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Thinking Through Confucius (SUNY Series In Systematic Philosophy)



Synopsis

"What I like most about this work is two-fold: the rigor and novelty of its methodological conception and the cogency and inciveness of its execution." -- Lik Kuen Tong

"This is a daring book. It develops an unconventional interpretation of Confucius, one which the authors claim is truer to the traditional texts than anything ever written in English (including Waley and Fingarette). The authors build their case from a close reading of the key Chinese terms of Confucian texts. This painstakingly detailed analysis is always readable, never too technical for a reader who knows no Chinese, but convincing by its thoroughness and its sensitivity." -- George Allan

Thinking through Confucius critically interprets the conceptual structure underlying Confucius' philosophical reflections. It also investigates "thinking," or "philosophy" from the perspective of Confucius. Perhaps the philosophical question of our time is "what is philosophy". The authors suggest that an examination of the Chinese philosophy may provide an alternative definition of philosophy that can be used to address some of the pressing issues of the Western cultural tradition. This book finds an appropriate language for the interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophical thought -- a language which is relatively free from the bias and presuppositions of Western philosophy.

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Customer Reviews

Perhaps the best study of Confucius' thought available. There is a very detailed study of all the key terms in the Analects, with an emphasis on the capacity of the individual Confucian to use his better judgment in specific situations. In other words Confucius does not recommend blind obedience to the rules of etiquette (Li). The book also includes an in-depth comparison with Western philosophy,

even post-modern. One of the authors, Roger Ames, has also recently written a splendid translation of the Analects together with Henry Rosemont. Both of these books are musts for a deeper understanding of the Analects.

I read this book and couldn't understand a damn thing they are talking about. I'm sorry to say, I got nothing from it. I read the whole thing and by the end, I still had no idea what Ames and Hall are trying to say. Not sure if the book pushed the limits of my reading comprehension or if it was just a lot of literary bells and whistles passing for some kind of deep analysis. Either way, if you plan to read this book, you ought to have a good English dictionary on hand as you'll likely be referring to it often. A Ph.D in philosophy may also help, as this book is definitely not for general audiences. Best of luck to ya if you do make a purchase . . . I'd be happy to hear anyone's translation of the book into more straightforward language.

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