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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Problem of Moral Spontaneity in the Guodian Corpus

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Abstract This paper discusses certain conceptual tensions in a set of archeological texts from the Warring States period, the Guodian corpus. One of the central themes of the Guodian corpus is the disanalogy between spontaneous, natural familial relationships and artificial political relationships. This is problematic because, like many early Chinese texts, the Guodian corpus believes that political relationships must come to be characterized by unselfconsciousness and spontaneity if social order is to prevail. This tension will be compared to my earlier work on the "paradox of wu-wei (effortless action)," and the Guodian corpus' "solution" to the problem of teaching spontaneity—drawing upon the transformative power of music—will be placed within the landscape of early "Confucian" and "Daoist" theories concerning human nature and self-cultivation.

Keywords Warring States thought · Wu-wei · Spontaneity · Guodian corpus · Music

Approximately five thousand years ago, the increasingly widespread mastery of agriculture caused human beings all over the globe to experience a profound transformation in their way of life. For most of our recent evolutionary history (say, the last 200,000 years), *Homo sapiens* lived in fairly small bands of hunter-gatherers, all to various degrees related, or at least well-known, to each other (Klein 1989). Evolutionary psychologists believe that *Homo sapiens* possess a variety of psychological adaptations tailored for this small-group, kin-focused lifestyle, including the ability to recognize and remember a certain number of unique faces, enhanced vigilance for social cheating, and such moral emotions as empathy and a desire to engage in altruistic punishment.[1] One of the problems that interests evolutionary psychologists and anthropologists is how human beings have managed what was, on an evolutionary time-scale, the abrupt and disruptive transition from this relatively stable "Environment of Evolutionary Adaptation" (EEA) to the large-scale, centrally-organized,

[1]For an introduction to these sorts of arguments, see the essays collected in Barkow et al. 1992 and Buss 2005.

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urban-based lifestyle made possible by agriculture. The innate, spontaneous psychological mechanisms evolved in our EEA appear to be designed primarily to deal with various degrees of kin and occasional, easily-identifiable strangers and trade-partners. It is an interesting question how creatures equipped with such mechanisms were able to adapt to dense urban life, forced to cohabitate and cooperate with large numbers of strangers, as well as participate in novel social forms such as impersonal, centralized governments, because the time scales involved are likely too short for the evolution of new, complex psychological mechanisms to have occurred.

Painting with a broad brush, there are basically two types of theories about how human beings managed this transition from tribe to state. The dominant position in economics and most areas of political science has traditionally been that the transition was made possible because of new institutional structures, such as laws and punishments, money, and hierarchical decision-making mechanisms. According to this model, human psychology has remained essentially tribal, but external institutions allow these tribe-based emotions and behavioral tendencies to be redirected or repressed. In recent decades, a growing number of social scientists have begun to argue that, rather than suppressing or consciously overriding our tribal-based emotions, the transition was managed by harnessing these emotions and other psychological mechanisms and extending or transforming them through various forms of socialization. According to this view, key tools for human socialization include role-emulation and training in cultural forms, especially religious and ritual activities possessing a high emotional salience and involving "high cost" displays.[2]

1 The Warring States Context

The transition of *Homo sapiens* from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a settled urban one might at first seem like an odd way to begin a paper on Warring States Chinese thought. I presume, though, that it is immediately clear to this audience how the tension between institutional and virtue models of socialization maps onto contemporary philosophical debates concerning virtue ethics and deontology or utilitarianism, as well as to debates that are central to Warring States thought, such as the tension between family and public loyalties, the problem of extending the scope of altruistic concern, and the relationship of "human nature" (*xing* 性) to morality. Stories in texts such as the *Xunzi* concerning the chaos and strife of the precivilized state suggest an awareness of the problem of getting large numbers of people to live together in groups.[3] Moreover, to any student of Warring States thought, the two strategies for socializing human beings mentioned above should immediately call to mind one of the central debates of the time, whether human societies are best regulated through rule by law and punishment or through the non-coercive, transformative power of Virtue (*de* 德).[4]

The basic issue at stake is how to resolve the tension between our spontaneous, effortless, evolved psychological mechanisms and the realities of our relatively novel, "artificial" life in large-scale urban society. The law/punishment strategy aims to simply override our spontaneous tendencies through force of will, which in most cases is encouraged by a system of punishment and reward. For the "Virtue-based" strategy of

[2] For an introduction to this approach, see Richerson and Boyd 1999 and Henrich (manuscript).

[3] See, for instance, the opening of "Discourse on Ritual" (Knoblock 1994: 55 / 19.1a).

[4] For an exploration of this theme with specific reference to the texts I will be exploring below, see Cook 2004.

government, the relationship with our innate emotions is more complex, since the aim is to create novel, but still spontaneous, autonomous, and stable emotional dispositions. This means that simply overriding or ignoring the emotions is not an option. Another complication is the common belief that the key strategy of role-model emulation can only work if the paragons of virtue sincerely embrace the socially desirable values they wish to inculcate in others.[5] For the Virtue strategy, the sort of effortlessness and spontaneity that marks built-in psychological tendencies is seen as a general desideratum for public ethical life in general, and especially for the political elites who will be serving as models for those under their rule.

Since socially desirable values, unlike hard-wired ones, are not natural—and are, indeed, often in conflict with natural desires—the question arises of how it is that these paragons themselves come to spontaneously, unselfconsciously embrace artificial virtues. Early Confucian thinkers emphasize that, to be truly effective, all figures of social authority—including both lords and high ministers—must embody such public virtues as benevolence (*ren* 仁), rightness (*yi* 義), dutifulness (*zhong* 忠), or trustworthiness (*xin* 信)—in a fully sincere, unselfconscious manner. In other words, the apparently unnatural virtues necessary to public life need to become "natural," which involves these thinkers in the problem of how one goes about training naturalness. In this article I would like to focus on how one particular set of Warring States texts, the Guodian corpus, conceptualizes the tensions involved in cultivating virtue, as well as the strategies it portrays as most effective for overcoming these difficulties. The way in which these tensions are conceptualized and dealt with can shed some light on both Warring States thought and the more general problem of virtue education.

