Debating Human Nature: Mencius and Gaozi

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In the earlier chapters, we have referred at certain points to a tendency to read the *Analects* in terms of the theory of *xing* 性 or (human) nature found in the *Mencius*. This theory is described in this chapter through a discussion of the debate between Mencius and Gaozi 告子, in Book 6 of the *Mencius*.[1] Mencius's theory was developed against some intellectual challenges,[2] one of these coming from Gaozi.[3] As we shall see, Mencius regarded his views on *xing* to be morally subversive. However, there has been controversy over the logical status of the individual moves made by Mencius and Gaozi in the debate. Thus, Arthur Waley has stated, "As a controversialist he [Mencius] is nugatory. The whole discussion (Book VI) about whether Goodness and Duty are internal or external is a mass of irrelevant analogies, most of which could equally well be used to disprove what they are intended to prove."[4] D. C. Lau, on the other hand, has argued that it is wrong to think that "Mencius . . . could have indulged consistently in what appears to be pointless argument or that his opponents were always effectively silenced by *non sequiturs*."[5] But, according to Chad Hansen, it is precisely this that Mencius is guilty of.[6] A. C. Graham, however, credits Lau with converting him from sharing Waley's point of view.[7]

Given these disagreements, there is a need to reexamine the debate. A major feature of it is the use of analogies by both Mencius and Gaozi. I shall draw out certain assumptions and implications of these analogies that have not been sufficiently clarified. As we shall see, Mencius fails to refute Gaozi in 6A:1–3. But the real issue emerges in 6A:4 and 6A:5 where the terms *nei* 內 and *wai* 外 or "internal" and "external" are prominent. Some writers have noted that this is one crux of the debate, and some also share my belief that Gaozi deserves better credit for his arguments than has generally been acknowledged.[8] However, I think there is a certain logical move that Mencius and his disciple Gongduzi make in 6A:4 and 6A:5 that has not been sufficiently appreciated.

Later on, I shall spell out this logical move schematically. But in general terms, we can put it in the following way first. It is crucial to note that, in the debate, the terms "internal" and "external" are introduced by Gaozi and questioned by Mencius. Through the analogies of food and drink in 6A:4 and 6A:5, Mencius (and also Gongduzi) exposes the sensory and appetitive assumptions behind Gaozi's use of these terms. I use the terms "sensory and appetitive" to

refer to two broad phenomena of desires. One, those stimulated by the sensations of taste, sight, sound, and so on (as mentioned for example in 6A:7). Two, the appetite for food and sex, as mentioned for example by Gaozi to be definitive of *xing* in 6A:4. Mencius throws doubt on whether "internal" and "external," as understood by Gaozi, can be applied to show that *ren* 仁 is internal and *yi* 義 is external. This interpretation goes against the usual view: that Mencius agrees with Gaozi that *ren* is internal, but disagrees that *yi* is external. On my interpretation, however, Mencius is questioning Gaozi's application of "internal" and "external" to both *ren* and *yi*, and showing that it has absurd consequences for his use of both terms.

I shall not reproduce the passages in full. Instead, there is a progression of argument best displayed in terms of paraphrase. Although reference shall be made to Lau's paper because of its centrality in the controversy, my aim is to analyze the arguments between Gaozi and Mencius so as to reveal their philosophical underpinnings. Thus, it is essential to Mencius's rebuttal of Gaozi that we understand his own application of "internal" and "external." But as an important preliminary to this, we need to see that Mencius provides a moral psychology of the *xin* 心 or the heart-mind which describes the possibilities of relationships and attitudes based on responses other than desire. A detailed account of this moral psychology will be provided after a discussion of the debate. In contrast to Mencius, Gaozi emphasizes the biological processes of life or *sheng* 生 and this limits him to a psychology of desire. Ultimately, as we shall see, it is Mencius's description of what it is to be human that allows him a conception of both *xin* and *xing*.

The Willow Analogy (6A:1)

In 6A:1, Gaozi draws an analogy between *xing* and the *qi* willow (*qi liu* 杞柳): to make *ren yi* 仁義 or morality [9] out of the *xing* of human beings is like making cups and bowls out of the willow. Some commentators have taken Gaozi to imply that *xing* is bad. For instance, Zhu Xi has commented that according to Gaozi, human *xing* originally has no *ren yi*. It must be worked upon before *ren yi* can be established, and that this is similar to Xunzi's 荀子 saying that *xing* is originally bad.[10] But contrary to Zhu Xi, this last comparison does not follow, for two reasons. First, the belief that *ren yi* is constructed need not imply that human *xing* is originally bad. Nothing is implied one way or another, about the original state of human *xing*. Second, as recent scholarship has shown, the sense in which Xunzi says that human *xing* is bad may have nothing to do with any original nature. Instead, badness or evil is a result of the nonregulation of desires in human interaction and given the limitedness of material resources.[11]

In response, Mencius poses two questions. First, would making cups and bowls out of the willow not involve doing violence to it? Second, on this analogy, would it not mean doing violence to human beings to make them *ren yi*?

To be consistent with Gaozi's analogy, Mencius should talk of doing violence to the *xing* of human beings, and not human beings *per se*. Perhaps it would be fair to say that this is what he has in mind, as he had prefaced the above questions by asking whether one could follow the *xing* of the willow in making cups and bowls. As Kwong-loi Shun has shown, while Gaozi compares *xing* to the willow, emphasizing that human *xing* is pliable and can be molded in a good or bad direction, Mencius, on the other hand, compares human *xing* to the *xing* of the willow: since making the willow into cups and bowls involves going against its nature (to grow into a full-grown plant), Mencius argues that Gaozi's analogy commits him to saying that making humans moral also involves going against their *xing*.[12]

But in any case, there is so far no real argument between Gaozi and Mencius. All we have is an analogy and its construal. There is no telling whether Gaozi accepts this construal. If he accepts it, no contradiction need arise vis-à-vis his analogy. It may be that making *ren yi* out of the *xing* of human beings would involve force or violence. However, the extent of "violence" depends on how pliable the *xing* of the willow is. Similarly, the extent of "violence" to human *xing* depends on its pliability. In this sense, violence need not imply a "violation" of anything.

There are two possible replies here, in support of Mencius. One is that in order to make cups and bowls out of the willow, one would have to kill the tree first.[13] Another is that "pliability" does not imply nonsuffering—a "pliant" person can be made to suffer terribly, in which case violence may increase with pliability. Perhaps it is possible objections like these that lead Gaozi to his next analogy of water, where no damage is done no matter how one forces it.

Mencius's comment on Gaozi's willow analogy is, "Surely, it will be your *yan* 言 (words, teachings) which lead people of the world to *huo* 禍 (bring disaster upon, regard as a disaster) *ren yi*." But this is a consequence that Gaozi could accept. After all, there is no saying that Gaozi wishes to uphold *ren yi*. On the other hand, Gaozi may want to uphold *ren yi*. Still, he could dispute the consequence.

However, Lau has developed two arguments for Mencius.[14] First, by implying that it is necessary to do violence to human nature in making people moral, one is saying that it is bad to do so—that it is unnatural and artificial to make humans moral. But, according to Lau, these *are* moral judgments. Gaozi cannot escape making moral judgments and this shows that they cannot be artificial and unnatural. Second, Gaozi's position implies that it would be just as much a violation of human nature if people were to be made immoral. But it would be easy for anyone "hostile to morality" to argue that "since it is unnatural for man to be moral it must be natural for him to be immoral." It is in this sense that Gaozi's saying would be disastrous for morality.[15]

In Gaozi's defense, we may deny that he is making any moral judgment about the badness of making humans moral or that he is committed to any such

judgment. Another sense of "inescapably" making moral judgments would be that Gaozi has to make such judgments in his everyday life. Nonetheless, we may invoke the distinction between first-order and second-order levels of discourse here. Thus, the fact that Gaozi inescapably makes moral judgments is logically distinct from how he views the nature of such discourse, that is, at the second-order level. Gaozi is proposing the theory that *ren yi* is established through the process of working upon *xing*. This is consistent with either upholding or not upholding *ren yi*, at the first-order level of moral discourse. This distinction also enables us to look at Lau's second argument as simply a reiteration of the moral anxiety felt by Mencius, at the first-order level, reflective of Mencius's earnest moral faith. Interestingly, Lau himself does not say that Gaozi is hostile to morality. Instead, he thinks that Gaozi may be "misrepresented," since it is easy for anyone hostile to morality to argue that it would be natural to be immoral.[16]

The Water Analogy (6A:2)

In 6A:2, perhaps sensing a misunderstanding on Mencius's part, or wishing to circumvent Mencius's objections to his willow analogy, Gaozi resorts to an analogy with water. Human *xing* is, like whirling water, directionless until it is channeled. The fluidity of water allows Gaozi to bypass the earlier objection that to make *ren yi* out of human *xing* would involve a violation. Water being fluid, no violence is done to it when channeled. It could be said that human *xing*, like water, does not have any inherent direction.

