

Cultural Construction of *D.C. Lau's* Paratexts in His Translation of *The Analects*

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Abstract

Paratexts, which exist alongside the main text, are characterized by their diversity, completeness, and systematic nature. As crucial carriers of culture, they are rich in cultural features. In translation, paratexts play a crucial role in conveying cultural meaning, especially when translating works like *The Analects*, which are deeply embedded with Confucian culture. As a must-read for western scholars seeking to understand Eastern culture, *D.C. Lau's* translation of *The Analects* leverages paratexts effectively to achieve cultural construction. His primary method for cultural construction is supplementation, followed by interpretation and commentary. Although he also employs comparison between ancient and modern Chinese culture, as well as between Chinese and Western cultures, this method is used sparingly. Unlike early overseas sinologists who interpreted Chinese culture through applying western philosophical elements and figures like Jesus, *Lau's* approach is characterized by using Chinese cultural perspectives to explain Confucian culture. Through these four methods, *Lau's* paratexts effectively reconstruct the rich cultural context of *The Analects*, restoring the authentic image of Confucian classics, the sage identity of *Confucius*, and his wise sayings that have been revered by the Chinese people for millennia.

Keywords: paratext; translation; cultural construction; *The Analects*

1. Introduction

The Analects is a collection of the main thoughts and remarks of *Confucius* (a Chinese philosopher who lived in the 5th century B.C.) and his disciples. It was compiled by his disciples during the Spring and Autumn Period (722-480B.C) and the Warring States Period (480-221B.C) (Yang, 2009). As one of the most renowned and influential Confucian works, *The Analects* serves as the stable carrier of some core concepts and the values system in Chinese nation, enabling it to be the representative of Chinese classics.

It consists of twenty chapters and 506 sections, comprising 12,000 characters in total, and covering a very wide scope of subjects from politics, philosophy, literature and art to education and moral cultivation. Over the course of more than two thousand years, *The Analects* has exerted a significant and profound influence on shaping the identity of the Chinese people.

The influence of *The Analects* is not confined only to China; it has extended far beyond the boundaries of China. Throughout the world, *The Analects* has exerted the most enduring influence on the Asian countries. Confucian culture has had a great influence on western countries as well. Matteo Ricci translated *Four Books* (including *The Analects*) into Latin between 1551-1592 (Wang, 2024). Since then, the translation of *The Analects* has never ceased. In fact, the translation action of *The Analects* has been always in flourish since its first English version appeared in 1691. Nowadays, it is estimated that more than sixty English versions, both abridged and unabridged, have been published (Huang, 2011).

The Analects is the concentrated embodiment of Confucian political propositions, ethical thoughts, moral concepts and educational principles. As a crystallization of Chinese civilization, it serves as a carrier of the cultural and traditional changes of the Chinese nation. Hence, to a great extent, the translation of *The Analects* is also a translation of Chinese national culture. The paratexts, which provide useful additional cultural information beyond the text, are an indispensable part of the interpretation. It is necessary for us to examine the cultural construction through the paratexts in translation: which cultural elements have been more interpreted, how they are introduced, and with what attitude. By addressing these questions on cultural identity, our understanding of translations of *The Analects* will hopefully be deepened.

Paratexts, accompanying a text in a published book, are an issue that has implications for the discussion of translations of *The Analects* for the following reasons. First, paratexts play an essential role in interpreting the original text, as *The Analects* is written in abstruse ancient Chinese language. Second, in each new translation, additional contents are invariably added to the paratexts, whether textual, linguistic or cultural, and these changes can potentially alter the representation of the source culture. Third, in almost every English translation of *The Analects*, translators, editors or other parties may add their own paratexts and find their distinct voices. Therefore, no discussion of the translated works of *The Analects* would be complete without an analysis of related paratexts.

Some researches have been carried out on the English translations of *The Analects*, as it has aroused attention almost since the first

translation was published. These studies cover a wide range of topics, including culture-specific items, the style of the translator, translation strategies, the dissemination of translated texts, retranslations and translator subjectivity. However, two important issues are absent from these investigations into translations. Firstly, as to the translators, most studies analyzed the relatively early famous Western sinologists translators and their classical translations, such as *James Legge*, *William Jennings*, *Arthur Waley*, leaving sinologists of the new age and their modern versions comparatively less explored, such as *D.C. Lau*. Secondly, studies on the translation of *The Analects* nearly focus on its main body (the text), neglecting its paratexts.

Apart from these classical translation versions done by Western sinologists long time ago, a great work appeared in 1979: the translation by *D.C. Lau*, which had been enjoying the reputation as “the best translation version of *The Analects* in contemporary times” and had been recognized as Penguin Classics. Years later, he gave the translation a thorough revision, and the second version was published by The Chinese University Press in Hong Kong. Canadian scholar *Edward Slingerland*, another translator of *The Analects*, pointed out in his translation bibliography of *The Analects* in 2003 that *D.C. Lau*’s translation is a “classic and the most commonly read translation” (Slingerland, 2003). *Roger* (2010) also believes that *D.C. Lau*’s translation is unmatched in terms of sales and popularity (Ames, 2008).