2 The Guodian Corpus

In 1993 a set of texts written on bamboo strips was discovered in a tomb in the Hubei province town of Guodian 郭店, which was sealed some time between the mid-fourth and very early third-century BCE.[6] After a long period of restoration and reconstruction, these texts were published in 1998 (Jingmenshi Bowuguan 1998). The lion's share of the initial attention was lavished on the Guodian versions of the *Laozi*, as well as the intriguing text referred to as *The Great One Gives Birth to Water* (*Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水) that appears in the Guodian find as a part of one of the *Laozi* versions. These "Daoist" texts were contrasted with a variety of so-called "Confucian" texts also included in the Guodian find, many of which were previously unknown. Although they are later creations of Han Dynasty

[5] It is likely that the primary recent selection pressure for human beings has been other human beings, and many anthropologists and psychologists have come to believe that our large brains are an adaptation to the rigors of social living (the so-called "Machiavellian intelligence" or "social brain hypothesis"; see Dunbar 1998 for a helpful overview). One of the most important cognitive arms races has probably involved the ability to detect social cheating, and then in turn to evade such detection. The result is that, in profoundly social animals such as humans, there has been intense pressure to develop a sensitivity to signs of another's sincerity or insincerity – as well as the ability to fake such signs (Ekman 2003, Cosmides and Tooby 2005). It is my feeling that early Chinese ideas about the power of Virtue (*de* 德), as well as the discourse about sincerity clues linked to facial expression and coloration, are motivated by this problem of evaluating commitment in one's fellow social cooperators.

[6] Although little is known for sure about the occupant of the tomb with whom these texts were buried, he appears to have been something of a scholar or philosophical enthusiast—texts are relatively rare in tombs, and it is even rarer to find exclusively philosophical-religious texts as was the case with Guodian. See Allan and Williams 2000 for a collection of the first English-language essays on the Guodian finds.

bibliographers, categories such as "Daoist" or "Confucian" are arguably based upon genuine differences in attitudes toward the proper role of culture in self-cultivation, the relationship of the individual to society, etc. As many scholars have noted, however, the texts of the Guodian corpus call into question how rigidly we should understand the line between the two to be (Csikszentmihalyi 2004). The Guodian *Laozi*, for instance, is less explicitly anti-Confucian than received versions, and many of the "Confucian" texts—like some received texts in collections such as the *Guanzi*, the *Mencius*, and *Xunzi*—advocate self-cultivation techniques that overlap somewhat with those described in the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*.

Combined with the degree of conceptual overlap between the "Daoist" and "Confucian" texts in the Guodian find, it is not unreasonable to treat the Guodian corpus as a collection of texts intended by the deceased, or by the deceased's executors, to be read as a consistent whole.[7] When we read the Guodian corpus as a unit, rather than a mixed collection of incompatible "Confucian" or "Daoist" texts, they can be seen, I think, to represent a coherent, and unique, Warring States position on the problem of self-cultivation.

3 The Problem of Public versus Private Emotions

Like all early "Confucian" texts, the Guodian corpus clearly belongs to the "Virtue-based" strategy of state organization. For instance, a *Liu De* (*Six Virtues*)[8] passage argues that cultural forms and institutions, such as rituals or laws and punishments, will not be efficacious unless they are deployed by someone who possesses the "six virtues":

> The task of creating ritual and music, establishing punishments and regulations, and teaching these to the common people so that they are viewed with respect cannot be accomplished by someone who is not sagely and wise. The task of assuring affection between father and son, creating harmony among the great ministers, and stilling potential hostility on the part of neighboring states cannot be accomplished by someone who is not benevolent and righteous. The task of bringing together the common people, supervising their agricultural activities, and providing for all of their needs cannot be accomplished by someone who is not dutiful and trustworthy (作禮樂, 制刑法, 教此民〔黎〕[9] 使之有向也, 非聖智者莫之能也。親父子, 和大臣, (寢) 四鄰之 (抵捂)[10], 非仁義者莫之能也。聚人民, 任土地[11], 足此民〔黎〕生死之用, 非忠信者莫之能也). (*Liude* 1–5)

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[7] Many of separations between the sixteen texts were originally created by the Jingmenshi Bowuguan editors on the basis of perceived content, but there is no reason to suppose that they in all cases represent entirely independent texts. For instance, the texts *Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi, Zun De Yi, Xing Zi Ming Chu*, and *Liu De* were all written on slips of the same size and shape, with the same distance between bindings and similar handwriting styles (Chen 1999; Li 2002a; Richter 2006), and might reasonably be considered portions of the same work.

[8] Throughout this essay I will, for ease of reference, be referring to the Guodian texts by the names given to them by the Jingmenshi Bowuguan editors in their 1998 publication, and also following their textual divisions, although of course many of these decisions have since been disputed. Unless otherwise noted, I will also be following their readings of individual characters.

[9] Following the suggestion of Chen 1999 that 尒 be read as 黎.

[10] Following the suggestion of Qiu Xigui (Jingmenshi Bowuguan) that 歸 be read as 寢, and that of Chen 1999 that [illegible] be read as 抵捂.

[11] Following the emendation of Qiu Xigui.

For such a Virtue-based model of governance, emotional sincerity is crucial. This is not only because the common people can sense insincerity in their superiors and will respond with disobedience, but also because insincerity will contaminate the relation of trust that binds ruler and minister, and that can instantly be perceived by both:

> The Master [Confucius] said, "When those above can be known at a glance, and those below can be categorized and ranked, then the lord will not be suspicious of his ministers, and the ministers will harbor no mixed feelings concerning their lord" (子曰, 為上可望而知也, 為下可類而等也,[12] 則君不疑.[13] 其臣, 臣不惑於君). (*Ziyi* 2–3)

This is because, as the *Book of Documents* quotation that caps this passage observes concerning the harmonious relationship of the great sages Yin and Tang, "They both share the same Virtue" (*xian you yi de* 咸有一 德; 緇衣, 5).