Mencius replies that although water may be indifferent to east or west, it cannot be indifferent to up or down. He asserts that the goodness of human *xing* is like the tendency of water to flow downward—there is no human being who is not-good (*bu shan* 不善), just as it can never be the case that water does not tend to flow downward. Further, just as water may be forced upward by splashing and damming, human beings may be made to be not-good. But this state of affairs may not be said to constitute the *xing* of water or humans.

Although some have thought that Mencius wins the argument here,[17] the comparison between the tendency of water to flow downward and the tendency of human nature to be good does no logical work. In other words, there is no logical connection whatsoever between the former and the latter tendencies. What is happening here is that a *belief* is being stressed, that human nature *must* be good, just as water must, ordinarily, flow downwards. But this belief does not constitute an *argument*.

We should note the aptness of Gaozi's water analogy, as a response to Mencius's earlier objections to the willow analogy. There is a dynamism to water that makes it hard to accept that any damage is done to it in the process of splashing and damming. We saw earlier that Gaozi could accept Mencius's construal of his willow analogy. The notion of violence being done to the willow

need not imply a "violation" of anything, because the suitability of the willow for making cups and bowls depends on its pliability. The water analogy extends this point, because the dynamic fluidity of water enables it to be shaped and channeled in any direction whatsoever.[18] Again, there need be no connotation that human beings are naturally and originally bad. The emphasis is still on *ren yi* being a construction.

Xing as *Sheng:* Mencius's *Reductio* (6A:3)

Gaozi next gives a definition of *xing*: *sheng zhi wei xing* 生之謂性 ("The life process is what meant by 'nature'"). Mencius's interrogations about the tautologous nature of whiteness as applied to various things (for example, "Is the whiteness of white feathers the same as the whiteness of white snow?") show that *sheng* and *xing* are taken by Gaozi tautologously. Mencius further asks whether, in this regard, there is any difference between the *xing* of a hound and an ox, on the one hand, and the *xing* of an ox and a human being, on the other. This is meant as a *reductio ad absurdum* of Gaozi's assertion that there is nothing more to human *xing* than *sheng*, the life process, or the related biological processes of food and sex, as given in Gaozi's statement in 6A:4, *shi se xing ye* 食色性也 ("The appetite for food and sex is 'nature'").

Although there is no indication in the text that Gaozi is floored by this attempted *reductio*, commentators like Lau and Graham take this as the clincher, thinking that Gaozi himself has no choice but to accept the argument.[19] But there is no reason why Gaozi cannot accept the conclusion that human *xing* is the same as that of animals. To make this more reasonable, we need to look more closely at Gaozi's overall position. His belief that *xing* is without inherent direction is spelled out more explicitly in 6A:6 by Mencius's disciple, Gongduzi, as *xing wu shan wu pu shan* 性無善無不善. This should not be rendered simply as "*Xing* is neither good nor bad," but instead as, "*Xing* is without good, and without not-good." In other words, the category of *shan* or goodness is wholly inapplicable to *xing*. The assertion that *xing* and *sheng* are tautologous reinforces this decategorization, bringing into focus instead the animal and biological instincts of human beings.

The reason why Mencius's *reductio* fails is that it simply reiterates Gaozi's view, that human nature is to be seen in terms of the necessary animal and biological processes of life. To say that human *xing* is the same as the animal and biological processes of life seems to imply that there is no difference between human being and animal. This is shocking. However, this merely begs the question. Neither does it follow that Gaozi believes there is no difference between human being and animal.[20] The assertion that *xing* and *sheng* are equivalent is still consistent with the view that *ren yi* is constructed out of *xing*. For even if *xing* consists of the sensory and appetitive desires, it may still be shaped, constructed, or enculturated into *ren yi*, and this is what differentiates human

being from animal. Later, we shall see how Mencius provides an argument for the difference between human being and animal in terms of the possibilities of human relationships and reflective thought, but that argument does not belong here.

Gaozi on Internal and External (6A:4, 6A:5)

In 6A:4, Gaozi says: "Appetite for food and sex is nature (*shi se xing ye*). *Ren* is internal, not external; *yi* is external, not internal." He is asked by Mencius to clarify the latter of the two statements. Evidently, *ren* is thought to be internal in some sense similar to the sensory and appetitive desires. An example of *ren* is given further in the passage, in terms of love or affection for one's brother, as against the brother of a person from Qin whom one would not love. The word *yue* 悦 is used here, indicating that in loving my brother and not another's, I am doing what "pleases" me.[21] This, together with the examples of food, sex, and affection, shows that by "internal" Gaozi is referring to the motivational basis for action, as arising from the sensory and appetitive desires.

This is reinforced by the contrast with *yi*. Gaozi describes the externality of *yi* in terms of the concepts of elderliness and respect for elders. An analogy is made with whiteness. Elderliness is said to be an external quality in the same way as whiteness. Just as it is on account of something's being white that I regard it as white (*bai zhi* 白之), Gaozi states that it is on account of someone's elderliness that he respects him (*bi zhang er wo zhang zhi* 彼長而我長之). Respect, in other words, is due to someone in relation to his position. One is fulfilling *yi* if one pays attention to the circumstances under which it is due, and shows respect accordingly. *Yi*, in this sense, is a social construct and hence, external.

Mencius replies that (admittedly) there is no difference between the "whiteness" of a white horse and of a white person, but is there no difference between the two "*zhang*" in *zhang ma* 長馬 (old horse) and *zhang ren* 長人 (old or elderly person)? The ambiguity of *zhang* either as adjectival (attributing oldness) or as verbal (to treat with respect) is brought out in his next question: Whether we say that it is the object of respect—that is, the elderly person (*zhang zhe* 長者)—or the person evincing respect (*zhang zhi zhe* 長之者), who is *yi*?

Mencius is drawing attention to the fact that the *yi* that is shown in respecting the elderly comes from the person who shows respect, not the object of respect. Gaozi's reply is that since there is no difference between respecting an elder from Chu and my own elder, this is due to the quality of being elderly and hence it is called external. Presumably, in the case of one's own elder, there is affection as well as respect. But because the respect shown is identical in both cases, this is *yi* and it is an external source that identifies whether respect is due.

Replying to this, Mencius poses the following question: Although there is no difference between enjoying the roast of a person from Qin, and enjoying my own roast, does it follow that there is externality in my enjoying a roast?

In 6A:5, Mengjizi (presumably a follower of Gaozi's) has a dialogue with Gongduzi (Mencius's disciple). Mengjizi claims that since *jing* 敬 or respect varies with the circumstances, this shows that respect (as an expression of *yi*) is external. The example cited is that although normally priority of respect is accorded my eldest brother over a more elderly villager, in a village gathering however, I would accord priority to the villager (by pouring wine for the villager first). Gongduzi is stumped by this, and informs Mencius of what has transpired. Mencius provides the example of the respect shown for one's younger brother having priority over one's uncle when the former is involved in a sacrifice where he is impersonating an ancestor.[22] Gongduzi relays this to Mengjizi, who replies, "It is the same respect whether I am respecting my uncle or my younger brother. It is, as I have said, external and does not come from within." To which Gongduzi replies: "In winter, one drinks hot water, in summer cold. Does that mean that even (the sensation of) drinking and eating can be a matter of what is external?"

There are various explanations about what is going on with regard to the roast and drink analogies in 6A:4 and 6A:5. I shall discuss some of these before presenting my own explanation.

The Roast and Drink Analogies

Kwong-loi Shun's explanation of the roast analogy is as follows:

> We like a roast whether it belongs to us or to someone else, but we do not do so because we recognize it as proper to like a roast by virtue of its quality of being a roast, which is independent of us. This idea Mencius puts by saying that there is no externality in liking a roast. . . . Rather, as Kao Tzu (Gaozi) would presumably agree, it is explained by the fact that we have a taste for roast in general, without regard to whether it belongs to us or to another. Likewise, in the case of treating old people as old, we recognize that it is improper not to extend the same respectful treatment to all old people because we are already inclined to treat old people in general with respect, whether they belong to our own family or not.[23]

In this explanation, the stress is on the fact that there is a shared taste, and on a shared inclination for respect and hence *yi*, irrespective of the object of taste or respect. Shun refers to 6A:7, for instance, where the point is made that there are certain predispositions of the heart-mind shared by all, just as there are shared tastes.[24] The same emphasis is made in Shun's explanation of the drink analogy:

> According to [Gongduzi], we just prefer to drink hot water in winter and cold water in summer; although our preferences vary with external circumstances, they are a matter of taste and not preferences we regard as proper to have by virtue of external

> circumstances. . . . Kung-tu Tzu (Gongduzi) took the example to illustrate the point that although the objects of our greater respect may vary with external circumstances, it does not follow that our greater respect is something we regard as proper to have by virtue of such circumstances. Rather, the variation may be a result of the way we ourselves are constituted, and hence Meng Chi-tzu's (Mengjizi's) argument does not show that propriety lies on the outside.[25]