Indeed, *Lau*’s version of *The Analects* stands out in terms of both sales and citations (Wei, 2013), making it invaluable for researches, particularly in understanding and interpreting Chinese culture and Confucian philosophy. His meticulous approach and the accompanying paratexts play a critical role in shaping the Western perception of *Confucius*’s profile. However, unlike the extensive research on the paratexts of early translators like *James Legge*, relatively little focus has been given to the paratexts in *Lau*’s translation.

2. Paratexts and Cultural Construction

This part provides an overview of the concepts of paratexts, the relationship between paratexts and translation, the function of paratexts in cultural construction, and a literature review.

2.1 Paratexts

Gérard Genette defines the vital paratexts as the textual materials that surround the main text and mediate the relationship between the text and its readers (Genette & Maclean, 1991). He describes paratexts as “all verbal and non-verbal materials that mediate the relation between the main text and its readers, serving to present the whole work.” In his book *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Genette, 1997), he categorizes paratexts into several types: publisher’s internal texts, author names, titles, dedication pages, epigraphs, prefaces, original prefaces, other prefaces, internal titles, title cards, public external texts, and private internal texts. He further divides paratexts into peritext and epitext. Peritext includes elements such as titles, subtitles, author names, prefaces, introductions, footnotes, illustrations, epilogues, and afterwords. Epitext encompasses elements like publisher’s advertisements, announcements, posters, interviews, translation notes, reviews, letters, and diaries related to the book (Genette, 1997; Huang, 2018).

From these concepts and types, it is evident that paratexts are intrinsically linked to the main text, diverse in form, and constitute a system of their own. Paratexts serve the main text and possess a certain degree of completeness. Different types of paratexts convey various messages and perform descriptive and interpretive functions for the main text (Huang, 2018). Additionally, paratexts act as a bridge among the work, the author, the publisher, and the readers, facilitating coordination (Kocak, 2007).

2.2 Paratexts and Translation

Since the introduction of the concept of paratext, it has been applied to research in both literary and linguistic fields and later extended to translation studies (Huang, 2018). In translation research, the paratext of a translation provides essential resources and objects of study. Besides the typical internal texts found in any book, such as author names and titles, the paratext of a translation includes the translator’s prefaces, postscripts, footnotes, endnotes, background illustrations, and even the book’s back cover, which may contain introductions and reviews of the translated work. These elements may involve the selection of the translation subject, an introduction to the original text, the purpose and methods of translation, the translator’s reflections on the translation process, the specific characteristics and challenges of translation, and the use of special symbols. Such paratexts describe or interpret various aspects of information, providing readers and translation researchers with insights into the background of the translation, the translator’s viewpoints, the translator’s perspective on the author, and the relationship between the translation version and the original text. They serve as direct sources for readers to delve deeper into the translated work and for researchers to examine the translator and their translation principles (Huang, 2018).

Paratexts in translation reflect the subjectivity of the translator and the choices of the readers, encapsulating the relationships involved in translation and thus serving a coordinating function. Paratexts are “essential links connecting the author, translator, publisher, and readers” (Xiao, 2011).

2.3 Paratexts in Cultural Construction

Paratexts are intrinsically linked to the main text, serving as essential supplements. In translation, the disparities in cognitive frameworks, languages, and cultures often result in instances of complete or partial untranslatability, or scenarios where cultural knowledge is entirely foreign to the target audience and requires clarification. Translators typically address these challenges by employing paratextual elements such as annotations and prefaces to elucidate underlying meanings. Specifically, internal paratexts immerse the target audience in the source language context, leveraging the interplay between the main text and paratext to enhance the readers’ comprehension of the translation (Huang, 2018). In translated works, the main text and paratext engage in a dynamic interplay. The rich internal paratexts, through annotations and accompanying commentary, embed the text within a comprehensive cultural and linguistic milieu (Li & Zhang,

2015). They interpret the discourse context, the author's intent, and emotional expressions, preserving cultural differences as a cultural reality within the text. This enables the target audience to understand and appreciate these differences, thereby reconstructing cultural identity (Li & Zhang, 2015). Consequently, paratexts facilitate the target audience's understanding of source language cultural nuances and foster respect for the source culture, achieving cultural construction. The application of the paratext concept and its theoretical implications in translation studies broadens the scope and perspective of translation research, providing new focal points and research angles, particularly in the construction and transmission of source culture within translations.

2.4 Literature Review

In the past ten years, translation studies have increasingly focused on paratexts, emerging as a cutting-edge topic within the field and showing a rising trend (Yin & Liu, 2017). The significance of the paratextual perspective in translation studies has become more pronounced, with related research on the rise. In 2010, the Department of Translation and Interpreting at the Autonomous University of Barcelona organized an international symposium on "Paratextual Elements in Translation". Following the symposium, Peter Lang Publishing released the first collection of essays focusing on translation research from a paratextual perspective, which comprised 11 papers (Rong & Fu, 2014). This collection explores various aspects of translation research, including the dissemination and reception of translations, translator's subjectivity, national identity, and globalization, all from the angle of paratexts (Bardaji et al., 2012; Rong & Fu, 2014).