A somewhat novel feature of the Guodian corpus is the manner in which this commitment to Virtue-based government and inward sincerity appears to inspire anxiety about the paradigmatic and central political relationship, that of lord and minister (*junchen* 君臣).[14] One of the central concerns of the Guodian corpus involves the tension between "natural" kin relationships and the sorts of non-kin relationships necessary for the functioning of any sort of state—in particular, the disanalogy between the pregiven, unavoidable father—son relationship and the optional relationship between lord and minister.

To be sure, the Guodian texts do wish to portray all of the valued ethical relations, along with their attendant virtues, as part of the cosmic order of things. As we read in *Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi*,

> Heaven sends down its Great Constancy (*dachang* 大常) as a means of ordering human relationships. In public administration, this constancy takes the form of the rightness between lord and minister, in manifesting itself [in the family] it takes the form of the intimacy between father and son, when it comes to establishing hierarchies it takes the form of the distinction between husband and wife (天降大常, 以理人倫, 制為君臣之義, 著為父子之親, 分為夫婦之辨). (*Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi* 31–32)

Despite comments such as this that portray all forms of human relationships as equally partaking of Heaven's "Great Constancy," it is clearly recognized that political relationships, such as that between lord and minister, are distinct from blood kin ties. This is acknowledged indirectly in the comment in *Liu De* that lauds the rightness of the minister who, "though not my blood [lit. blood and *qi*] relative, nurtures me as if I were his son or younger brother" (非我血氣之親, 畜我如其子弟) (*Liude* 14–15). One of the important ways in which public relations are different from blood relations is that they are *chosen* rather than pregiven; as we read in one of the *Yucong* 語叢 (*Thicket of Sayings*) texts, "The relationship between lord and minister, and between friends—these are things that are chosen" (君臣, 朋友, 其擇者也) (*Yucong* 1: 87). Because they are chosen—and thus presumably optional or provisional—non-kin relationships are also portrayed as being less durable or reliable: "The

[12] Following Qiu Xigui and not changing the readings of the characters 類 = 述, 等 = 志 as the Jingmenshi editors suggest.

[13] As Pang Pu observes, this character is written with the heart radical, and seems to refer to "mental doubt/uncertainty or suspicion rather than the sort of dawdling or hesitancy that can characterize one's behavior"—a distinction that appears to have become graphically unmarked when this character was subsumed under standardized *yi* 疑 (Pang 2000: 38)

[14] For the lord-minister relationship as a central concern of the Guodian corpus, also see Luo 2000.

way in which [the lord] can be distinguished from the father is this: when the lord and minister are not of the same mind, the minister can simply end their relationship; when they are not happy, he can abandon the relationship; and when something that is not right is being forced upon him, the minister can refuse to accept it" (所以異於父, 君臣不相在也, 則可已; 不悅, 可去也; 不義而加諸己, 弗受也) (*Yucong* 3: 1–5).

The lord-minister relationship is thus potentially disposable in a way the father-son relationship is not. Moreover, when push comes to shove, the Guodian corpus notes that the extra-kin relationships are the first to go. As the *Liu De* puts it:

> One can reject one's lord for the sake of one's father, but would never reject one's father for the sake of one's lord; one can reject one's wife for the sake of one's brothers, but would never reject one's brothers for the sake of one's wife; one can, for the sake of one's fellow clansmen, become estranged from one's friends, but one would never become estranged from one's clansmen for the sake of one's friends (為父絕君, 不為君絕父。為昆弟絕妻, 不為妻絕昆。弟為宗族〔殺〕朋友, 不為 朋友〔殺〕宗族). (*Liude* 28–29)

One of the dominant metaphors employed by the text to conceptualize blood kin versus other, more public or political sorts of relationships is that of a container, with close blood relations portrayed as "inner" (*nei* 內) and pregiven and wider social relations portrayed as "outer" (*wai* 外) and chosen. These two types of relationships are then mapped onto two central "Confucian" virtues, "benevolence" (*ren* 仁) and "rightness" (*yi* 義): "Benevolence is internal, rightness is external…. On the inside are established the roles of father, son, and husband; on the outside are established the roles of lord, minister, and wife" (仁, 內也。義, 外也……內立父子夫也, 外立君臣婦也) (*Liude* 25–26).

The inner virtue of benevolence is further portrayed as inborn and spontaneous, whereas rightness is seen as a product of cultural training: "Benevolence emerges from people, and rightness emerges from the Way; some things emerge from the inside, others from the outside" (仁, 生於人, 義生於道。或生於內, 或生於外) (*Yucong* 1: 23). As in other Confucian texts, such as the *Analects*, the "inner" blood–kin relationships are portrayed as a model for the "outer" social relations. As the *Yucong* 3 observes, "The love one feels for one's relatives is one's model for loving others" (愛親則其方愛人) (*Yucong* 3: 40); *Yucong* 1 further notes that "The father-son relationship is the ultimate manifestation of the relationship between superior and inferior; the elder brother-younger brother relationship is the ultimate manifestation of the relationship between those who precede and those who follow" (父子, 至上下也。兄弟, 〔至〕先後也) (*Yucong* 1: 69–70). Public virtues thus come about by taking the emotions one feels toward one's blood kin and somehow extending and expanding these feelings to include others.