However, the same stress on taste has been taken as irrelevant by Whalen Lai. After clarifying that for Gaozi, nature is what is inborn, and that the desire for food and sex that is central to this nature is morally neutral just as water can be channeled in different directions, Lai says: "Mencius and a disciple on two occasions used 'the love of roast meat independent of location' (6A:4) and 'the instinct to drink cold water in summer and hot beverages in winter' (6A:5) to disprove Kao Tzu's (Gaozi's) use of the 'inner/outer' distinction. By our clarification . . . both meat and drink come under 'food and sex' and should therefore be ruled not applicable to an analysis of moral attitude."[26] It is clear that Lai is saying that the analogies do not work, since these remarks are prefaced by the statement that "Kao Tzu (Gaozi) can withstand some of the Mencian charges against him."[27]

Curiously, what Lai says about the inapplicability of food and sex to an analysis of moral attitude can be taken as supportive of what Mencius wants to say. In other words, Mencius *is* denying the applicability of the sensory and appetitive desires to a proper description of moral concepts, when he claims that both *ren* and *yi* are internal. We shall see this in more detail later. Here, I want to offer an alternative explanation of the roast and drink analogies that brings out a strong logical move that I think both Mencius and Gongduzi are making. But first, we need to see the overall point of the analogies. In this regard, a clue is given by the following remarks of Lau's in reference to 6A:4 and 6A:5:

> The arguments are obviously not conclusive, but this is in part due to Mencius' limited purpose. All he set out to do, in both cases, was to show that his opponents failed to establish the externality of *yi*. He did not attempt to go beyond this and to establish positively that *yi* was internal.[28]

This is an important observation. Mencius is seeking a clarification of the terms, "internal" and "external," extending the question he had posed earlier in 6A:4, "Why do you say that *ren* is internal and *yi* is external?" Mencius is pointing to a difficulty with "internal" and "external," because the evincing of respect is not just an external quality like whiteness or being elderly (whether it be an old horse or an old man). The roast and drink analogies bring out further, logical, difficulties.

The roast analogy in 6A:4 parallels Gaozi's argument that since the respect shown for both a family and nonfamily member is the same, this shows that

respect for the elderly must be external. Mencius points out that by the same token, since there is no difference between enjoying my own roast or another's, my enjoyment would be deemed external. This is of course absurd, for enjoyment of a roast must be internal in the sensory and appetitive sense. The argument can be presented schematically, to show the logical parallels. Taking X to be "my" and Y to be "another":

Gaozi argues

(1)		愛 X 之弟	Love my brother
	But Not:	愛 Y 之弟	Love another's brother
	Therefore:	*Ren* (love) is internal	
(2)		長 X 之長	Respect (literally, "to elder") my elder
	Similarly:	長 Y 之長	Respect another's elder
	Therefore:	*Yi* (respect) is external	

Mencius shows

(3)		嗜 X 之炙	Relish my own roast
	Similarly:	嗜 Y 之炙	Relish another's roast
	Therefore:	Relish is external	

As we can see schematically, (3) has the same logical form as (2). However, its conclusion is absurd. This is what logicians refer to as a *reductio ad absurdum* (or a *reductio*, in short): a refutation of an argument by displaying its absurd consequences, where these consequences follow as a matter of logical necessity.

The same absurdity is illustrated in the drink analogy of 6A:5. Schematically, with "X" for "uncle" and "Y" for "younger brother impersonating an ancestor in a sacrifice":

Mengjizi responds to Mencius's example of the younger brother impersonating an ancestor at a sacrifice:

(4)	*Jing* X *ze jing*	敬 X 則敬	Respect for X then (makes up) respect
	Jing Y *ze jing*	敬 Y 則敬	Respect for Y then (makes up) respect
	Guo zai wai	果在外	Therefore, (respect is) external

Gongduzi replies:

(5)	*Dong ze yin tang*	冬則飲湯	Winter then drink hot water
	Xia ze yin shui	夏則飲水	Summer then drink cold water
	Ran ze yin shi zai wai ye?	然則飲食在外也?	Therefore, (the sensation of) drinking/eating is external?

The *ze* 則 in (4) is not just one of implication, but also connotes the fact that the respect accorded is a result of the practice of respect itself. That is, the

respect is constituted or made up by the very performance of respect. Thus, there could be various such acts, under varying circumstances. The drink analogy parallels Mengjizi's argument that respect is external because the variation in circumstances calls for different objects of respect.

As can be seen in the above schematic presentations, the analogies of roast and drink are, in each case, consistent with the form of the arguments given by Gaozi and Mengjizi, respectively, in 6A:4 and in 6A:5. Just as the roast analogy parallels Gaozi's argument that respect (and hence *yi*) is external because there is no difference in the respect shown to my elder brother and an elder person unrelated to me, similarly, the drink analogy parallels Mengjizi's argument that *yi* is external because of the varying circumstances. In each case, an absurd consequence follows: (1) Since there is no difference in the relish of my roast or someone else's, it follows that relish is external, and (2) Since different seasons (that is, varying circumstances) call for drinks of different temperature, it follows that the sensation of drinking/eating is external.

Mencius's and Gongduzi's use of these "absurd" analogies was deliberate. The parallel formal resemblance to Gaozi's and Mengjizi's arguments show that, logically speaking, similarity of respect and variation of circumstances have nothing to do with whether something is to be regarded as internal or external. Gaozi's claim that *yi* is external is therefore invalidated.

At the same time, we are made aware that this does not mean that *yi* is internal either, *in the sense that taste and sensation are internal*. The same holds for *ren*. Most commentators have assumed that since Gaozi holds that *ren* is internal, Mencius does not question this, but instead questions only the assertion that *yi* is external.[29] However, Mencius is not counter-asserting that *yi* is internal, as most readers believe. Remember Lau's statement above: "All he (Mencius) set out to do, in both cases, was to show that his opponents failed to establish the externality of *yi*. He did not attempt to go beyond this and to establish positively that *yi* was internal."

Lau's last remark should be understood as saying that Mencius did not try to establish that *yi* was internal, *in* the arguments of 6A:4 and 6A:5. If the reader has followed the argument so far, Lau is *not* (and neither am I) denying that Mencius himself holds *yi* (and *ren*) to be internal! We shall go on to see the sense in which he does hold *yi* to be internal. Having shown up the absurdity of Gaozi's position, the onus is on Mencius to provide his own understanding of "internal" and "external." Although this is not a stated task in the context of the debate with Gaozi, it is necessary to complete the argument, one that may be seen as lying in the background. Thus, another way of looking at the debate with Gaozi is to see it as preparing the way for an account of Mencius's own understanding of "internal" and "external." Before discussing this, it is necessary to analyze his concept of *xin* first.

Xin—The Heart-Mind

In 6A:6 Mencius is asked by Gongduzi to elaborate on his position that *xing* is good (*xing shan* 性善). According to Mencius, it is not the fault of a person's native endowment (*cai* 才) if he does not do good. Everyone has the *xin* or heart-mind of compassion, shame, respect, right and wrong (*ce yin zhi xin, xiu wu zhi xin, gong jing zhi xin, shi fei zhi xin* 惻隱之心，羞惡之心，恭敬之心，是非之心). It is clear from 2A:6 that these are *duan* 端, sprouts or beginnings. Mencius says in 6A:6 that these four sprouts "do not give me a lustre from the outside, they are in me originally. It is only that I have not reflected (*si* 思) upon this."[30] Mencius's denial of a luster can be taken as a direct rebuttal of Gaozi's emphasis on *ren yi* as having an external source. He is disagreeing with Gaozi that *ren yi* is a social construct, and internality for him has to do with a potential goodness. This consists of the four sprouts. These sprouts require reflective thought and nurturance or nourishment (*yang* 養) to develop into the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* 仁，義，禮，智 (Lau: benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom).

The example of the child about to fall into a well (2A:6) has been regarded by most commentators as evidence for the existence of the heart of compassion. It has to be said that as evidence, this is rather thin. The sudden feeling one has may be of alarm, not amounting to compassion.[31] Instead, it would be better to regard this and other examples as providing a moral psychology that, when expanded upon (as we shall see), is more sophisticated than Gaozi's.

Mencius is especially careful to differentiate the feeling of compassion from wishing to please the child's parents, winning the praise of others, or even disliking the cry of the child. In other words, the compassion is a direct concern *for* the child. It is not indirect or secondary, as a means to pleasing the parents. Neither is it for the anticipated pleasure of winning the praise of others. And lastly, it is not a deflection of an unpleasant sensory state. Note that these are various modes of desire. Suppose one describes the compassion as a desire for the welfare of the child. Even so, it is clear that it is not like the desire for a pleasurable state or for deflecting an unpleasurable state. In the latter cases, the focus is on consummating a desire-state. Compassion, on the other hand, is outward-directed. The difference can be accentuated by considering that an unfulfilled sensory state may yet be fulfilled by "transferring" one's desire elsewhere. For example, frustrated in my attempt to buy a piece of property, I can look for another with similar characteristics. On the other hand, what would it mean to recommend that I "transfer" my compassion for the child elsewhere?

