warranted iconoclasm is rooted in an assumption that an adequate response to a social issue ought to foster a meaningful community—a community, fiduciary in nature, dedicated to the attempt to bring out the best in each other.[59] Not only are the trusting and sympathetic relationships that define a fiduciary community not at odds with critique, the early Confucians argue that a commitment to cultivating a meaningful community requires us to criticize others when they are in the wrong—that we cannot be a good family member, or member of any fiduciary community, if we are not willing to remonstrate.[60] To embrace moral relativism, or to avoid remonstrating out of an overriding commitment to tranquility, would constitute a dysfunctional degree of tolerance. As preservationists at the very least neglect their part in bringing out the best in others, they are in the wrong. The ritually appropriate response is to skillfully remonstrate with them.

More than anything else it is the Confucian commitment to remonstrance that provides the reason to favor de-pedestalling over removal or either form of contextualism. Since supplemental contextualism is predicated upon an embrace of moral relativism or dysfunctional tolerance, it precludes remonstrating with those at fault. While removal and relocation contextualism involve an iconoclastic rebuke of these memorials and those who would seek to preserve them, insofar as these iconoclastic acts lack duration and tend to remove monuments from public space and memory, they quickly silence the conversation and undermine the duration and impact of the remonstrance. Besides, attempts to remove or contextually relocate memorials present stakeholders with mutually exclusive options—preserving or removing, preserving or contextually relocating. By locking the conflicting parties in a zero-sum contest, these approaches promote and perpetuate adversarial relationships—as we clearly saw in the protests that emerged concerning the fate of Charlottesville's Lee statue. De-pedestalling, on the other hand, not only prolongs the iconoclastic and remonstrative act, it prolongs the conversation by retaining a site for continual disagreement and negotiated meaning.

The Confucian thus has cause to prefer de-pedestalling over any other form of iconoclasm in this situation, yet there are at least two objections that can be raised to such an approach. First, supporters of Confederate memorials are unlikely to be receptive to our remonstrations. One might draw upon the early Confucian literature to raise a second objection: that while it might be ritually appropriate to remonstrate with our friends and family, we have no grounds for remonstrating with our fellow-citizens *per se*, especially when many of them are strangers to us.

The early Confucians were aware of the potential for remonstrance to be ineffective, and were interested in developing methods for improving the odds of success in one's remonstrations. They recognized that remonstrance was effective only when the one we remonstrated with was open to our critique—an attitude they referred to as being cultured (*wen* 文).[61] Furthermore, the method of remonstrance preferred by the early Confucians, because of its increased efficacy, utilized indirect modes of communication—such as cloaking one's critique in the form of a poetic image or as a discussion of a traditional narrative.[62] The literature gives at least two reasons for favoring an indirect mode of remonstrance. First, like the wind (*feng* 風), indirect remonstrance can have far-reaching influence because it cannot be easily pinned down or

circumscribed, and it is visible only when it rouses and provokes a response.[63] Its indeterminacy is a strength as it renders dismissal that much harder. Second, indirect remonstrance allows us to critique others without engaging in a frontal assault on their social standing and dignity—it allows the criticism to be communicated with minimal risk to the remonstrator and minimal public shame to the remonstrated.[64] Yet even if an oblique attack is more likely to find a receptive target, it can only be successfully executed when the recipient of the remonstration is able to anticipate and detect the cloaked meaning of our words. A common tradition, or some other type of mutual understanding, is necessary. Thus, the efficacy objection challenges the Confucian to answer two questions: how might we cultivate the *wen* of others, and how can we help others anticipate our indirect mode of remonstrance?

Concerning the cultivation of *wen*, the early Confucians recommend that we ensure our remonstrations are seen as being distinct from ridicule or exposing others to the offense of directly naming their faults.[65] Yet to reduce the likelihood that one's remonstrance comes across as ridicule or exposure it is necessary to establish trusting relationships with others before one remonstrates with them. Developing a trusting relationship also fosters indirect remonstrance as it tends to provide the intimacy—the shared narratives and vocabulary—necessary to know what the other is likely to be able to decode.