4 Emotional Reformation Through Ritual and Music

The trick, of course, is how precisely to bring this about, because the process of altering emotions appears to be more difficult than it might seem at first glance. A common human intuition is that emotions are in some ways less fungible than beliefs or merely intellectual convictions—that emotions possess a great deal of phenomenological inertia, as it were. Intellectual argumentation can shift easily-moved beliefs around, but genuine emotional commitment seems harder to budge. As Confucius puts it:

> When a man is rebuked with exemplary words after having made a mistake, he cannot help but agree with them. However, what is important is that he change himself in

> order to *accord* with them. When a man is praised with words of respect, he cannot help but be pleased with them. However, what is important is that he actually *live up* to them. A person who finds respectful words pleasing but does not live up to them, or agrees with others' reproaches and yet does not change—there is nothing I can do with one such as this. (*Analects* 9.2)

Intellectual assent to the Confucian Way is insufficient—one must sincerely love the Way and strive to embody it in one's person. The problem is what the teacher is to do with a student who intellectually understands or superficially agrees with the Way but cannot summon up the genuine commitment required of the gentleman. Confucius' lament here is clearly related to the sarcastic 9.18: "I have yet to meet a man who loves Virtue as much as he loves female beauty." None of Confucius' contemporaries seems to have a problem finding the motivational energy required for the pursuit of sex, but their enthusiasm seems to flag when the object of pursuit is the Way. A belief in the relative intractability of the emotions is arguably also behind Mencius' position that the "extension" (*tui* 推) of one's innate moral sprouts cannot be forced or rushed, with the growth of agricultural plants or the gradual accumulation of a reservoir of water serving as metaphorical models for the process. It also appears in Xunzi's concern that apparently virtuous behavior might fail to be accompanied by internal sincerity (*cheng* 誠), with the result being a "counterfeit" Confucian gentleman incapable of inspiring obedience in the common people:

> Even if a person is good at acting in accordance with the Way, if he is not sincere he will not [be careful] when alone, and if he is not careful when alone [the Way] will not take form. If it does not take form, even though it arises in the heart/mind, manifests itself in his countenance, and appears in his speech, the common people will not wish to follow him. If forced to follow, they will do so only with misgivings. (Ch. 3, "Nothing Indecorous"; Knoblock 1988: 178/ 3.9b)

For all of the early Confucian thinkers, intellectual assent or even behavioral modification is not enough to make one a gentleman: the hard-to-move emotions must also be genuinely and permanently transformed.

As with other thinkers identified with the "Confucian" school, the position of the Guodian corpus is clearly that training in cultural forms such as ritual, music, and study of the classics is required to accomplish this transformative work. Much has been written about these self-cultivation techniques;[15] here I would merely like to locate the Guodian corpus within the spectrum of Warring States self-cultivation discourse.

The now well-known opening passages of *Xing Zi Ming Chu* (*Human Nature Emerges from the Mandate*) states that "The Way starts with feelings (*qing* 情), and feeling arise from human nature (*xing* 性). At the beginning one is close to one's emotions; by the end one is close to rightness" (道始於情, 情生於性。始者近情, 終者近義) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 2). We have here a metaphor common to Confucian self-cultivation discourse, Self-Cultivation as Journey, with one's spontaneous, natural emotions dominating at the beginning and cultivated, moral emotions dominating at the end. The forces that move on along on this journey and accomplish the reshaping are traditional cultural forms such as ritual, music, and the study of the classics. Training in these external forms is intended to supplement, extend, and balance pre-existing internal tendencies, and the forms themselves are portrayed as being particularly well-suited to hook up with pre-existing, spontaneous,

[15] See, e.g., Shun 1997; Ivanhoe 2000; Slingerland 2003b; Csikszentmihalyi 2004; or the essays collected in Kline and Ivanhoe 2000 and Liu and Ivanhoe 2002.

internal dispositions. As Michael Puett has observed, *Xing Zi Ming Chu* (16–18) portrays the sages as, prior to establishing their cultural forms, having considered the layout of human dispositions, which, as Puett renders it, "are then brought back for use in education" (然後復以教) (Puett 2004). As a *Yucong* passage puts it, "the rites were fashioned in response to people's feelings" (禮, 因人之情而為之) (*Yucong* 1: 31). These cultural forms are seen as creating a balanced and stable moral disposition, with the artificial "outer" cultural forms entering into and working together with natural, internal human tendencies.

Scott Cook has noted that this intimate connection between human nature and cultural forms leads the authors of the Guodian texts to portray Confucian culture as "an ordered extension and reimplantation of natural human expression" (Cook 2004: 416), combining natural human tendencies with the active organizing work of the ancient sages. As *Xing Zi Ming Chu* explains:

> As for their original inception, the *Odes* and *Documents*, ritual and music, were all engendered by human beings (*shengyuren* 生於人). Through effort, the *Odes* were created. Through effort, the *Documents* were given verbal expression. Through effort, ritual and music were brought into being. Noting analogies between [these cultural forms], the sage[16] was able to discursively unify them (*lunhuizhi* 論會之); observing their proper sequence, he was able to accept and accord with them; embodying their rightness, he was able to modulate and adjust them; ordering the emotions [expressed or inspired by them], he was able to enact them in a flexible manner.[17] Only then was he able to proceed to teach others. Teaching is the means by which one engenders Virtue within; ritual is fashioned from the emotions (詩書禮樂, 其始出皆生於人。詩, 有為為之也; 書, 有為言之也; 禮樂, 有為舉之也。聖人比其類而論會之; 觀其先後[18]而逢順[19]之; 體其義而節度[20]之; 理其情而出入之。然後復以教。教所以生德於中者, 禮作於情). (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 4–8)

Here we have a description of a teacher (or lineage of teachers) immersing themselves in traditional cultural forms, and thereby developing an intuitive sense of their meaning that allows them to apply the forms in a flexible manner, and even potentially to alter them when necessary. This passage echoes aspects of Confucius' spiritual autobiography in *Analects* 2.4,[21] where Confucius explains that "at fifty, I understood Heaven's Mandate; at sixty, my ear was attuned (*ershun* 耳順); and at seventy, I could follow my heart's desires without overstepping the bounds of propriety." Similarly, the idea that the goal of self-cultivation is to embody traditional Zhou cultural forms to the point that they become a kind of second nature—enacted in a completely effortless and unselfconscious manner—is a common theme in Warring States Confucian literature (see Slingerland 2003b, especially Chs. 2 and 6). As the *Wu Xing* observes, "When the five kinds of actions all take form within, and then are practiced in a timely fashion, this is what we call a 'gentleman'" (*Wu*

[16] Or "the sages."