Consider the following example. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Dorothea is disappointed to find that the villagers in her parish are not so poor as to require her charitable work. We might recommend that she should transfer her "compassion" elsewhere. This contrasts with the "nontransferability" of

compassion, the point being that the phenomenological description of (genuine) compassion precludes such transference; that is, my compassion is for *you*, not some substitute, and this is precisely what Mencius is getting at in his contrast of the compassion for the child with other motives.[32]

Mencius can also be construed as describing the relations that can obtain between oneself and others or certain states of affairs, on the basis of certain primitive responses. Again, these are not relations of desire. In 2A:6, Mencius associates having the four sprouts with having the four limbs. A lack of any of these would cripple one. In other words, the capacity to uphold oneself and to relate to others in certain ways would be absent. As Mencius says:

> For someone possessing these four sprouts to deny his own potentialities is for him to cripple himself; for him to deny the potentialities of his prince is for him to cripple his prince. If a person is able to develop all these four sprouts that he possesses, it will be like a fire starting up or a spring coming through. When these are fully developed, he can tend the whole realm within the Four Seas, but if he fails to develop them, he will not be able even to serve his parents.

Earlier in the same passage, Mencius says that anyone who lacks any of the four sprouts would not be a human being. Clearly, the sprouts are said to define the human being in terms of enabling one to relate to others in certain ways, which, if developed, would be the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. Although not mentioned in this passage, there is also the upholding of oneself in relation to certain things.

Two examples are given in 6A:10 of this last relation. Referring to the fact that the heart-mind loathes (*wu* 惡) certain things more than death, Mencius states that this is not an attitude confined to the virtuous person, but common to all men. It is simply that the virtuous person (*xian zhe* 賢者) never loses this heart. Given that it would not only be loathsome but also shameful (*xiu* 羞) to do something that is worse than death, one develops the virtue of *yi* by maintaining this sense of shame and loathing (*xiu wu*). The second example makes the same point. When getting food means life instead of death, even a beggar would not accept food that is first trampled upon (in other words, given in a thoroughly insulting manner). Mencius goes on to say, however, that some people seem to forget the proprieties of *li yi* 禮義 when they accept certain things improperly, such as beautiful houses, concubines, and the gratitude of others, although like the beggar, they believe that they would rather die than accept food that has been given in the manner described earlier. Mencius concludes by saying, "This way of thinking is known as losing one's original heart (*ben xin* 本心)."

Environmental factors play a role in the failure to nourish, nurture, and sustain one's heart-mind. This is described, for example, in 6A:8 in terms of the Ox Mountain where it is argued that it would be mistaken to think that

its denuded state constitutes its original nature (see also 6A:9). But the failure is also attributed to the failure to reflect (*si*), in several places (6A:6, 6A:13, 6A:15, 6A:17).

In 6A:7 Mencius says that there is something possessed in common by all hearts (heart-mind):

> all palates have the same preference in taste; all ears in sound; all eyes in beauty. Should hearts prove to be an exception by possessing nothing in common (*du wu suo tong ran hu* 獨無所同然乎)? What is it, then, that is common to all hearts? Reason and rightness (*wei li ye yi ye* 謂理也義也). Thus reason and rightness please my heart (*yue wo xin* 悅我心) in the same way as meat pleases my palate (*yue wo kou* 悅我口).

Our earlier analysis has shown that it would be wrong to construe Mencius as suggesting that the heart-mind is a sensory organ in the way that the palate is. Instead, he is making a naturalistic assumption that just as there is something that pleases my palate, there is also something that pleases my heart-mind. It is clear, however, that it is *li* 理 and *yi* that please the heart-mind, not the sensation of taste. Lau translates *li* as "reason." Together with his translation of *tong ran* 同然 as "common," this may suggest that reason and rightness are distinctive of the heart-mind, to the extent that they bind the four sprouts together. But, alternative translations of *tong ran* are "agreed upon," or "agree in approving of."[33] And *li*, which occurs only in three passages in the *Mencius*, seems more appropriately translated as "pattern" or "principle."[34] In 5B:1, it occurs as order or *tiaoli* 條理 in the context of the orderly progression of music from beginning to end, and analogously, the beginning and end of wisdom and sageness.[35]

In the light of these other translations, we may read Mencius as saying that the contents of the heart-mind, that is, the four sprouts, are such that they affirm and are pleased with pattern, order or principle, and rightness. In other words, they are able to distinguish and judge what is right. We may say that Mencius is asserting the ability of the four sprouts to register certain modes of awareness, that is, both cognitively and affectively at once.[36]

Thus, the perception of the child about to fall into a well is not a mere cognition. Rather, it registers a moral awareness of an alarming situation. The compassion or feeling of concern for the child is not a concomitant part of the cognition but constitutes the mode in which the situation is registered. This applies also to the other examples discussed in 6A:10. The perception that something is both loathsome and shameful is a direct mode of awareness, not something added on to a pure cognition. In 3A:5, Mencius gives the example of people in earlier times who threw the bodies of their deceased parents into the gullies. Later observing that the bodies were being eaten by creatures and flies, they broke into a sweat and returned home for baskets and spades to bury them. Mencius comments, "The sweating was not put on for others to see. It

was an expression of their innermost heart (*zhong xin da yu mian mu* 中心達於面目)." Again, we have a mode of cognition that brings about a particular form of action. This is not confined to a single case, but as Mencius says, "(If in this case) burying them is the thing to do (*yan zhi cheng shi ye* 掩之誠是也), then the burying of their own parents by filial sons and *ren* persons also must have (a) *dao* (*ze xiao zi ren ren zhi yan qi qin yi bi you dao* 則孝子仁人之掩其親亦必有道)."[37] The perception of the thing to do here is not a function of reason but of what all heart-minds *tong ran*, that is, what they would all affirm.

Through his usage of organic and developmental terms in his description of the heart-mind, Mencius would be hard put to explain why it is that some people fail to nourish their heart-mind.[38] As we have seen, he has referred to environmental interference and he also mentions the failure of people to reflect, both cognitively and affectively, on their priorities. This last is not an explanation, but nonetheless, a realistic psychological observation. Time and again, Mencius laments the fact that many people are imprudent, neglecting the 'greater' part of themselves for the 'smaller'. Comments are made about the person knowing how to tend to various things, such as a tree, one's livestock, one's body or parts of the body such as the mouth and belly, but neglecting the greatest or most precious part of oneself, the heart-mind (6A:11, 6A:12, 6A:14).[39]

Mencius on Internal and External

With this picture of Mencius's (account of) moral psychology, we are now in a position to appreciate his understanding of "internal" and "external." As we have seen, the sprouts of compassion, shame and loathing, respect, right and wrong are not sensory and appetitive desires. The latter are transferable, and their objects substitutable and negotiable. To use Mencius's example in 6A:10, if he cannot get both delicacies of fish and bear's palm, then he would settle for bear's palm. Similarly, the desire to remain alive could be such that someone may resort to any means to keep alive. But Mencius goes on to say:

> Yet there are ways of remaining alive and ways of avoiding death to which a person will not resort. In other words, there are things he wants more than life and there are also things he loathes more than death. This is an attitude not confined to the virtuous person but common to all. The virtuous person simply never loses it.

The want or desire (*yu* 欲) in this case must surely be different from an appetitive desire. Rather than being of a piece with any desire that one will go to any length to satisfy, the want of not avoiding death at any cost puts a stop to certain desires. In other words, it judges the desires. We now see why Gaozi's definition of *xing* as *sheng* (the biological processes of life), and his insistence that the appetite for food and sex is *xing*, are unacceptable to Mencius. The

sensory organs, which are attracted to external objects, function differently from the four sprouts and their corresponding virtues. In 6A:15, Mencius says:

> The organs of hearing and sight are unable to reflect (*bu si* 不思) and can be misled by external things. When one thing acts on another, all it does is to attract it. The organ of the heart-mind can reflect. But it will find the answer only if it does reflect; otherwise, it will not find the answer. This is what Heaven has given me. If one makes one's stand on what is of greater importance in the first instance, what is of smaller importance cannot displace it. In this way, one cannot but be a great person.

The sensory organs are part of *xing*, but their nature is such that they are simply attracted or drawn toward external objects. The heart-mind, given its ability to reflect, is able to prioritize and as such can judge the suitability of external objects and not be drawn by them. *Ren* and *yi*, insofar as they are developed from the sprouts of the heart-mind, are internal, in a deeper moral sense. This sense is heightened by the contrast between humans and the brutes. Mencius is giving us a definition of what it means to be human. There are two passages in particular that spell this out, 4B:19 and 7B:24.