In 2018, Professor *Kathryn Batchelor* from University College London published *Translation and Paratexts*, the first comprehensive theoretical monograph on the study of paratexts in translation. This work has spurred related research and discussions (Zhou, 2023). Other notable studies have explored guiding target readers (Watts, 2000; Zhang, 2012), the translator's or institutional perspectives, values, and interventions in the text (McRae, 2012; Summers, 2013; Zhang, 2013), and facilitating the process of cultural translation (McRae, 2012; Watts, 2000), as well as the reconstruction of cultural identity. However, in terms of research methodology, speculative research predominates, with empirical studies relatively scarce.

The study of classical text translation, exemplified by research on the English translations of *The Analects*, has garnered significant attention both domestically and internationally. While there has been some focus on external elements of translation such as prefaces and postscripts, these studies are often scattered and tend to lean towards book reviews or historical analysis. Notably, there is a lack of in-depth examination of annotations, which are a crucial component of thorough translations. International research covers a broad spectrum but often treats paratexts as peripheral to the main translation. In contrast, domestic literature emphasizes the importance of paratexts in translation studies (Xiao, 2011). Both domestic and international researches have rarely explored the transformation of the original author's image from a paratextual perspective, and discussions typically focus on titles, illustrations, and prefaces, neglecting the annotations in translated works (Rong & Fu, 2014).

This paper, therefore, examines the ways and significance of paratexts in the cultural construction in *D.C. Lau's* English translation of *The Analects*, taking Gérard Genette's concept of paratext as a theoretical foundation.

3. Research Content and Methodology

This section outlines the content and data sources of this case study, the analytical framework, and the analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Content: Paratexts in *D.C. Lau's The Analects*

In addition to his annotations, *D.C. Lau's* translation of *The Analects* includes a comprehensive introduction and several appendices that provide detailed explanations of Confucius' biography, an overview of *The Analects*, its ideological content, and background information. These additions are aimed at helping foreign readers better understand *The Analects*. These paratexts provided by *Lau* are invaluable to the readers of the translation, offering contextual background, social and ideological frameworks, and textual interpretations, and thus facilitating a deeper cultural understanding of the original text. They help the translation achieve cultural reconstruction more effectively.

Therefore, this paper focuses on the paratexts within *Lau's* translation of *The Analects*, specifically analyzing the introduction (44 pages), annotations (205 entries), appendices (3), and glossary (2 categories) to explore how these elements assist in the cultural reconstruction of the original work.

3.2 Methods and Analytical Framework

This research is a descriptive study on the cultural construction of *D.C. Lau's* paratexts, including the preface, footnotes and annotation, in his translation of *The Analects*.

To facilitate the analysis of cultural construction, three methods of cultural identity construction through paratexts in translation proposed by previous scholars are employed: supplementation, comparison, and evaluation (Luo & Zhang, 2020). As the translator's is rarely negative, commentary is used instead of evaluation to form our framework for cultural construction. In addition, interpretation is added to refer to the method clarifying the hidden meaning or missing cultural information in the source text.

3.2.1 Supplementation

Providing additional resources and information in a supplementary form is essential to help readers better interpret the meaning of the source culture. Chinese classical texts, often characterized by their concise language and rich cultural content, cannot fully convey their cultural nuances through language conversion alone. The shared cultural knowledge of Chinese readers, due to spatial and other

limitations, is inaccessible to foreign readers without any Chinese cultural background. Supplementation through paratexts is an effective means for translations to construct the identity of the source culture (Luo & Zhang, 2020).

3.2.2 Interpretation

Interpretation refers to using paratexts to clarify the hidden or missing cultural information in the source text to facilitate readers' understanding. This method involves clarifying the missing ancient cultural information, interpreting the omitted contextual information, explaining the metaphorical information and making up for cultural image deficiency.

3.2.3 Commentary

Commentary involves commenting on the original text or the author. Such comments reflect the translator's thoughts and judgments on the source work and their cultural attitudes. These reviews influence the reception of the source text and culture to varying degrees. Therefore, commentary through paratexts is an important means of constructing the source culture.

3.2.4 Comparison

Comparison is another essential method for cultural construction in translated texts (Luo & Zhang, 2020). Due to the early composition of ancient texts and the significant temporal distance from the present, the Chinese language has undergone substantial changes. Many meanings conveyed in classical Chinese differ greatly from those in modern Chinese, and even contemporary Chinese readers may find it challenging to grasp the inherent cultural connotations. Additionally, while there are commonalities between Chinese and Western cultures, there are also profound differences. Thus, a dual comparison of the cultural differences between ancient and modern Chinese, as well as between Chinese and English can bridge cultural gaps and enhance foreign readers' appreciation of Chinese work's cultural significance.

Cases belonging to these categories are selected and analyzed in the following section. These methods can be used individually or in combination. Exploring them can help determine how the source culture is established in the translated text.

4. Analysis of Cultural Construction Through D.C. Lau's Paratexts

This section analyzes how D.C. Lau achieves the cultural construction through his paratexts by supplementation, interpretation, commentary and comparison.