[17] Understanding *chu ru* 出入 in the sense of *Analects* 19.11: "As long as one does not transgress the bounds when it comes to important virtues, it is permissible to cross the line here and there when it comes to minor virtues" (大德不踰閑, 小德出入可也; see Slingerland 2003a: 224 for a defense of this reading).

[18] Following Qiu Xigui in reading 之遂 as *xian hou* 先後.

[19] Following Li Ling 2002a in reading 辵 訓 as *nie shun* 逆順, and understanding *nie* 逆 in its sense of *ying* 迎 ("to receive, welcome, meet").

[20] Following Li Ling and an alternative suggested by Qiu Xigui and reading 即廈 as *jie du* 節度.

[21] This suggests that shengren 聖人 should be understood as referring to Confucius rather than "the sages" in general.

Xing 5–6). The moral example of the sage or gentleman, in turn, should lead to both personal happiness and good political order: "Sageliness and wisdom are that which originate in and are produced by ritual and music, and are that which is harmonized by the five kinds of action. When there is harmony, there will be joy; when there is joy, one will possess Virtue; when one possesses Virtue, the states and families will come together" (聖智, 禮樂之所由生也, 五〔行之所和〕[22]也。和則樂, 樂則有德, 有德則邦家與). (*Wu Xing* 27–28)

5 The Problem of Trying Not to Try

At first glance, the cultivation of virtue may appear to be a fairly straightforward process: the individual is trained in external cultural forms, and he or she internalizes them and is thereby emotionally and intellectually transformed. Once this is accomplished, the resulting "gentleman" or "sage" is able to manifest the desired virtues in a spontaneous and reliable manner, and therefore to teach and morally influence others. Upon further reflection, the manner in which virtues are supposed to function, and therefore the way in which virtue-education must proceed, introduce some potential tensions.

To begin with, the interaction of cultural forms and internal emotions is not one way—that is, it is not enough to simply expose a person to the rites or the classics to cause them to be transformed. It appears to be an intuition common to virtue educators that such education is only effective when there is active, sincere, and appreciative engagement on the part of the learner. As Confucius remarks in *Analects* 7.8: "I will not open the door for a mind that is not already striving to understand, nor will I provide words for a tongue that is not already struggling to speak. If I hold up one corner of a problem, and the student cannot come back to me with the other three, I will not attempt to instruct him again."[23] This intuition seems to lie not only behind Confucius' demands that his students have at least some incipient love for and appreciation of the Way before he can teach them, but also comments such as the following in the *Xunzi*:

> When presented with [the ideal of] the gentleman, a person who loves it is the type who can actually obtain it.…When presented with an ideal contrary to that of the gentleman, a person who loves it is not the type who can actually become a gentleman. When you take a person who is not the type who can actually become a gentleman but nonetheless try to educate him, he will become a common thief or fall in with a gang of bandits. (Ch. 27, "The Great Compendium"; Knoblock 1994: 231/ 27.95)

In the Guodian corpus, we find clear expressions of this idea that one must somehow already appreciate the basics of the Way if one is to truly internalize it. The opening passages of *Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi*, for instance, explain that one who is to be in a position of authority over the common people must be able to "seek it from within":

> When it came to employing the people, the ancients viewed seeking it from within oneself as a constant. If, in your actions, you are not trustworthy (*xin* 信), then your orders will not be followed; if your trustworthiness is not manifest, your words will fail to be received with pleasure. It has never been the case that the people could be capable of embracing Virtue when they do not follow their superiors' orders and do

[22] Following the Jinmen Bowuguan editors and reconstituting these four characters from context.

[23] Cf. 15.16: "The Master said, 'I have never been able to teach anything for a person who is not himself constantly asking, 'What should I do? What should I do?'"

> not trust their words. Thus the gentleman, when he wishes to establish the people, personally submits to goodness (*shenfushan* 身服善) in order to set an example, and is respectful and sincerely careful (*jingshen* 敬慎) in order to guide them – the resources he marshals [in order to bring this about] are possessed within (古之用民者, 求之於己為恆。行不信則命不從, 信不著則言不樂。民不從上之命, 不信其言, 而能含德者, 未之有也。故君子之立民也, 身服善以先之, 敬慎以〔導〕[24]之, 其所在者內矣). (*Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi* 1–3)

There are at least a couple of potential problems here. How, for example, is one to "personally submit to goodness" if, turning within, one fails to find the resources to bring this about? How is one to guide the people in a manner both "respectful and sincerely careful" if one is not already so inclined? Can a virtue such as respectfulness or trustworthiness—which needs to be self-activating, spontaneous, and to a certain degree unselfconscious to count as true rather than counterfeit virtue—be consciously pursued, or would the conscious pursuit itself somehow taint the goal?