In 4B:19, Mencius says:

> Slight is the difference between humans and the brutes. The common person loses this distinguishing feature, while the noble person retains it. Shun understood the way of things and had a keen insight into human relationships. He followed the path of morality. He did not just put morality into practice (*you ren yi xing fei xing ren yi ye* 由仁義行非行仁義也).

Certain remarks in 2A:6 referred to earlier may help us understand what Shun is said to have known. Shun's understanding about things in general and his insight into human relationships amount to understanding the basic constituents of the heart-mind and their nurturance. As we have seen, the person who denies the four sprouts is incapacitated for human relationships. Shun's understanding of this allowed him to flow from *ren yi*. In other words, he acted and moved naturally from within the basic contents of the heart-mind, instead of instituting or imposing principles of conduct. Gaozi's emphasis on the sensory and appetitive desires made him insist that *ren yi* could only be an enforced social construct, and as such, an imposition on natural desires. Mencius is asserting that *ren yi* is a natural mode of conduct, albeit one that arises from principles of the human psyche different from the principle of desire.

In 7B:24, Mencius says:

> The way the mouth is disposed towards tastes, the eye towards colours, the ear towards sounds, the nose towards smell, and the four limbs towards ease is human nature, yet therein also lies the Decree (*ming* 命). That is why the noble person does

> not describe it as nature. The way filial love (*ren*) pertains to the relation between father and son, duty (*yi*) to the relation between prince and subject, the rites (*li*) to the relation between guest and host, wisdom (*zhi*) to the good and wise man, sageness (*sheng* 聖)[40] to the way of Heaven, is the Decree, but therein also lies human nature. That is why the noble person does not describe it as Decree.

This describes the attitude of the noble person. Again, Mencius does not deny that the sensory organs and their objects are part of nature. His statement that therein lies *ming* is the idea that the external objects toward which the sensory organs are drawn are contingent. This reading takes *ming* in a descriptive sense,[41] pertaining to the contingency of events. It is consistent with the above analysis of the externality of objects of desire. When Mencius describes the relations of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi,* and *sheng* (in 7B:24), on the other hand, it is difficult to read *ming* as a contingency, given that he sees them as arising out of the sprouts of the heart-mind. As we have seen, Mencius has argued against Gaozi that, as human beings, we have the potentiality for relations other than the relation of desire. These are relations that may instead judge the objects of desire, and "That is why the noble person does not describe it as Decree." But if we are to be consistent in the use of *ming* in the same passage, Mencius does seem to be saying that nonetheless, there is contingency in human relations too. Despite our efforts in maintaining the forms of relationships, things may go awry.

This is as it should be. Mencius does speak of Heaven as the source of *xin* (6A:15). Fully realizing *xin*, one knows *xing*, and through this, one knows and serves Heaven (7A:1). In this sense, Heaven not only endows one with some potentialities, but there is also a proper destiny, *zhengming* 正命. This is a normative sense of *ming*, which enables one to take a steadfast attitude toward death and to cultivate one's character (7A:1). Both *ming* and *zhengming* seem to be described in 7A:2—understanding that there is nothing that is not *ming*, one does not stand under a wall on the verge of collapse. This implies a cautious attitude to the contingency of events. But if one dies "after having done his best in following the Way," he would have followed *zhengming*.

This difference between *zhengming* and *ming* reiterates and heightens our understanding of "internal" and "external" as Mencius sees it. The four sprouts enable us to relate to others and to act in ways that are proper, ultimately defining us as human beings who can stand to others and to things in terms of the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. This is to follow what is internal both literally and normatively, that is, the heart-mind. In doing so, one is obeying what has been decreed by Heaven, *zhengming*. The internality here may also be described in terms of the relation between seeking and getting. Thus, in 7A:3, Mencius says: "Seek and you will get it; let go and you will lose it. If this is the case, then seeking is of use to getting and what is sought is within yourself." We may add that the seeking is a constitutive part of the getting.[42] In other words, the effort to cultivate oneself involves modes of awareness described earlier. These modes

of awareness are not means to an end that one may discard after the getting but are an important part of what it means to be a human being. There cannot be a stronger sense of "internal" than this, because it goes right to the heart of one's identity as a human being. The relation between seeking and getting, we may say, is essential. By contrast, the external objects that one seeks even if arrived at properly may elude one, depending on *ming*. In this sense, there is no essential relation between seeking and getting. As Mencius says in the same passage, "then seeking is of no use to getting and what is sought lies outside yourself."

Conclusion

Mencius fails to rebut Gaozi's assertion that morality is a construction in 6A:1–3. Mention was made of how Gaozi could escape the charge of inviting disaster to morality (*ren yi*), given his belief that it is constructed. That is, Gaozi could make a distinction between the second- and first-order levels of discourse. His theorizing at the second-order level need not imply that he cannot engage in first-order moral discourse like anyone else.

It is only when Gaozi mentions that *ren* is internal whereas *yi* is external that Mencius manages to pin him down, given the incoherence of the sensory and appetitive sense of "internal" and "external" when applied to the virtues. The development of Mencius's account of moral psychology enables us to see why the distinction we have made for Gaozi between first- and second-order levels of discourse cannot be maintained for morality, or *ren yi*. For Mencius, denial of the heart-mind and its contents would mean denying the basis on which human relationships are built. You can maintain *ren yi* only if you have a deep faith in it as arising out of your deeper self, not as something artificially imposed.

The debate with Gaozi enables us to appreciate more fully Mencius's philosophy of the human being. We see its basis in a sophisticated moral psychology, which goes beyond the psychology of desire as emphasized by Gaozi. In the final analysis, for Mencius, *xing* or nature rests on *xin* or the heart-mind. And *xin*, as Mencius states in 6A:6 is a potentiality for the virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. My analysis has shown that Mencius is in fact stressing the potential for relating to others and to things in terms of certain modes of moral awareness when he talks of *xin*. This stands in contrast to the psychology of desire as advocated by Gaozi, where the emphasis is on consummating a desire-state. In other words, it is definitive of human beings that they do not stand in relation to others as consumers, and neither are they objects that are helplessly drawn toward other objects.

My analysis has shown that we can interpret Mencius to be stressing the potential for relationships which are not relations of desire but of compassion, shame, respect, and (a sense of) right and wrong. These are different modes of

moral awareness. Mencius is reminding us that it is within the human capacity to have these modes of awareness. We should not forget, however, that these are only potentialities. It is their development into the virtues that give them their worth. There is a feedback effect here. The manifestation of the virtues enable us to talk of potential capacities and their cultivation. Mencius sometimes talks as if what prevents moral growth is the lack of appropriate environmental conditions. Thus, it could be said that one cultivates the seeds of the virtues by providing the conditions for moral growth. But there is another sense of "cultivation" that is nonvegetative and that he emphasizes. This involves thought and reflection of what it is to be human. In this sense, nothing is given and talk of what is potential is worthless if nothing is achieved.[43] The debate with Gaozi enables us to take a particular view of what Mencius is doing when he describes examples to illustrate *xin*—namely, he has provided us with a moral psychology of the possibilities of human relationships. One advantage of this reading is that it alleviates the problem mentioned earlier, that Mencius would find it difficult to explain why some people fail to nourish their *xin*. If we see *xin* from within the framework of what it is to be human and the possibility of human relations, then it becomes an existential possibility, one that some individuals may fail to live up to.

exigent situation." See A. S. Cua, "Reasonable Action and Confucian Argumentation," in *Moral Vision and Tradition Essays in Chinese Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 11–12.

52. My description of *ren* as an ethical orientation and an ethical commitment is anticipated by Antonio Cua in some of the essays in his *Moral Vision and Tradition*. Speaking of *ren* as an "ideal theme" rather than as an "ideal norm," Cua says: "an ideal may be construed as a sort of *theme* that endows the life of a commitive agent with a certain quality of excellence. In this sense, it offers not normative or preceptorial guidance, but a focal point of orientation for conduct. It is a perspective that gives a significance or quality to an individual's life. *Jen* [*ren*] may be taken thus as an ideal theme, as a focal point of attention for achieving a meaning or significance in an agent's life. The stress on self-cultivation in accordance with *jen* [ren] is a central feature in Confucian ethics" (Cua, "Reasonable Action and Confucian Argumentation," 14). See also "Confucian Vision and Experience of the World," in the same book, 30: "An ideal theme is neither a typal conception nor an archetype that establishes a pattern of behavior. It is a vision that focuses upon the gestaltlike character of a way of life. It functions as a standard of inspiration, not by providing an articulate norm or set of action guides to be complied with, but by providing a point of orientation. The achievement of an ideal theme does not depend on prior knowledge of directives that issue from it. One can comport to an ideal theme in various ways. Much depends on the creative development of the individual in his life and conduct. It is the action and experience of individual agents that furnish the content of the ideal theme."