4.1 Supplementation in D.C. Lau's Paratexts

4.1.1 A Comprehensive Explanation of Confucian Thoughts System in the Introduction

The Analects meticulously records the words and deeds of *Confucius*. These sayings are concise yet profound, encapsulating the essence of Confucian philosophy. To fully understand *The Analects* and Confucian culture, one must first have a grasp of *Confucius*'s philosophical system. However, due to space limitations, the translator cannot elaborate extensively within the main text. Therefore, in the introduction, the translator provides a detailed explanation of *Confucius*'s philosophical system, focusing primarily on his moral system and educational philosophy.

1) *Confucius*'s Moral System

Confucius held a high regard for morality, believing it to be something cultivated by individuals that even enables them to govern a country effectively. Thus, he emphasized the importance of developing personal virtue (Lau, 1992). The moral foundation of government was also a cornerstone of *Confucius*'s teachings. Given *Confucius*'s emphasis on morality, Lau deemed it necessary to elaborate on *Confucius*'s moral thoughts and system.

For *Confucius* there is not one single ideal character but quite a variety. The highest is the sage (*sheng jen*). Lower down the scale there are the good man (*shan jen*) and the complete man (*ch'eng jen*). There is no doubt that the ideal moral character for *Confucius* is the *ch'in tzu* (gentleman), as he is discussed in more than eighty chapters in *The Analects*.

In *Confucius*'s moral framework, *jen* (benevolence) is the most important virtue one can possess. In addition to *jen*, other virtues such as *li* (rites), *chih* (wisdom), *yung* (courage), *hsin* (trustworthiness), and *yi* (righteousness) are crucial components of his moral system and central terms in *The Analects* (Lau, 1992). The translator dedicates substantial portions of the introduction to explicating these key virtues. Lau's exposition of *Confucius*'s moral attitudes and the essential elements of his moral teachings helps readers reconstruct a clear understanding of *Confucius*'s moral system.

2) *Confucius*'s Educational Philosophy

Confucius's moral teachings are closely linked to his ideal of *ch'in tzu* (gentleman). The most critical aspect of one's attitude towards knowledge, according to *Confucius*, is honesty with oneself. *Confucius* never proposed anything that was not based on knowledge. This responsible attitude towards knowledge is paramount for teachers. *Confucius*'s teaching philosophy also includes a significant focus on methodology, particularly the relationship between "learning (学)" and "thinking (思)". "learning" and "thinking" are both distinct and interconnected. Learning differentiates individuals and fosters moral growth; it is a crucial means of accumulating the wisdom of predecessors. Thinking, on the other hand, allows individuals to discern right from wrong and distinguish between appearance and essence. They are inseparable; the former is the foundation, and the latter is the extension (Lau, 1992). The translator dedicates about 17,000 characters (44 pages) to helping readers grasp the true essence and substance of *Confucius*'s thought. This extensive explanation is the most direct and core way the paratexts contribute to the cultural construction of *The Analects*.

4.1.2 Background Knowledge in Appendices and Indexes

The translator enriches the appendices and indexes with comprehensive background knowledge on four fronts: significant events in *Confucius’s* life, disciples mentioned in *The Analects*, structure and formation of *The Analects*, and works and proper names cited in the book. This detailed supplementation provides a thorough understanding of *Confucius* and *The Analects*.

To truly grasp a person’s thoughts, it is essential to understand their life experiences, living conditions, and historical context. Similarly, reading an ancient text necessitates familiarity with the historical background and the structure of the work.

Consequently, *Lau* employed three appendices to provide detailed expositions: *Appendix 1* elucidates events in the life of *Confucius* with 31 pages; *Appendix 2* delineates the disciples as they appear in *The Analects* with 22 pages, focusing on *Confucius’s* disciples; *Appendix 3* explicates the specific chapters and structure of *LUN YÜ* (14 pages); and Index presents Works cited (nearly 50 in total) and Proper Names (nearly 230 in total).

By adding these appendices and indexes, *Lau* provides readers with a deeper understanding of *Confucius’s* personal and historical background, information about his disciples. And a structural analysis of the work directly aids readers’ comprehension.

4.2 Interpretation in D.C. Lau’s Paratexts

Interpretation refers to clarifying hidden or missing cultural information in annotations. Beyond the comprehensive explanation of Confucian thoughts in the introduction, the translator also provides detailed annotations to elucidate specific cultural information that might be hidden or missing in the main text of *The Analects*. The original text is concise and profound, and due to its antiquity, it contains numerous cultural elements that require additional explanation to avoid misinterpretation or loss of meaning in translation. These annotations address four main areas: First, given that *The Analects* was compiled over a millennium ago, it involves numerous people, places, historical events, titles, systems, and rituals related to politics, history, art, and morality. These elements carry rich cultural information crucial for understanding the text. Over time, such references have become obscure even to modern Chinese readers, let alone contemporary foreign readers. Without explanations, these cultural references would remain inaccessible. Second, the original text often omits contextual information, leading to ambiguity or incomplete references, thus causing a loss of cultural information. Third, the use of metaphors and allusions in *The Analects* often carries different cultural meanings than their literal words suggest. Misinterpretations can lead to incorrect cultural associations. Fourth, due to geographical and societal differences, certain cultural images prevalent in ancient China are unfamiliar to modern Western readers. The lack of associative imagery makes it challenging to connect specific terms with their intended cultural meanings.