6 The "Paradox of *Wu-wei*"

In Slingerland 2003b, I argued that there is a tension involved in trying to achieve a state of natural spontaneity through conscious effort, and that this tension is, in fact, one of the central problematiques in early Chinese thought. I refer to it there as the "paradox of *wu-wei*"—essentially, the problem of how one can try not to try—and argue that much of early Chinese theorizing about human nature and strategies of self-cultivation is driven by this tension. I also compare this paradox to a problem that David Nivison has called the "paradox of Virtue" (Nivison 1996a, b), which possesses two aspects or forms: 1) consciously seeking to possess Virtue in order to benefit from its efficacy seems to prevent one from acquiring it, since Virtue must be spontaneously and unselfconsciously loved for its own sake; and (as an apparent consequence) 2) one cannot acquire Virtue without already having some appreciation or understanding of it. P.J. Ivanhoe helpfully refers to these as the "motivational" and "resource" aspects of the paradox (Ivanhoe 2007).[25] The claim in *Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi* that one must already have virtue within before one can rule others points to the "resource" form of the paradox, which, as Nivison notes, also appears in early Greek thought with regard to Plato's *Meno* problem, or the problem in Aristotle of how one can teach a virtue such as justice, since "if we are to do what is just or temperate, we must already be just or temperate" (*Nichomachean Ethics* 1105a21–22).[26] The problem here also bears at least some resemblance to tensions grappled with in the later Western virtue ethical tradition. As Alasdair MacIntyre has observed with regard to the relationship between an aspiring student and the foundations texts of the Augustinian educational system:

> In medieval Augustinian culture the relationship between the key texts of that culture and the reader was twofold. The reader was assigned the task of interpreting the text,

[24] Following Guo 1998 and Liao 2000 in interpreting the character 𠂤 as 寸, and reading it as 導, as discussed in Ding 2004: 176

[25] Ivanhoe, however, does not see the two aspects as necessarily related, and ultimately concludes that both versions of Nivison's paradox are "more apparent than real" (Ivanhoe 2007: 278).

[26] Nivison argues that the two aspects of the paradox of Virtue are "opposite sides of the same coin" (Nivison 1996a: 34), and I agree, with the proviso that the "resource" aspect is in some ways a particular response to the "motivational" aspect—what, in Slingerland 2003b, I refer to as the "internalist" response that one, in some important sense, *is wu-wei* already, and the task of self-cultivation is merely to develop, recover or release this innate potential.

> but also had to discover, in and through his or her readings of those texts, that they in turn interpret the reader. What the reader, as thus interpreted by the texts, has to learn about him or herself is that it is only the self as transformed through and by the reading of the texts which will be capable of reading the texts aright. So the readers, like any learner within a craft-tradition, encounters apparent paradox at the outset, a Christian version of the paradox of Plato's *Meno*: it seems that only by learning what the texts have to reach can he or she come to read those texts aright, but also that only by reading them aright can he or she learn what the texts have to teach. (1990: 82)

I continue to think that there is a real conceptual paradox involved in virtue education or the conscious pursuit of a state of unselfconsciousness, and that the tenaciousness of this paradox (at least at a conceptual level) is what causes it to maintain its power throughout later East Asian religious thought, driving the sudden/gradual debate in Chan/Zen Buddhism, the Lu-Wang versus Cheng-Zhu debate in neo-Confucianism, and the schism between the Pure Land and "True" Pure Land schools of Buddhism as developed in Japan. Several reviewers have questioned this aspect of my thesis, however. It has been argued, for instance, that the problem of how to inculcate *wu-wei*-style virtue in someone who does not already have it is not a "paradox" but rather a "riddle", and one that is easily solved in practice (Ivanhoe 2007); others have taken a more extreme voluntarist position and argued that there are no problems involved in virtue education: if Sally wants to become a just person, she merely needs to start performing just acts, and then, after practicing for a time, *voilà*, she will be transformed into a just person (Fraser 2007: 102).

What I would like to do in the final portions of this article is to respond to one particular critique: namely, that nothing like the paradox of *wu-wei*, or Nivison's paradox of Virtue, played a significant role in the development of early Chinese thought.[27] In defending the position that the early Chinese *did* think that there was a tension involved in the cultivation of their central spiritual/ethical goal[28]—that is, the attainment of a state of spontaneous, effortless, unselfconscious virtue—it is necessary to respond to critics who ask why, if the paradox of *wu-wei* plays such a central role in early Chinese thought, there is not more explicit discussion of it in the Warring States period. With regard to Nivison's "paradox of Virtue", for instance, P.J. Ivanhoe argues that it is at best a heuristic device for highlighting some tensions in the early Confucian tradition; "it is not," he concludes, "an explicit problem posed and considered within the early Chinese tradition itself" (Ivanhoe 2007: 280).[29] In Slingerland 2003b, I try to make the case that the paradox of *wu-wei* can be seen as lurking in the background of—and indeed driving—more explicit arguments about human nature or self-cultivation strategies, and that following these arguments is in fact one of the best ways of tracking responses to the paradox of *wu-wei*. I also present a variety of passages that seem to me fairly clear expressions of the paradox. One set of texts that I did *not* consider in this work was the Guodian corpus, and this was an unfortunate omission, because one of the more interesting features of these texts is that they provide the "smoking

[27] Many critiques of my argument about the paradox of *wu-wei* conflate the issue of whether, in some ahistorical philosophical or psychological sense, cultivating spontaneity or virtue is a problem, and whether or not the early Chinese *thought* it was a problem—two separate issues that are best kept apart.

[28] I would also maintain that the presence of an identifiable set of features common to the spiritual ideals of a set of early Chinese thinkers allows us to refer to "a" central spiritual goal, however we might wish to label it; it should be noted that this aspect of my argument is disputed by Kwong-loi Shun (Shun 2004: 513–514) and Chris Fraser (Fraser 2007: 99–101).

[29] Most, including Ivanhoe, would acknowledge that something like the problem of wu-wei is explicitly thematicized in later East Asian religions.

gun" that scholars such as Ivanhoe find lacking: explicit discussions of the paradox of *wu-wei*, and what might be done about it.