Chapter 3: Debating Human Nature: Mencius and Gaozi

1. I shall again be referring to the bilingual edition of D. C. Lau, tr., *Mencius*, previously cited. Passage numberings follow those given in this edition. I have modified some of Lau's translations. Apart from the debate in Book 6, Mencius also discusses Gaozi in 2A:2, where he is said to have achieved an "unmoved mind" (*bu dong xin* 不動心) even before Mencius. In Gaozi's case, this is explained as: "If you fail to understand words, do not worry about this in your heart; and if you fail to understand in your heart, do not seek satisfaction in your *qi* 氣." Kwong-loi Shun has explained that Gaozi believed in shaping one's motivations by first adopting and being committed to certain doctrines, in this way attaining an "unmoved mind." Mencius's criticism of Gaozi in 2A:2 is that Gaozi did not know *yi* "because he regarded it as external and was therefore mistaken about its source, and he was not good at nourishing *ch'i* (*qi*) because he was helping *ch'i* grow by imposing a mistaken conception of *yi* from the outside." See Kwong-loi Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 119. I shall not be discussing 2A:2. However, I shall be concerned to explicate the sense in which Gaozi holds *yi* to be external, as it is very much an issue in Book 6. Discussions of 2A:2 can also be found in Whalen Lai, "Kao Tzu and Mencius on Mind: Analyzing

a Paradigm Shift in Classical China," *Philosophy East and West* 34 (April 1984): 147–60, and Jeffrey Riegel, "Reflections on an Unmoved Mind," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 47, no. 3, Thematic Issue S (September 1980): 433–57.

2. Mencius saw it as his mission to combat the egoism (*wei wo* 為我) of Yang Zhu and the doctrine of universal love or impartial caring (*jian ai* 兼愛) of Mozi, and his theory may be said to have been developed or at least sharpened with this mission in mind. This was to him an urgent task given the popularity of the idea that *xing* 性 or nature merely refers to *sheng* 生 the process of life, and the Yangist recommendation of its nurturance in individualistic terms. The Mohist challenge of particularistic concern and the gradations of love, too, had to be met. In *Mencius* 3B:9, Mencius says that he has no alternative but to dispute Yang and Mo. "The teachings current in the Empire are those of either the school of Yang or the school of Mo. . . . If the way of Yang and Mo does not subside and the way of Confucius is not proclaimed, the people will be deceived by heresies and the path of morality [*ren* yi] will be blocked. When the path of morality is blocked, then we show animals the way to devour humans, and sooner or later it will come to humans devouring each other. Therefore, I am apprehensive. I wish to safeguard the way of the former sages against the onslaughts of Yang and Mo and to banish excessive views." For detailed discussions of these challenges, see especially A. C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in his *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986) and Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*. See also my "Egoism in Chinese Ethics," in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. A. S. Cua (New York: Routledge, 2003). In chapter 4, I shall discuss how the Mencian theory of motivation is opposed to the Mohist's.

3. The affiliation of Gaozi is not important to my discussion, although I shall be concerned to explicate his views on human nature more fully in this and a subsequent chapter, where I compare him with Xunzi. Paul Rakita Goldin has noted that the idea that "morality must be obtained from outside of the self, is common to Gaozi, Xunzi, and the Guodian manuscripts—and to virtually no other known members of the Confucian school." See Goldin, "Xunzi in the Light of the Guodian Manuscripts," *Early China* 25 (2000): 120, and also 139–46. In other words, Gaozi may have belonged to an early branch of the Confucian school. The view that Gaozi belongs to the Confucian school is shared by Maurizio Scarpari. See "The Debate on Human Nature in Early Confucian Literature," *Philosophy East and West* 53 (July 2003): 336, note 5. A. C. Graham notices parallels between Gaozi and the *Jie* 戒 section of the *Guanzi* 管子. See Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature*, 22–23. David Nivison, "Philosophical Voluntarism in Fourth Century China," in his *The Ways of Confucianism*, says, "We must take seriously . . . the possibility that Gaozi as a very young man was a disciple of Mozi" (130). Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, investigates the various possibilities, but concludes that "Based on the available evidence, I do not think it is possible to determine Kao Tzu's (Gaozi) affiliation, whether as Confucian, Mohist, or Taoist . . . the content of his thinking does not point clearly in any one direction. Indeed, since this distinction between philosophi-

cal schools is drawn retrospectively, it is quite possible that they were not distinguished clearly during that period, and that Kao Tzu's thinking drew upon ideas from different philosophical movements. If so, this might well explain why his thinking is resistant to classification into our standard categories" (126).

4. Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1956), 145. Originally published by George Allen and Unwin (London, 1939).

5. D. C. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," in Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 2, 334.

6. Chad Hansen, *A Daoist Theory of Chinese Thought: A Philosophical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 188.

7. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in Graham, 27.

8. See especially Whalen Lai, "Kao Tzu and Mencius on Mind, and Huang Min Hao 黃敏浩 (Simon Wong), *Mengzi, Gaozi Bianlun de zai quan shi* 孟子, 告子辯論的再詮釋, *Tsinghua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series 32, no. 1 (June 2002): 117–44. Both Lai and Huang analyze the debate in detail and argue that Gaozi has been much misunderstood and unjustifiably maligned. Paul Rakita Goldin, *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), realizes that "the crux of the debate between Mencius and Gaozi is the question of the source of morality—is it internal or external?" (32). But he states that "Gaozi's recurrent obstacle in the discussion is his inability to marshal his images; he is outwitted at every turn by Mencius" (33), although he attributes this to Mencius's sometimes engaging in "legerdemain" and "sophistry" (34). See also Shun's examination of the debate in *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*.

9. This follows Lau's translation of *ren yi* as "morality." In the context of the present chapter, *ren* itself means "love," especially the love of kin. In one instance (7B:24), I have translated it as "filial love" which I think is more appropriate than Lau's "benevolence" since the context is the relation between father and son. Note, however, that *ren* in the *Mencius* has other meanings that I will discuss in the next chapter. The term *yi* itself pertains to the virtue of righteousness or dutifulness that has its basis in the sprout of loathing and shame in one's heart-mind (*xiu wu zhi xin* 羞惡之心).

10. Zhu Xi, *Sishu Zhangju Jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Taipei: Changan Chubanshe, 1990), 325.

11. See Donald J. Munro, "A Villain in the *Xunzi*," and David B. Wong, "Xunzi on Moral Motivation," both in *Chinese Language, Thought, and Culture: Nivison and his Critics*, ed. Philip J. Ivanhoe (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1996).

12. Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 88.

13. A point made by Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, 33: "A willow does not turn into so many cups and bowls *naturally*; one must chop the tree and work its wood to *create* cups and bowls." I wonder what the *qi* willow or *qi liu* 杞柳 is or was like. Was it necessary to cut the whole trunk or just its branches to make cups and bowls? If the former, perhaps it would have been killed, if the latter, then not necessarily.

14. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," 336.

15. Donald Munro, in personal correspondence, comments: "Chinese thinkers of many schools use the behavioral implications of a doctrine as grounds for accepting or rejecting it (i.e. the psychological impact it is likely to have on people who hear it). The behavioral implication of saying that it is unnatural to be moral (or a violation of the nature) is that people will not act morally, namely, they will have no incentive to do the right thing."

16. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," 338.

17. For instance, Sarah Allan, *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 42.

18. A comparison may be made here with Xunzi's image of molding clay when describing the production of *li yi*. Gaozi's image of water, however, is more dynamic and implies that nature is more easily influenced or directed. See the chapter on "Man's Nature is Evil" (性惡) in John Knoblock, tr., *Xunzi*, vol. 3 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 157.

19. Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," 340: "If we insist on saying that this [the appetite for food and sex] constitutes the whole of human nature then we will have to accept the logical conclusion that the nature of a man is no different from that of a dog or an ox and this not even Gaozi was prepared to accept." Graham, "The Mencian Theory of Human Nature," 46: "Gaozi has committed himself to much more than he has bargained for; if *xing* in general is merely *sheng* there is no inherent tendency in the development of any specific thing, and nothing to distinguish the natures of ox, dog and man."

20. Whalen Lai says: "If nature is just food and sex, then man is no better than a dog (6A:3). Kao Tzu (Gaozi) would have agreed, but with this qualification: by *hsing* (*xing*) is meant what pertains to life, but above that is *jen-hsing* [*ren xing*] (specific human nature). Compare this with 'All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; Socrates is mortal.' It does not mean that that is all Socrates is." See Lai, "Kao Tzu and Mencius on Mind," 148. Except for the idea that above *xing* is *ren xing*, I would agree with the logical tenor of Lai's remarks.