Without specific explanation, these issues would significantly hinder readers’ full and accurate understanding of *The Analects*. However, to maintain the coherence, conciseness, and correspondence with the original text, it isn’t feasible to insert lengthy explanations into the main body of the translation. Therefore, *D.C. Lau* uses annotations to either directly highlight or provide explanatory notes on these culturally significant elements. This approach helps restore the original cultural information and enables readers to comprehend the deeper cultural meanings behind the text.

Among the 205 annotations in the main text, a significant portion (nearly 100 annotations) provides explanatory notes that offer complete and accurate cultural information or explanations, facilitating the reader’s understanding of the translation.

4.2.1 Clarify the Missing Ancient Cultural Information

Adding the annotations to deal with the first type of translation challenge: the missing ancient Chinese cultural information is the most prevalent in *Lau’s The Analects*. Take some cases as examples in Figure 1.

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 1	BOOK III 1. <u>Confucius</u> said of the Chi Family, “They use eight rows of eight dancers each ¹ to perform in their courtyard. If this can be tolerated, what cannot be tolerated?”	Annotation 1: A prerogative of the Emperor.	19
Example 2	BOOK III 10. The Master said, “I do not wish to witness that part of the <i>ti</i> sacrifice ⁹ which follows the opening libation to the impersonator.”	Annotation 9: An important sacrifice performed by the Emperor, but the privilege of performing it was granted to the Duke of Chou, the founder of the state of Lu.	21
Example 3	BOOK VI 28. The Master went to see Nan <u>Tzu</u> . ⁹ <u>Tzu-lu</u> was displeased.	Annotation 9: The notorious wife of Duke Ling of Wei.	54

Figure 1. The Missing Ancient Cultural Information and Its Annotation

Example 1 explains that “eight rows of eight dancers each” was a privilege exclusive to the Emperor, whereas “four rows of eight each” was appropriate for the *Chi* family. Example 2 elaborates on the “*ti* sacrifice”, a grand sacrificial ritual in ancient China that only the Emperor could perform. However, *King Cheng* of *Zhou* granted the *Duke of Zhou* the privilege to perform this ritual due to his significant contributions. This practice continued with the rulers of *Lu*. Without these additional explanations, readers would not grasp the cultural significance behind terms like “eight rows of eight dancers” or “*ti* sacrifice”, nor understand the whole text.

In Example 3, without further context, “*Nan Tzu*” might seem like an ordinary name, and readers wouldn’t even know why “*Tzu-lu* was displeased” after “The Master went to see *Nan Tzu*”. The annotation then clarifies *Nan Tzu*’s identity and her bad reputation, which explains her displeasure. This additional information helps readers understand the logical relationship between the actions and reactions in the text.

For content that embodies elements of traditional Chinese culture but cannot be directly translated, using a literal translation can be cumbersome and lengthy within the main text. Therefore, it is more effective to clarify it in the paratext to aid reader comprehension. To do this, *Lau* provides relevant cultural background information or explanatory notes related to the translation.

4.2.2 Clarify the Omitted Contextual Information

For the second type of translation challenge mentioned above, where contextual references are often omitted or unclear, the translator typically adopts a direct and explicit approach in the annotations. Examples are shown in Figure 2 :

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 4	BOOK III 15. ...Someone remarked, “Who said that the son of the man from Tsou ¹⁴ understood the rites? ...”	Annotation 14: The man from Tsou refers to Confucius’ father.	23
Example 5	BOOK IX 11....“The Master is good at leading one on step by step. He broadens me with culture and brings me back to essentials by means of the rites. I cannot give up even if I wanted to, but, having done all I can, it ⁷ seems to rise sheer above me and I have no way of going after it, however much I may want to.”	Annotation7: Throughout this chapter the “it” refers to the way of Confucius.	79
Example 6	BOOK XI 8. When Yen Yuan died, Yen Lu ⁵ asked the Master to give him his carriage to pay for an outer coffin for his son. The Master said, “Everyone speaks up for his own son whether he is talented or not. When Li ⁶ died, he had a coffin but no outer coffin, I did not go on foot in order to provide him with an outer coffin, because it would not have been proper for me to go on foot, seeing that I took my place after the Counsellors.”	Annotation 5: Yen Yüan’s father. Annotation 6: Confucius’ son.	99

Figure 2. The Omitted Contextual Information and Its Annotation

In Examples 4 to 6, the omission of contextual details results in vague references to names or pronouns. Lau enhances clarity for the readers by explicitly interpreting the identities of individuals or the nature of events that are implied but not directly mentioned in the source material.