7 The Problem of Intentional Striving in the Guodian Corpus

We have already seen above an expression of the "resource" form of the paradox in the Guodian corpus: one would appear to have to already have an incipient appreciation of virtue in order to be able to acquire it. This "resource" form of the paradox is quite common in early Confucian texts. What is interesting about the Guodian corpus is that we also see there a clear anxiety about the very process of striving or trying (*wei* 為) itself – a concern about the "motivational" form of the paradox that one normally associates with texts of a more "Daoist" orientation.[30]

In the Guodian texts, the view seems to be that the internal virtues and kin relations are inherently *wu-wei*, in both the "resource" sense (we have them naturally within us) and in the "motivational" sense of not involving effort or self-consciousness: "A father's being treated with filiality, and a son with caring, is not a matter of exerting effort" (父孝子愛, 非有為也) (*Yucong* 3: 8). The external relationships, and the virtues that go along with them, are not *wu-wei* in either sense, but *need* to be if they are to properly function. This is where the Virtue-based model of governance significantly parts ways with the institution-based model: for a thinker such as Mozi or Hanfeizi, there is no problem with forcing socially desirable behavior—indeed, the exertion of force or effort is portrayed as a constant necessity, since innate selfish desires are a perpetual threat to social stability. For Virtue-based theorists, motivated effort is often seen as a potential moral "contaminant"—possibly required in early stages of self-cultivation, but also potentially sullying true moral behavior by devolving into empty hypocrisy.

The clearest condemnation of striving *per se* that one could possibly wish for is found in *Xing Zi Ming Chu*: "Generally speaking, human striving is an odious thing. Striving leads to regret, and regret leads to rumination (*lü* 慮).[31] Once you begin to ruminate, you will find that you get along with no one" (凡人**爲**為可惡也: **爲**斯吝矣, 吝斯慮矣, 慮斯莫與之結矣) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 48–49). What is specifically condemned here is "striving," my rendering of a word that appears throughout the Guodian corpus, as well as in some other Warring States archeological texts, but that has no modern equivalent: 為 written with the heart radical 心, either to the left or below.[32] The Jingmenshi Bowuguan editors originally interpreted this as a variant of the modern 僞 ("hypocrisy," or in the *Xunzi* "human effort / exertion"), but Pang Pu has convincingly argued that the use of the heart radical, with 為 as well as a host of

[30] See, for instance, the condemnation of "doing" (*wei* 為) or "grasping" (*zhi* 執) in *Laozi* 29 (Guodian Laozi A, 9–10), the arguments that any exertion of effort (*li* 力) will inevitably block one's spiritual progress in the "Inner Training" chapter of the *Guanzi* (Roth 1999: 49, 83, 95), or the imaginary dialogue between Confucius and Laozi found in Ch. 21 of the *Zhuangzi*, where the need for any sort of effort-ful cultivation (*xiu* 修) is rejected (Watson 1968: 226). Contrast Ivanhoe's argument that "as [is] the case with Virtue, what prevents the successful self-cultivation of wuwei is not striving per se—as Slingerland claims—but striving in the wrong way…neither early Confucians nor early Daoists reject striving per se" (2007: 281).

[31] Qiu Xigui alternately reads this character as 虙, understanding it as *ju* 怚 ("arrogant") (Qiu 2000). However, his primary argument against understanding it as *lü* 慮 ("to reflect, ruminate") is that, under this reading, it is "hard to make sense of the text" (Qiu 2000: 26), an opinion with which I disagree.

[32] The presence of this lost 心 radical will be indicated in my text by adding bold and underline to the standard character.

other characters in these texts, should be understood as semantically significant, serving to mark off verbs referring to internal psychology from those involving external action in the world (Pang 2000).[33] 爲 thus refers to a kind of psychological effort or mental exertion.[34] An earlier passage from the same text explains in more detail why this sort of "striving" is problematic: "In all cases, when it comes to learning, it is getting the motivation right that is difficult. Even if you are able to perform some task, if you do not have the proper motivation, it is not to be valued. If you seek to get the proper motivation through trying, though, you will surely not succeed in getting it. From this, it is apparent that people cannot make it through trying/striving[35] (凡學者, 求其心為難…… 雖能其事, 不能其心, 不貴。求其心有為也, 弗得之矣。人之不能以為, 可知也) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 35–37). The *Yu Cong* makes a similar point in simply declaring: "Benevolence is not something that can be achieved through trying. Rightness is not something that can be achieved through trying" 人 (仁) 亡能為。(*Yucong* 1: 83) 義亡能為也. (*Yucong* 1: 53).[36] Of course, a conviction that striving or trying is inherently problematic when it comes to the final moral or spiritual state does not in any way imply paralysis or a radical policy of inaction.[37] Certain "Daoist" texts, such as the *Laozi*, come closest to advocating *wuwei* in the literal sense of "inaction" or "no doing," but most Warring States thinkers were convinced that something needed to be done, which is what renders the paradox, as Nivison puts it, "distressingly real" (Nivison 1996c: 80).

In the Guodian corpus, we see this anxiety about effort expressed quite acutely. While one cannot consciously try to be moral, one also cannot *not* try, since political order depends on developing public virtues in the aspiring gentleman. After baldly declaring that benevolence and rightness cannot be achieved through striving, the *Yu Cong* passage quoted above continues: "If you try to be filial, this is not true filiality; if you try to be obedient, this is not true obedience. You cannot try, but you also cannot *not* try; trying is wrong, but not trying is also wrong" (為孝, 此非孝也; 為弟, 此非弟也; 不可為也, 而不可不為也; 為之, 此非也; 弗為, 此非也) (*Yucong* 1: 55–58). I believe that the *Laozi* was included in the reading material that the Guodian tomb occupant was to ponder in the afterlife because it takes a fairly clear position on this problem, arguing that striving itself should be done away with. The first line of text A of the Guodian *Laozi* advises: "Reject striving and abandon rumination, and the common people will return to filiality and kindness" (絕爲弃慮[38], 民復孝慈) (*Laozi* A: 1). As the *Thicket of Sayings* passage above makes clear, though, the overall tenor of the Guodian corpus is that, though striving or trying is morally suspect, one cannot help but try if the world is to be properly ordered. Therefore, if one is to properly order

[33] For instance, in the Guodian corpus *fan* 反 is written with both the "travel radical" (i.e., 返) and with the heart radical, depending upon the context: the former in cases where external movement is being referred to, and the latter in the sense of introspection, as in the gentleman "looking within" (*fanji* 反己) (Pang 2000: 38). Pang also argues that the loss of these heart-radical verbs has invariably distorted the extant corpus: the famous passage from Xunzi's "Rectification of Names" chapter concerning the two definitions of *wei* 僞, for example, makes much more sense if we imagine that the first *wei* was originally written with the heart radical, a distinction that was lost when this character fell out of use (Pang 2000: 39). For an English-language discussion of this issue, see Shaughnessy 2006: 26–30.