De-pedestalling—depending on the way it is done—can arguably satisfy the Confucian prerequisites of effective remonstrance. First of all, the iconoclasm of problematic memorials is often directed—if circuitously—at the moral assumptions of those who would seek to preserve them. By attacking these memorials and the misguided solidarity some feel towards their subjects, we can effectively engage in indirect remonstrance. Remonstrating with preservationists through de-pedestalling preserves the critique but hides it within the critique of these memorials, and thus can communicate the critique without necessarily involving ridicule or exposure of the supporters. Secondly, while even indirect remonstrance of this variety has offended several preservationists, some of whom feel they are being unfairly punished for their ancestry, this infelicity can be addressed if we first establish a minimum of trust with preservationists.[66] This would likely entail prioritizing grass-roots initiatives rather than state-sanctioned action, and suggests that this debate ought to be addressed in our relationships with family, friends, and neighbors. De-pedestalling, when part of effective remonstrance, will thus tend to occur—initially at least—in the form of a verbal critique of Confederate memorials rather than any physical alteration to them.

As for the objection that even on Confucian terms it is presumptuous and ritually inappropriate to seek to remonstrate with our fellow-citizens when they are but strangers to us, we can start by pointing out that there are several "remonstrative differentials" mentioned in the early Confucian literature that appear to lend support to this sort of objection. With friends, Kongzi advises us to do what we can to bring out the best in them, but cautions us to know when to stop trying.[67] There is no similar caveat when it comes to remonstrating with our parents. We are to patiently and tactfully remonstrate with them, even if they become violent.[68] Another remonstrative differential is discussed in the *Mengzi*:

> If a fellow lodger is involved in a fight, it is right for you to rush to his aid even if your hair is hanging down and your cap is untied. But it would be misguided to do so if it were only a fellow villager. There is nothing wrong with bolting your door.[69]

Living in socially chaotic times, the early Confucians were often perturbed by their compromising entanglements with others. Kongzi, for instance, was sometimes accused of being overly selective in those he wished to associate, much like the rather fastidious Bo Yi who would rather starve to death in self-imposed exile than take up a post in a state that had lost its way. With time, however, Kongzi and other early Confucians seem to have come around and realized that to curtail our relationships is to deny ourselves opportunities to help our broader community and is, in effect, to waste our talents.[70] While the *Mengzi* passage, above, emphasizes that the propriety of intervening depends on whether the social dysfunction is localized or systemic, the early Confucians were also committed to attempting to improve social affairs even in the worst of times, and to expanding their sphere of relatedness. Furthermore, the early Confucians would remind us that our relationships with others are not fixed and that even the family is expansive and dynamic.[71] Nor is trust impossible to cultivate with strangers. No doubt there is an organic approach to be taken that places the seemingly discrete ethical issue of Confederate memorials within the context of a healthy or flourishing community, and knows that we cannot address this ethical issue without addressing the quality of our community, but also knows that by addressing one, we address the other.[72] This is, after all, the ambition of those who wish to live as part of a fiduciary moral community. Finally, it is worth mentioning that our public spaces, and the memorials that inhabit them (whether due to the positive example of those whom we memorialize, or through the social benefits of de-pedestalling certain memorials) can play an important role in developing perceived kinship and inclusion—of knitting ourselves together and rendering each other more familiar.

4. CONCLUSION

By not separating demerit from harm, the early Confucians employ an account of warranted iconoclasm that dodges the pitfalls of the alternative justifications. We have also seen that the Confucian account of warranted iconoclasm supports a grass-roots practice of de-pedestalling Confederate figures on the grounds of its efficacy in resolving the current issue. But beyond these curative considerations meant to address preexisting memorials, there is a preventative point to consider—one that looks to the future of public memorials. The early Confucian practices of memorialization reflect a commitment to the impermanent normative significance of memorials. This is a radical departure from how most public memorials are approached; were we to also embrace the early Confucian approach, however, we might prevent the current ethical issue from arising in the future. This preventative consideration is thus a reason to endorse a Confucian approach to iconoclasm independent of how its justification compares to the alternatives.