4.2.3 Explain the Metaphorical Information

For the third above-mentioned translation challenge, caused by metaphors and allusions in the original text, the translator adds clear explanations of both the surface and actual meaning, and the connections between the ontology and the metaphor, so that the correct cultural image link can form for readers. Examples are shown in Figure 3 :

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 7	BOOK III 13. Wang-sun Chia said, “Better to be obsequious to the kitchen stove Than to the south-west corner of the house. ¹¹ What does that mean?” ...	Annotation 11: By “the south-west corner of the house” which is the place of honour Wang sun Chia, being a minister of Wei, presumably meant to refer to the lord of Wei and by “the kitchen stove” to himself.	23
Example 8	BOOK XVII 18. The Master said, “I detest purple for displacing <u>vermillion</u> . I detest the tunes of <u>Cheng</u> for corrupting classical music. ¹⁰ I detest clever talkers who overturn states and noble families.”	Annotation 10: According to the traditional interpretation, <u>vermillion</u> is a pure colour while purple is a mixed colour, but by Confucius’ time the practice of using purple in place of <u>vermillion</u> was becoming widespread. For Confucius’ condemnation of the music of <u>Cheng</u> see V.11.	177
Example 9	BOOK IX 9. The Master said, “The Phoenix does not appear nor does the River offer up its Chart. ⁵ I am done for.”	Annotation 5: Both the Phoenix and the Chart were auspicious omens. Confucius is here lamenting the hopelessness of putting the Way into practice in the Empire of his day.	79

Figure 3. The Metaphorical Information and Its Annotation

For contemporary readers, phrases in Example 7 above like “the south-west corner of the house” or “the kitchen stove” may only refer to parts of a building. In traditional Chinese culture, however, “the south-west corner of the house” was believed to house a deity, thus warranting worship. The two phrases also contain metonyms: “the south-west corner of the house” presumably means to refer to the lord of *Wei*, and “the kitchen stove” means *Wang-sun Chia* himself. The metonyms possibly serve as a form of modesty, which is a common Chinese cultural feature.

Moreover, in Example 8, colors like vermillion and purple had different cultural connotations during *Confucius*’s time when it was widespread to use purple to replace vermillion, a fact not widely known even among modern Chinese. Additionally, in Example 9, the phoenix was considered a divine bird symbolizing auspiciousness, and its appearance was believed to signify peace. Similarly, the emergence of the sage (*sheng jen*) heralded the birth of “the Chart of the Yellow River”. These cultural connections are absent in Western contexts. By providing these explanations, the translator helps readers form accurate cultural associations and understand the deeper meanings behind these references.

4.2.4 Make up for Cultural Image Deficiency

For the fourth kind of issue, the deficiency of Chinese cultural image, where western readers lack the associative Chinese image in their minds for the words they encounter, the translator interprets the text with characteristic and functional explanations in the annotations. This aids readers in swiftly establishing basic schematic links within their minds, thereby creating associations for the imagery. Examples are shown in Figure 4:

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 10	BOOK VI 25. The Master said, “A <i>ku</i> ⁸ that is not truly a <i>ku</i> . A <i>ku</i> indeed! A <i>ku</i> indeed!”	Annotation 8: A drinking vessel with a regulation capacity.	53
Example 11	BOOK VI 4. Jan Tzu asked for grain for the mother of Tzu-hua who was away on a mission to Ch'i. The Master said, “Give her one <i>fu</i> .” ² Jan Tzu asked for more. “Give her one <i>yü</i> .” Jan Tzu gave her five <i>ping</i> of grain. ...	Annotation 2: <i>Fu</i> , <i>yü</i> and <i>ping</i> are dry measures in ascending order of capacity.	47

Figure 4. The Deficiency of Cultural Image and Its Annotation

The annotation in Example 10 explains the ancient Chinese object “*ku*”, a specific type of drinking vessel with a defined capacity. This annotation ensures that readers can understand the essence of *ku* without needing to consult additional references, thereby enhancing reading efficiency. Similarly, in Example 11, annotations clarify that *fu*, *yü*, and *ping* are traditional dry measures of capacity, concepts absent in Western cultural imagery. By providing characteristic and functional explanations, the translator compensates for the lack of corresponding cultural imagery in the target language, helping readers quickly form basic associative links to construct cultural meanings.

4.3 Commentary in D.C. Lau’s Paratexts

Lau’s commentary in the paratext mainly includes two aspects: commentary on the source text and of *Confucius*.

4.3.1 Commentary on *The Analects*

For informations that are missing, ambiguously explained, or remain controversial due to the antiquity of *The Analects*, Lau meticulously traces the origins to make informed judgments or highlight issues. This reflects the translator’s rigorous cultural attitude and profound knowledge of classical Chinese literature. It also conveys accurate cultural judgments and presents cultural areas of *The Analects* that require further exploration. According to statistics, there are over 20 instances of such evaluations.

First, the ambiguity and uncertainty in *The Analects* are pointed out for further exploration. Figure 5 provides some cases.