21. My rendering of *yue* as what "pleases" is contextual, and I believe it captures what Gaozi is thinking of in his explanation of "*ren* is internal." Lau translates *yue* as "explanation" here in the sense of *shuo* 說, thus rendering *shi yi wo wei yue zhe ye gu wei zhi nei* 是以我為悅者也故謂之內 as "This means that the explanation lies in me. Hence I call it internal." And similarly, a few sentences later, *shi yi zhang wei yue zhe ye gu wei zhi wai ye* 是以長為悅者也故謂之外也, as "This means that the explanation lies in their elderliness. Hence I call it external." The first use of *yue* as "the explanation lies in me" is consistent with my rendering of it as what "pleases," although not the second "the explanation lies in their elderliness." Note that in 6A:7, we have *gu li yi zhi yue wo xin you chu huan zhi yue wo kou* 故理義之悅我心猶芻豢之悅我口 which Lau renders as "Thus reason and rightness please my heart in the same way as meat pleases my palate." Although both instances of *yue* are translated as "please(s)," I show below that the pleasure that the heart-mind takes in *li yi* is different in kind from the sensory pleasure of taste.

22. After providing this example, and anticipating what Mengjizi would say, Mencius says to Gongduzi: "You can then say, "[In the case of the person from my village] it is also because of the position he occupies. Normal respect is due to my elder brother; temporary respect is due to the person from my village." I cannot make sense of this. But this should not affect the logical point that is at work in the ensuing exchange between Gongduzi and Mengjizi, after the former conveys Mencius's example to the latter.

23. Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 106. A similar explanation is given by Huang Min Hao 黃敏浩 (Simon Wong), *Mengzi, Gaozi Bianlun de zai quan shi* 孟子, 告子辯論的再詮釋131.

24. Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 109.

25. Ibid., 108.

26. Lai, "Kao Tzu and Mencius on Mind," 148.

27. Ibid.

28. Lau, "Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," 351.

29. David Nivison states, "Gao and Mencius are agreed about *ren*, exemplified by loving: I won't show love unless I am disposed to, in virtue of the relation of the object to me. They disagree about *yi*, exemplified by behavior showing respect for elderliness, because Gao thinks of the occasional cause as the decisive one: It is what is 'out there' that counts, every time, no matter where, including the applicable public standard." See Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism*, 162–63. Nivison notes the absurd consequence of Gaozi's having to say that his enjoyment of roast is external, but does not make the point that Mencius is rejecting the internal-external distinction that Gaozi is working with. Xiusheng Liu, "Mengzian Internalism," in *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*, ed. Xiusheng Liu and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), 115, says that "Mengzi and Gaozi agree on the meanings of 'internal' and 'external.' This is shown by the fact that they do not even try to correct each other's use of those terms. What they dispute is whether *yi* is internal or external. Gaozi insists that it is external; Mengzi disagrees. We therefore can derive the meaning of 'internal' from either Mengzi's or Gaozi's statements."

30. Modifying Lau's "Only this has never dawned on me" for *fu si er yi* 弗思耳矣. Bryan Van Norden has noted the psychological importance of *si* for Mencius. He notes "8 occurrences in which *si* clearly is a technical term of Mengzian psychology referring to the psychological act that I label 'concentration': 4A1, 6A6, 6A13, 6A15 (four occurrences), and 6A17" (Van Norden, "Mengzi and Xunzi: Two Views of Human Agency," in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*, ed. T. C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe [Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2000], 112).

31. Lau translates *bu ren ren zhi xin* 不忍人之心 in 2A:6 as "a heart sensitive to the suffering of others," and "a sensitive heart." Wing-tsit Chan translates this as "the mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others." Mentioning the example, Mencius attributes this capacity to something more basic, *ce yin zhi xin*. Lau translates this as "compassion," and Chan as "a feeling of alarm and distress." It could be argued that Lau's "sensitive heart" and "compassion" are no different, and one cannot as such be the basis of, or serve as evidence for, the other. On the other hand, Chan's "feeling of

alarm and distress" could be seen as a more rudimentary form of response, necessary (but not sufficient) for the "heart which cannot bear to see the suffering of others." See Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 65.

32. For a detailed discussion of the nontransferability of compassion or concern, see my book *Moral Agoraphobia: The Challenge of Egoism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 50–51, where the case of Dorothea is described more fully. The example is from George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), 103. To obviate any misunderstanding, consider also the following case: I see a child killed in a car accident; contrary to what I normally do, I might give some money to a child begging further down the road. There is no denying that this constitutes a psychological phenomenon of "transference," but it should not affect what I mean by the "nontransferability" of compassion or concern.

33. See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 137; Ann-ping Chin and Mansfield Freeman, tr., *Tai Chen on Mencius: Explorations in Words and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 74.

34. Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Though*, 150, 265. According to Tang Junyi (T'ang Chün-i) 唐君毅, the pre-Qin thinkers largely used *li* in the sense of *wen li*, or pattern. See his study of the concept of *li* in "Lun Zhongguo zhexue sixiangshi zhong (li) zhi liu yi 論中國哲學思想史中 (理) 之六義 in *Xinya Xuebao* 新亞學報, vol. 1, no. 1 (1995): 45–98. See p. 47. The three passages where *li* occurs are 5B:1, 6A:7, and 7B:19. In the last we have someone called Mo Ji saying, *Ji da bu li yu kou* (稽大不理於口) which Lau renders as "I am not much of a speaker." Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 takes *bu li* as *bu shun* (不順) or "not agreeable." As such, he gives the modern Chinese equivalent of the passage as "I am badly spoken of by others." See Yang Bojun, *Mengzi Yizhu* 孟子譯注 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua zhuju, 1984).

35. Lau's translation of the relevant passage in 5B:1 reads, "Confucius was the one who gathered together all that was good (*ji da cheng* 集大成). To do this is to open with bells and rally with jade tubes. To open with bells is to begin in an orderly fashion (*shi tiao li ye* 始條理也); to rally with jade tubes is to end in an orderly fashion (*zhong tiao li ye* 終條理也). To begin in an orderly fashion pertains to wisdom while to end in an orderly fashion pertains to sageness." Note Wing-tsit Chan's and Chin and Freeman's translation of *ji da cheng* as a "complete concert." See Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 711; Chin and Freeman, *Tai Chen on Mencius*, 69.

36. See David Wong, "Is There a Distinction between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" *Philosophy East and West* 41, no. 1 (1991): 31–44, for an extended argument of this point. An earlier argument of the same point is Donald Munro, *The Concept of Man in Contemporary China* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977). See especially ch. 2, p. 26 ff.

37. Translation my own. Compare Lau: "If it was truly right for them to bury the remains of their parents, then it must also be right for all dutiful sons and benevolent people to do likewise." As Lau often uses "right" for a translation of *yi* 義, and *yi* does not occur in this passage, it is better not to use the term "right" here.

38. A similar point is noted by Confucius's disciple, Gongduzi in 6A:15, when

he asks, "Though equally human, why are some people greater than others?" Bryan Van Norden notes the persistence of Gongduzi in the same passage. Commenting on Mencius's final answer that if you don't *si* (Van Norden: "concentrate") then you won't get it, Van Norden says: "This passage . . . confirms the importance of concentration in Mengzi's picture of self-cultivation, but it fails as an altogether satisfactory answer . . . since we may go on to ask why some people concentrate and others do not" (Van Norden, "Mengzi and Xunzi: Two Views of Human Agency," 115). I discuss this problem further in chapter 7.

39. In addition to the view that "All humans are capable of becoming good," Bryan Van Norden finds in the *Mencius* a view of human agency with various claims, perhaps the most central of which is that "Humans must do that which they believe will obtain for them what they most desire." See Van Norden, "Mengzi and Xunzi," 116–17. This is debatable, given the fact that Mencius often laments that although people know how to tend to the various things cited, they nevertheless neglect what is most important. However, I totally agree with Van Norden's view that Mencius has a "deep" point, that "humans are, intrinsically, evaluative animals. We are not just creatures who desire to satisfy our desires for food, sex, etc. We are creatures who desire to feel worthy, to be esteemed, to lead lives which have moral value" (114).

40. The original text has *sheng ren* (sage), instead of *sheng* (sageness). I have adopted "sageness" instead of "sage," because it allows for a more consistent reading of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, *sheng*. This is a possible reading as noted after the Chinese text of 7B:24 in Lau. Lau cites Pang Pu 龐樸. The full bibliographic reference is given by Kwong-loi Shun in *Mencius and Early China*: *Boshu wuxing pian yanjiu* 帛書五行篇研究 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 1988), 19–21. As Shun notes, "Pang Pu argues for the emendation on the grounds that *sheng* is grouped along with *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the 'Essay on the Five Processes' in the Mawangdui silk manuscripts." See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 203–4.

41. The distinction between the descriptive and normative senses of *ming* is made by Shun, 78–79. Shun gives quite an exhaustive discussion of different possible interpretations of 7B:24, on pp. 203–5 of his book.

42. Lau makes a related distinction between instrumental and constitutive means in his discussion of *Mencius* 4A:17, although I would not describe what I have said as a constitutive relation between seeking and getting in terms of "means." Asked why he would save a drowning sister-in-law (contrary to the rites of *nan nü shou shou bu qin* 男女授受不親) but not the Empire, Mencius replies: "When the Empire is drowning, one helps it with the Way; when a sister-in-law is drowning one helps her with one's hand. Would you have me help the Empire with my hand?" To Waley, this is a "cheap debating point" (Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, 146). Lau replies that one may use anything to save a drowning woman, the means is purely instrumental. But one may only save the Empire through the proper way, the *dao*. He adds that the way "becomes part of the end it helps to realize, and the end endures so long as the means remains a part of it. Remove the Way at any subsequent time, and the Empire will revert to disorder" (Lau, "On Mencius' Use of the Method of Analogy in Argument," 341–42.