Confederate memorials, similar to most public memorials in the United States, were erected by individuals seeking to communicate certain normative claims to future generations; from the materials used to the language of the dedications, no indication is given that public memorials would eventually become outdated or morally obsolete. Yet we have several reasons to anticipate just such a fate of most—if not all—of our public memorials. Correlativity of evaluations can, after all, apply on a generational level and thus necessitate the memorialization of different persons to address the moral needs of different generations. There is also the fact that the communal potential of memorials can be morally deficient. At their best, public memorials can play a significant role in building and sustaining community, and can teach and inspire us with concrete moral examples, but—as we can see in the case of the Confederate memorials—

sometimes this solidarity is achieved for some by means of the exclusion and oppression of others. Finally, attempting to communicate timeless norms by means of permanent memorials puts future generations at risk of attempting to repeat the past in an undiscerning, and thus unproductive, fashion.[73] Friedrich Nietzsche was right to complain that monumental history tends to trade on the fallacy of repeatability: when memorials hold up a past figure as an icon, the assumption is that the example of the memorialized is relevant to our own conduct—that we might, in some way, repeat their greatness.[74] Yet between total amnesia and the promise of perfect repeatability there is a third possibility. It is to establish "timely" memorials—memorials fitted to the moral needs of the times. One way to promote this outcome is to establish memorials that are, either by ritual or composition, temporary.[75] Were our memorials temporary in nature, memorials would reflect the values of the living and the recently deceased, rather than the values of those far removed from us in time. With elimination of our memorials as the default position, memorials would more easily be renewed so as to fit the changing moral needs of the community. Temporary memorials would also promote a different orientation to canonical figures—one that accepted their moral contingency (without requiring something as extreme as moral relativism). In all these ways, temporary memorials are more likely to also be timely memorials. While de-pedestalling can play an important role in rendering our existing memorials timely, a culture of erecting only temporary memorials would eventually render such iconoclasm largely unnecessary.

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[1] Helen Frowe, "The Duty to Remove Statues of Wrongdoers," *Journal of Practical Ethics* 7, no. 3 (2019): 1-31. For the normative function of public memory in general, see Blustein, Jeffrey, *The Moral Demands of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). To be sure, some memorials condemn their subjects. There are the ancient Roman *domnatio memories*, the burning of Guy Fawkes in England, and the Holocaust memorials that, tacitly, accuse and condemn the agents of the Nazi party. There are thus memorials that praise and memorials that reprobate. But so long as a memorial does not involve the markers of those that condemn (viz., defacement, destruction, or absence), it is probable that it is of the commending variety.

[2] This represents a refinement on the classification proposed in Macalester Bell, "Against Simple Removal: A Defense of Defacement as a Response to Racist Monuments," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 30, no. 5 (2021): 778-792.

[3] George Schedler, "Are Confederate Monuments Racist?" *International Journal of Applied Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2001): 287-308.

[4] Frowe op. cit.; Travis Timmerman, "A Case for Removing Confederate Monuments" in *Ethics, Left and Right: The Moral Issue that Divide Us*, edited by Bob Fischer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 513-522.

[5] Dan Demetriou and Ajume Wingo, "The Ethics of Racist Monuments" in *The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Public Policy*, edited by David Boonin (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 341-355.

[6] For accounts of de-pedestalling, see Bell "Against Simple Removal"; Ten-Herng Lai, "Political Vandalism as Counter-Speech: A Defense of Defacing and Destroying Tainted Monuments," *European Journal of Philosophy* 28 (2020): 602-616; Chong-Ming Lim, "Vandalizing Tainted Commemorations," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 48, no. 2 (2020): 185-216.

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[7] Stalin's Boots in Budapest is an example of de-pedestalling. The process of destroying Stalin's statue was halted and thus prolongs the negation or repudiation of the memorial's normative claim. Another example is the traffic cone on top of Glasgow's equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington that achieves the normative rebuke through an act of ridicule.