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 12	Book III 4. ...at sixty my ear was attuned; ⁴ ...	Annotation 4: The expression <i>erh shun</i> is very obscure and the translation is tentative. It is worth pointing out that the graph 聖 (sage) has an 耳 (ear) component, and this saying of Confucius may have some bearing on the fact that he was regarded as a sage by even his contemporaries (see, e.g., IX.6).	11
	Book IX 7. Lao ³ said, “The Master said, ‘I have never been proved in office. That is why I am a jack of all trades.’”	Annotation 3: The identity of the person referred to here is uncertain.	79
	Book XI 13. ... “A man like Yu will not die a natural death.” ⁷	Annotation 7: This remark seems out of place here. It probably belongs to another context.	99
	Book XVI 12. ... This is probably what is meant. ³	Annotation 3: This chapter is obviously defective. The beginning seems missing. Hence no speaker is mentioned. Neither is there any saying to which the final sentence can refer.	167
	Book XVII 9. ... “Inside the family there is the serving of one’s father; outside, there is the serving of one’s lord; there is also the acquiring of a wide knowledge of the names of birds and beasts, plants and trees.” ⁴	Annotation 4: To these activities the study of the Odes must, presumably, be relevant, but the point is not explicitly made. This is very likely due to some corruption in the text.	175

Figure 5. The Ambiguity and Uncertainty and Its Annotation

Due to the ancient origin of *The Analects*, unintentional omissions by recorders or text damage over generations have led to information loss and ambiguity. As in Example 12, Lau points out these unclear or missing parts in the paratext, demonstrating a genuine cultural representation and revealing the cultural exploration space within *The Analects* for future research.

Beyond highlighting issues above, Lau makes informed judgments based on thorough research. Examples are shown in Figure 6:

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 13	Book XIV 9. Someone asked about Tzu-ch'an. The Master said, "He was a generous man." He asked about Tzu-hsi. The Master said, "That man! That man!" He then asked about Kuan Chung. The Master said, "He was a man. ¹ ..."	Annotation 1: The text is probably corrupt. In the light of the first answer, an adjective, probably "benevolent", should precede the word "man". See chapters 16 and 17 below where Kuan Chung is said to be "benevolent".	135
Example 14	Book XVI 1... Confucius said, "Ch'iu, the gentleman detests those who, rather than saying outright that they want something, can be counted on to offer a plausible pretext instead. What I have heard is that the head of a state or a noble family worries not about under population but about uneven distribution, not about poverty but about instability. ¹ ..."	Annotation 1: The text is corrupt here. In the light of what follows, this passage should, probably, read: "... worries not about poverty but about uneven distribution, not about under population but about disharmony, not about overturning but about instability."	163
Example 15	Book XX 1... If he is impartial the common people will be pleased. ³	Annotation 3: This passage is not attributed to any speaker. It seems to consist of a number of unconnected parts on various aspects of government. Although one of these parts, as we have just pointed out, is, indeed, attributed to Confucius in XVII.6, it would be rash to infer from this that Confucius must be responsible for everything else as well.	203

Figure 6. Make Judgments in Its Annotation

In Examples 13-15, where the original text presents cultural ambiguities, Lau doesn't just present them unchanged in the paratext but also uses his deep understanding of classical literature and diligent cultural exploration to find clues and relevant evidence. He carefully deliberates and, based on sufficient and accurate evidence, offers his cultural interpretations and judgments. This compensates for some of the cultural information missing in the original text of *The Analects*.

4.3.2 Commentary on Confucius

Commenting Confucius's image provides readers with the translator's cultural perspective on *The Analects* and is a crucial element of cultural construction.

In the introduction, Lau offers his high praise for Confucius, describing him as both a great thinker and a great human being. He notes that Confucius was anything but dogmatic; he was modest about his own achievements, widely different in talent and temperament (Lau, 1992).

Lau concludes the introduction by stating, "Here is a man who, indeed, appreciated the joys of living. Anyone who has read the sayings of Confucius carefully and without prejudice will surely find it difficult to recognize the diehard conservative and arch-villain that he has sometimes been made out to be. Confucius is, perhaps, yet another instance of the proverbial prophet" (Lau, 1992).

Throughout history, Chinese Confucian scholars have never questioned or denied Confucius or his teachings in any text. Traditional Chinese reverence for Confucius and *The Analects* has established Confucius as a "sage", rendering his words sacred and inviolable (Wei, 2015). Lau's direct evaluation of Confucius in the introduction, positioning him as a prophet, reflects his utmost respect and recognition of

Confucius's wisdom and virtues. This aligns perfectly with the traditional Chinese perception of *Confucius* and *The Analects*.

4.4 Comparison in D.C. Lau's Paratexts

Lau's cultural construction through paratexts involves two primary comparisons: between ancient and modern Chinese and between Chinese and Western cultures. Comparison serves as another method for constructing cultural understanding in the translation.