43. Roger Ames, "The Mencian Conception of *Ren Xing*: Does it Mean 'Human Nature'?" in Henry Rosemont, Jr., ed., *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays Dedicated to Angus C. Graham* (La Salle: Open Court, 1991), argues for an understanding of *xing* as not given and essentialistic but instead, creatively and existentially achieved and maintains that it should be more accurate to translate it in terms of character, personality, and constitution rather than "nature." Ames also stresses the distinction between *xin* and *xing* in that *xing* is something creatively achieved out of *xin* (see 143–45). Ames is correct, insofar as the contents of *xin* (and not *xing*) denote a *potential* that need to be worked upon, creatively. At the same time, however, Mencius says that if someone becomes bad, it is not the fault of his native endowment *cai* (6A:6). Ames's denial of an essentialistic "nature" has been controversial on precisely this point, as he seems to deny something which Mencius has explicitly stated. See Irene Bloom, "Mencian Arguments on Human Nature (*Ren-Xing*)," *Philosophy East and West* 44, no. 1 (1994): 19–53; and "Human Nature and Biological Nature in Mencius," *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 1 (1997): 21–32.

Chapter 4: Mencius on *Ren* and the Problem of "Extending"

1. See C. L. Ten, "The Moral Circle," in Chong, Tan, and Ten, *The Moral Circle and the Self*, for a discussion of the problems facing various "monistic" moral theories (including, for example, utilitarianism) that seem to stress only one ultimate value and one motivational source.

2. See especially the more recent essays by David B. Wong, "Reasons and Analogical Reasoning in Mengzi," and Philip J. Ivanhoe, "Confucian Self Cultivation and Mengzi's Notion of Extension," both in Liu and Ivanhoe, *Essays on the Moral Philosophy of Mengzi*. The debate seems to have been set off by David Nivison's "Mencius and Motivation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Thematic Issue S, 47, no. 3 (1980): 417–32, subsequently revised and published as "Motivation and Moral Action in Mengzi," in his *The Ways of Confucianism*. Subsequent debate involves papers by Kwong-loi Shun, "Moral Reasons in Confucian Ethics," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16, no. 3-4 (1989): 317–43; Bryan Van Norden, "Kwong-loi Shun on Moral Reasons in Mencius," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 18, no. 4 (1991): 353–70; David B. Wong, "Is There a Distinction Between Reason and Emotion in Mencius?" *Philosophy East and West* 41, no. 1 (January 1991): 31–44; Craig K. Ihara, "David Wong on Emotions in Mencius," *Philosophy East and West* 41, no. 1 (January 1991): 45–53.

3. A point that has been recognized by others such as Julia Po-Wah Lai Tao, "Two Perspectives of Care: Confucian *Ren* and Feminist Care," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (June 2000): 215–40, 236; and David Wong, "Reasons and Analogical Reasoning in Mengzi," in Liu and Ivanhoe, *Essays on the Philosophy of Mengzi*, 209–10. Both Tao and Wong make this point through a discussion of the dilemma in *Mencius* 7A:35, which I shall also be discussing later.

4. For convenience, I shall use "filial love" for *xiaoti*, which was rendered more fully as "being filial toward parents and respectful of elders," in chapter 2.

5. See chapter 2.

6. Bloom, "Three Visions of *Jen*," 24–25.

7. Nivison, in "Motivation and Moral Action in Mencius," also discusses the problem of "extending" in terms of the model of individual moral failure. But note that Mencius treats the failure to act not as a logical puzzle in the way philosophers in the Western tradition do. Instead, he puts it in terms of the fact that people neglect the 'greater' part of themselves (the heart-mind) for the 'lesser' parts. See for instance 6A:11–12 and 6A:14.

8. `Lau says, "Throughout this passage Mencius is exploiting the fact that the word *ai* means both 'to love' and 'to be sparing, to be frugal.'" Lau, *Mencius*, vol. 2, 285, n.17.

9. The idea of a "lexical" order of priority was made popular by John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford University Press, 1972). As Rawls stipulates, a serial or lexical order is one "which requires us to satisfy the first principle in the ordering before we can move on to the second, the second before we consider the third, and so on. A principle does not come into play until those previous to it are either fully met or do not apply. A serial ordering avoids, then, having to balance principles at all; those earlier in the ordering have an absolute weight, so to speak, with respect to later ones, and hold without exception" (43). As will be evident, I do not hold that Mencius gives absolute weight to filial affection, despite stipulating its lexical priority. I use "lexical priority" more to differentiate it from the "ethical priority" of Zhu Xi, as discussed earlier.

10. As noted earlier, there has been a debate about the nature of the reasons that Mencius reminds the King of, for extending his compassion from the ox to his people. However, whatever the nature of these reasons that the King is brought to acknowledge, a good question is whether he would finally be motivated to *act*, to bring relief to his people, not engage in war that involves bringing suffering to them, and so on.

11. Burton Watson, tr., *Han Fei Tzu*, "The Five Vermin" (*Wu Du* 五蠹), in *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu, Hsün Tzu, and Han Fei Tzu* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 101. For the Chinese, I have quoted from Fu Wu Guang 傅武光 and Lai Yan Yuan 賴炎元 ed., *Xinyi Han Feizi* 新譯韓非子 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1997), 715.

12. Lin Pin Shi 林品石 ed., *Lü shi chunqiu jin zhu jin yi* 呂氏春秋今註今譯 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1985), 31, chapter on "*Qu Si* 去私." See also John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, tr., *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), book I, ch. 5, sec. 5.

13. I am referring to the Yangist and Daoist avoidance of and even disdain for public office. See Graham, *Disputers of the Tao*, 53–64, for a discussion of the Yangists.

14. Bloom, "Three Visions of *Jen*," 19, contrasting Confucius's metaphorical image of a difficult journey in which one is required to endure and persevere with Mencius's use of organic metaphors in their separate discussions of *ren*, says: "Mencius' organic metaphors imply concomitant notions of enlargement, fulfillment, growth, and maturation; the images are of an individual who, being fully contextualized in nature, finds

fulfillment within the natural process. His course may not be easy, but he has a lot of life's energies working within and for him. . . . Other metaphors, such as the fire and spring employed in 2A:6, are suggestive of a dynamic and growing energy: each rereading of that familiar passage must re-evoke a vision of the faintly flickering flame beginning to burn brightly and the trickle of water bursting into a bubbling torrent."

15. I have benefited from the discussion of this incident in 林義正 (Lin Yih-jing), "*Chunqiu gongyang zhuan sixiang zhong daode juezhe de wenti* 春秋公羊傳思想中道德抉擇的問題," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Chinese Philosophy*, National Taiwan University, Taipei, R.O.C., November 3–7, 1985. I have consulted the following edition of the *Gongyang Zhuan*: *Xin yi Gongyang Zhuan* 新譯公羊傳, ed. Xue Ke 雪克 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1998). The incident is recorded under the fifteenth year of Xuan Gong 宣公 or 594 B.C.E.

16. We should also not neglect the emotional and psychological role of the family in the moral development of the individual. See David Wong, "Universalism Versus Love With Distinctions: An Ancient Debate Revived," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16 (1989): 251–72, for an account of the emotional and psychological processes involved in this regard.

Chapter 5: Xunzi's Critique of Mencius

1. Passage numbers such as 23.5a, 23.5b in this chapter are John Knoblock's in his *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, 3 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988,1990,1994). Other texts consulted: *Xunzi: A Concordance to the Xunzi*, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Institute of Chinese Studies Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: The Commercial Press, 1996) cited as ICS, with chapter/page/line number; Li Disheng 李滌生, *Xunzi Ji Shi* 荀子集釋 (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1994); Burton Watson, *Hsün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

2. Nivison, "Xunzi on 'Human Nature'," in *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, 212, states that Xunzi resorts to "linguistic legislation" about the difference between *xing* and *wei* 偽 (human artifice). Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," 56, holds that it is because of a "shift" in the sense of *xing* in Xunzi's *Xing E Pian* that, "although its theory is as coherent in terms of its own definitions as Mencius's in terms of his, [it] never quite makes contact with the Mencian theory which it criticises." Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, 11, 13, agrees with Graham. He locates Xunzi's disagreement with Mencius in terms of the former's stress on *wei* or human artifice. Goldin refers by analogy to the "policies" as against the "resources" of a state: "Success or failure rest with the policies; the resources play no appreciable role in the determination of the state's ultimate fate" (16).

3. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," 56–57, finds Xunzi (23.5a) "remarking incidentally that man has 'the equipment by which he