[8] Throughout "Confucians" will be used to include contemporary Confucians or anyone who would employ a Confucian approach to memorials, while "early Confucians" will denote two historical Confucians: Kongzi (Confucius), and Mengzi (Mencius).

[9] See Bell, "Against Simple Removal"; Joanna Burch-Brown, "Is It Wrong to Topple Statues and Rename Schools?" *Journal of Political Theory and Philosophy* 1 (2017): 59-88; Blustein, *The Moral Demands*; and Demetriou and Wingo, "The Ethics of Racist Monuments."

[10] "Stakeholders" are understood to be those who are likely to be impacted, either positively or negatively, by society's response to a moral situation. Primary stakeholders are members of the public who will be personally impacted. Secondary stakeholders are those who are in an official position related to the issue—journalists, elected officials, tour guides, academics, and so on. Secondary stakeholders may or may not be personally impacted by society's response to the issue, but their roles often obligate them to understand the issue, propose solutions, and educate primary stakeholders. In discussing the three justifications of iconoclasm proposed by secondary stakeholders, the aim is to distinguish between them, not to exhaustively present their supporting arguments.

[11] Eric Lamar, "Why praise Robert E. Lee?" *The Washington Post*, August 23, 2017.

[12] Lamar, "Why Praise Robert E. Lee?"

[13] Schedler, "Are Confederate Monuments Racists?"

[14] While Demetriou and Wingo describe their position as "preservationist," they support a policy that "add[s] new monuments and reframe[s] old ones" (341, 351). Such a policy is an example of what I have described as "supplemental contextualism."

[15] Demetriou and Wingo, "The Ethics of Racist Monuments," 351.

[16] Ibid., 350

[17] Ibid., 352

[18] Timmerman also appeals to the harm of offense to justify his removalist position and, like Demetriou and Wingo, allows offense to be unconnected to the merit of the memorialized ("The Ethics of Racist Monuments," 514-516).

[19] An alternative form of the hybrid justification is to find iconoclasm warranted if either demerit *or* harm is established. I have, however, yet to see this position endorsed by a secondary stakeholder.

[20] Gregory S. Schneider, "In the former capital of the Confederacy, the debate over statues is personal and painful." *Washington Post*, August 27, 2017. This approach is also adopted by Frowe op. cit., and Georgia state Representative Tommy Benton (see Sarah Larimer, "'Confederate cleansing': Lawmaker vows to stop 'cultural terrorism' in Georgia," *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2016).

[21] Schneider, "In the Former Capital."

[22] Ibid.

[23] In the summer of 2020, after a month of protests in Richmond and the vandalism of several Confederate memorials by protestors, Mayor Stoney ordered the removal of the city's Confederate memorials, justifying his order with an appeal to both public safety *and* the racism of these memorials (Gregory S. Schneider, "Richmond's Mayor Took Down Confederate Monuments this Summer. That Move May Have Vaulted Him to Another Term in Office," *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2020). That Stoney does not regard harm as sufficient to warrant iconoclasm is made explicit by his refusal to remove Richmond's monument dedicated to tennis legend, Arthur Ashe, despite the fact that a few weeks after his order to remove the Confederate memorials, the Ashe memorial had become a site of counter-protest and conflict (https://www.wsls.com/news/virginia/2020/07/10/relatives-request-temporary-removal-of-arthur-ashe-memorial-in-richmond/).

[24] Frowe, "The Duty to Remove Statues," 1.

[25] It is not hard to imagine a racist person taking offense at memorials dedicated to Civil Rights activists, and so utilizing a harm-based justification to call for their iconoclasm.

[26] Even the harm-based approach assumes as much even though, on such an approach, getting to an accurate assessment of the memorialized person is irrelevant to the question of iconoclasm.

[27] See, for example, Frowe, "The Duty to Remove Statues," and Burch-Brown, "Is it Wrong to Topple Statues," for explicit endorsements of this view.

[28] While presupposed by each of the three justifications, the assumption that evaluations can be both stable and singular may obviously be held by stakeholders who do not explicitly endorse one of these justifications.

[29] See Frowe, "The Duty to Remove Statues," 20-22.