4.4.1 Comparison Between Ancient and Modern Chinese

Language evolves over time, and even within the same language, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation can change significantly over millennia. This is true for Chinese as well. *The Analects*, written thousands of years ago, contains words whose meanings and usages have diverged in modern Chinese. Some terms, particularly rare ones, might be unfamiliar to contemporary Chinese readers. Without additional comparative explanations, misunderstandings are likely to occur. Example is shown in Figure 7:

Example	Text	Annotation	Page
Example 16	Book VII 11. ...The Master said, "I would not take with me anyone who would try to fight a tiger with his bare hands or to walk across the River 74 and die in the process without regrets..."	Annotation 11: In ancient Chinese literature, "the River" meant the Yellow River.	59

Figure 7. Comparison Between Ancient and Modern Chinese

In modern Chinese, "he liu" (river) in Example 16 is a general term for any river, but in ancient Chinese, it specifically referred to the Yellow River (Yang. 2009), the largest one in China. Such cultural image is precise and specific rather than general. By comparing ancient and modern meanings, Lau helps readers accurately understand the original sense of these terms in *The Analects*.

4.4.2 Comparison Between Chinese and Western Cultures

Chinese and Western languages and cultures share similarities and differences. For Western readers of Chinese works, comparing these cultures can enhance their understandings of Chinese language and culture. Set "hsin" (trustworthiness) and "ching" (reverence) as examples in Figure 8:

Example	Key Concept	Comparison	Page
Example 17	"hsin" (trustworthiness)	This is a concept which has no exact equivalent in English. To be <i>hsin</i> is to be reliable in word. An important part of this has, of course, to do with promise-keeping. But when Confucius talks of being <i>hsin</i> in word, he means more than that. To be <i>hsin</i> in word applies to all one's words. It concerns, besides promises, resolutions concerning future conduct, or even plain statements of fact.	XXIV
Example 18	"ching" (reverence)	This is a rather ancient concept. In early Chou literature <i>ching</i> describes the frame of mind of a man taking part in a sacrifice. It is different from that shown in other religions. In other religions, there is fear and abject submission in face of the power of the deity. <i>Ching</i> , on the other hand, is born of the awareness of the immensity of one's responsibility to promote the welfare of the common people. It is a combination of the fear of failing in the responsibility one is charged with and the solemn single-mindedness directed towards the satisfactory discharging of that responsibility.	XXIV

Figure 8. Comparison Between Chinese and Western Cultures

Terms like "hsin" (Examples 17) and "ching" (Examples 18) lack exact English equivalents, and the translator highlights the cultural difference to prevent cultural misunderstandings and aid comprehension through comparative explanations.

However, Lau's work contains relatively few such comparisons, and those that exist primarily explain Chinese culture from a Chinese perspective rather than using Western cultural logic. Unlike some overseas sinologists who interpret Chinese culture through Western philosophical elements and figures like Jesus, Lau avoids this approach to prevent cultural centrism. Instead, he strives to preserve the authentic Chinese cultural perspective. He also avoids interpreting Western culture through a Chinese lens. As he states, "It cannot be denied that, over the centuries, Confucianism acquired a lot of dogmas and developed authoritarian tendencies, but it would be as grossly

unfair to lay these at *Confucius*' door as to blame Jesus for the excesses of the Church in later ages (Lau, 1992). This reflects his attitude and inclination towards constructing Chinese Confucian culture authentically.

5. Conclusion

The role of paratext in translation is crucial for conveying cultural significance, especially when translating works rich in Confucian culture like *The Analects*. D.C. Lau's translation of *The Analects* has become an essential read for Western scholars seeking to understand Eastern culture. Beyond the main text, *Lau's* paratextual elements play a vital role in cultural construction. He employs four primary methods in the paratext to effectively construct rich culture in *The Analects*: supplementation, interpretation, commentary and comparison. Among them, supplementation is *Lau's* main method of cultural construction. In the introduction, he offers a comprehensive and systematic explanation of the Confucian thought system, helping readers deeply understand the origins and essence of Confucianism. In the appendices and indexes, *Lau* includes background knowledge that provides readers with a clearer understanding of the historical context of the original work, as well as detailed information about *Confucius's* personal and life background. Interpretation is *Lau's* second most frequently used method for cultural construction. Through annotations, he clarifies hidden or missing cultural information in the original text, guiding readers to correctly interpret the underlying assumptions. Commentary is the third frequently used method. By commenting on the original text and *Confucius* himself, *Lau* not only presents his culturally informed judgments based on rigorous evidence but also reflects his cultural choices. For instance, he refers to *Confucius* as a "prophet". Comparison is *Lau's* method as well, involving both comparisons between ancient and modern Chinese, and between Chinese and Western cultures. On one hand, this helps modern Western readers understand the commonalities and differences between ancient and modern Chinese culture, as well as between Chinese and Western cultures. On the other hand, it is noted that *Lau* employs cultural comparisons sparingly, which underscores his approach of using Chinese cultural perspectives to explain Confucian culture. Through these methods, *Lau* demonstrates the authentic Confucian cultural classic, faithfully presenting the sage image of *Confucius* and his wise teachings as perceived by the Chinese people over millennia. The rich paratext effectively constructs the translation culture of *The Analects*.

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Authors' contributions

The authors' contributions to the paper are as follows: Salina and Zhong Lue conducted the study design. Zhong Lue, Salina, and Syed were responsible for method, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Draft manuscript was primarily prepared by Zhong Lue and checked by Salina, and Syed. All authors critically reviewed the results and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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