[30] Ilya Somin, "Why Slippery Slope Arguments Should Not Stop Us from Removing Confederate Monuments," *The Washington Post*, August 15, 2017.

[31] The tendency for presumably stable and singular moral judgments of historical persons to distort our descriptive accounts of them led Butterfield to caution historians against morally assessing the subjects of their studies. See Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: Norton, 1965).

[32] *Lunyu* [*Analects*] 3.14, *Mengzi* 3A1. See also *Xunzi* 8.2 and 8.10

[33] See *Lunyu* 2.11, 3.9, 3.22, 5.18, 14.12, 14.14, 14.15, and 15.14; *Mengzi* 1A7, 2A1, and 3B2; Roger T. Ames, *The Art of Rulership: A Study in Ancient Chinese Political Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 5.

[34] All translations of classical Chinese literature are my own.

[35] *Lunyu* 5.10, 11.3, and 17.21

[36] For details on the nature of ritual propriety, see *Xunzi* 19; Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1972), 1-17; David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 71-127. On bringing out the best in others, see Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2011), 87-157.

[37] See *Lunyu* 13.18, and compare *Mengzi* 1A7 with 2A1.

[38] See, for instance, *Lunyu* 3.22 and 13.18, and *Mengzi* 1A7, 2A1, and 3B2.

[39] *Lunyu* 3.22

[40] *Lunyu* 2.10.

[41] *Lunyu* 15.25; cf. *Mengzi,* 2A2.

[42] As he does in *Lunyu* 5.10-5.12, 6.12, 11.15-11.18, and so on.

[43] *Lunyu* 7.31.

[44] *Lunyu* 17.24; cf. 13.18.

[45] Even sages are morally complex and with their own faults, according to the early Confucians. See Thorian Harris, "Moral Perfection as the Counterfeit of Virtue," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 22 (2023): 43-61.

[46] *Lunyu* 3.22 and 14.17; cf. 19.20.

[47] See *Mengzi* 2A9, and *Shiji* [*Records of the Grand Scribe*] 61

[48] See *Mengzi* 2A9, and *Kongzi Jiayu* [*Sayings of Kongzi's School*] 10.16

[49] *Mengzi* 2A2, 2A9; cf. 7B15

[50] On the significance given to perlocutionary force in the early Confucian literature, see Thorian Harris, "Pragmatics without Deception: Towards a Hermeneutics of Speech Activities in the *Lunyu* and *Mengzi*," *International Communication of Chinese Culture* 2, no. 3 (2015): 235-257.

[51] *Mengzi* 7B15

[52] Similar considerations led Kongzi to offer contradicting advice to different students (*Lunyu* 11.22). For more on the assumption of correlativity that pervades Confucian philosophy, see Angus Charles Graham, *Yin-Yang and the Nature of Correlative Thinking* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986); David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Anticipating China: Thinking Through the Narratives of Chinese and Western Culture* (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), 123-141.

[53] *Mengzi* 2A2

[54] *Lunyu* 3.25, 15.5.

[55] For a concise defense of this evaluation of Lee, see Adam Serwer, "The Myth of the Kindly General Lee," *The Atlantic*, June 4, 2017.

[56] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

[57] There is, in fact, a long history to the correlation between communities that support Confederate memorials and are willing to engage in physical assault. See Kyshia Henderson, Samuel Powers, Michele Claibourn, Jazmin Brown-Iannuzzi, and Sophie Trawalter, "Confederate Monuments and the History of Lynching in the American South: An Empirical Examination," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 42 (2021). In press.

[58] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 58-63.

[59] *Lunyu*, 12.16, 12.13, 12.24. It is this appeal to a fiduciary conception of community that sets the Confucian account apart from those offered by Bell, and Demetriou and Wingo. Bell's appeal to rights assumes an adversarial and individualistic approach to community that is at odds with the fiduciary possibility; and his willingness to embrace "harsh" and "contemptuous" remonstrations is at odds with the means of fostering community (op. cit., 3). Demetriou and Wingo's appeal to high-trust relationships comes closer to a fiduciary conception of community, yet they characterize such relationships as precluding remonstrance ("The Ethics of Racist Monuments," 351-352). The Confucians would argue, however, that this would prevent us from bringing out the best in each other (see *Lunyu*

13.23 and *Liji* [*The Book of Ritual Propriety*], "Xiaojing" ["Classic of Familial Reverence"] 15). For more on the Confucian conception of a fiduciary community, see Tu Weiming, Tu, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on* Chung-yung [Zhongyong (*Focusing the Familiar*)] (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976).

[60] See *Lunyu* 4.18, cf. 14.7, and *Xiaojing* 15.

[61] *Lunyu*, 5.15, cf. 12.23.

[62] For a general account of indirect remonstrance, see François Jullien, *Detour and Access: Strategies of Meaning in China and Greece*, trans. by Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2000), 55-92. For examples of indirect remonstrance in the *Lunyu*, see 6.3 and 7.15. For the Confucian preference for indirect, over direct, remonstrance see *Kongzi Jiayu* 14.2, cf. *Lunyu* 4.18; *Liji*, "Fangji" ["The Record of the Levee"] 18.

[63] Burton Watson, *Early Chinese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 202-203; Jullien, *Detour and Access*, 65.

[64] Jullien, *Detour and Access*, 66. From an individualistic perspective the compensatory move on the part of anyone engaging in indirect remonstrance—to, in this specific case, consider the pragmatics of their iconoclasm—may strike us as unfair as it places an additional burden of care on the one remonstrating—who is, we might add, right to remonstrate (cf. Myisha Cherry, *The Case for Rage: Why Anger is Essential to Anti-Racist Struggle* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021]). But if we think about this matter from a fiduciary perspective, as the Confucian would (a perspective that does not give up on others, but prioritizes our social entanglements over a somewhat fictionalized account of our individuality) it is not an unfair burden but an opportunity for relational virtuosity and an occasion to enrich our socially composite self.

[65] *Liji*, "Shaoyi" ["Bearing on Special Occasions"] 21, "Biaoji" ["The Record of the Model"] 40.

[66] Larimer, "Confederate Cleansing"; Paul Duggan, "Battle over Robert E. Lee Statue in Hands of Charlottesville Judge," *The Washington Post*, September 1, 2017.

[67] *Lunyu* 12.23; cf. 4.26.

[68] *Liji*, "Niezi" ["The Model Family"] 18.

[69] *Mengzi* 4B29.

[70] *Lunyu* 18.6, 18.7, 18.8.

[71] *Lunyu* 12.5. The plasticity of the early Chinese family—open to expansion through adoption, for instance, and contraction though ritual expulsion from the ancestral temple—provides an alternative to a consanguineous conception of the family. See Fei Xiaotong, *From the Soil: The Foundations of Chinese Society*, trans. by Gary G. Hamilton and Wang Zheng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 60–70.

[72] *Mengzi* 7A9 and *Liji*, "Daxue" ["The Great Learning"].

[73] *Liji*, "Zhongyong" 28; *Han Feizi*, "Wudu" ["The Five Pests"].

[74] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 69-72.

[75] For a discussion of the contemporary emergence of temporary memorials, at least in response to tragic deaths, see Erika Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008). It is an open question how we might go about erecting temporary memorials to cultural icons, and not just the tragically deceased, but we might take inspiration from the early Chinese practices of ancestral memorialization. One of the most relevant examples is the ritualized destruction of ancestral markers—a kind of "structural amnesia"—after a set number of generations elapsed (Kenneth E. Brashier, *Public Memory in Early China* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014], 55-66). With the passage of time and generations, and the fading of memory, ancestors cease to be relationally vital as none remain that remember them in intimate terms. At that point removing their monuments from the domestic altar and the larger family's ancestral temple is thought to be both fitting and proper. Another example of temporary memorialization concerns burial practices and grave markers. The common materials used—wooden coffins and earthen burial mounds—were not particularly long-lasting, and Kongzi says that the ancients were right to not repair grave sites as they deteriorated (*Liji*, "Tan Gong Shang" ["The Upper Tan Gong"] 6).