[34] To attempt to keep the two words distinct in my translations, I will render *wei* 為 without the heart radical as "effort" (noun) or "trying" (verb).

[35] In the Shanghai strip version of this text (entitled *xingqinglun* 性情論 by the editors), the second 為 in this passage is written with the heart radical (Shanghai Bowuguan 2001: vol. 1, strips 31–32).

[36] Following strip rearrangement and readings of Scott Cook 2006: 214–215.

[37] *Pace* Ivanhoe, who seems to suggest this is an inevitable consequence of acknowledging something like the paradox of *wu-wei* (Ivanhoe 2007: 283).

[38] See Qiu 2000 for alternate readings of this line.

society, it is necessary to find a way around the "motivational" form of the paradox of *wu-wei*.

8 Music as Solution to the Paradox of *Wu-wei*

As I argue in Slingerland 2003b, each Warring States thinker or school that confronts the paradox of *wu-wei* formulates its own response to it, usually taking the form of a theory of human nature combined with a particular strategy of self-cultivation. The solution hit upon by the authors of the Guodian corpus seems to be a particular social technology—namely, music (*yue* 樂). In the *Xing Zi Ming Chu* passage cited above concerned with learning, I omitted a bit of text; the full passage reads: "In all cases, when it comes to learning, it is getting the motivation right that is difficult. By relying upon that which can be achieved through trying, you can almost get it, but this is not as good as employing the rapid influence of music" (凡學者, 求其心為難. 從其所為, 近得之矣; 不如以樂之速也) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 35–36). "That which can be achieved through trying" seems to refer to ritual and other forms of learning, such as the knowledge of the classics. What is special about music is that, unlike these forms of learning, it can get right to the "inside" and directly reshape one's innermost emotions. In this respect, music, rather than ritual, is viewed by the Guodian corpus as the ultimate source of morality: "Music is the deep reservoir of ritual. With regard to any sound, if it emerges from the emotions/dispositions it will be trusted, and then its ability to enter inside and pluck at the heart-strings will be substantial indeed" (樂, 禮之深澤也。凡聲, 其出於情也信, 然後其入拔人之心也厚) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 22). This idea of music as especially efficacious in "entering in" (*ru* 入) to people and transforming their emotions quickly and directly is a theme in many extant early Chinese texts,[39] and is also quite widespread in other archeological texts of the period. One of the more intriguing passages from the Shanghai strip text *Kongzi Shi Lun* 孔子詩論 (*Confucius Discusses the Odes*) concerns the need to give expression to one's inner, "hidden" (*yin* 隱) intentions or thoughts (*zhi* 志) in words, and when this is done sincerely through the medium of lyrical poetry—presumably in the form of words set to music—it has an irresistible effect on others: "People's nature is intrinsically thus: the intentions that they harbor must find an outlet for being expressed. If the words that are sung carry genuine meaning, then they will enter into [the hearts of others]—recite them in people's presence and they will have an effect, people will be unable to resist" (民性固然, 其𠰁 (隱) 志必有以輸 (喻) 也。[40] 其言有所載而后內 (入, 納), 或前之而后交 (效), 人不可扞也) (*Kongzi Shi Lun* 20). What is particularly interesting about the Guodian corpus treatment of music, however, is that it seems to be explicitly offered as the solution to the tension of how one can inculcate sincerity in a person who is not already sincere.

In addition, we see this conception of music as self-cultivation tool coupled in the Guodian corpus with the idea that, as in the *Mencius*, one's physiological appearance can serve as outward "proof" that the desired internal transformation has occurred. As Csikszentmihalyi (2004) has noted, in texts such as the *Wu Xing* and the *Mencius*, the

[39] Consider especially the Xunzi's "Discourse on Music" or the "Record of Music" chapter of the *Liji* 禮記. For comprehensive discussions of early Chinese views of music, see Cook 1995 and Brindley 2006b; for the importance of music as a "uniquely powerful motivational force" (Cook 2004: 417) in the Guodian corpus in particular, see Cook 2004 and Brindley 2006a.

[40] Both of the readings in parentheses are proposed by Pang Pu 2002; also see the discussion of this passage in Li Ling 2002b.

presence in people of sincere virtue is something that can be felt—and in some case brought about—by a process that is explicitly modeled on musical resonance:

> "The sound of a metal bell causing a jade chime to vibrate" describes the presence of a Virtuous person. The sound of the metal bell is goodness, the [evoked] tone of the jade is sageliness. Goodness is the human Way, Virtue is the Heavenly Way. Only when the Virtuous person is present can there be "the sound of a metal bell causing a jade chime to vibrate"[41] (金聲而玉振之有德者也。金聲善也, 玉音聖也。善, 人道也; 德, 天道也。唯有德者然後能金聲而玉振之). (*Wu Xing* 19–20)

This type of "Virtue-resonance" allows both outside evaluations of others' Virtue and an external confirmation of one's own,[42] resolving the problem of potential hypocrisy or insincerity. In the Guodian corpus, then, music serves as a self-cultivation tool particularly suited to circumvent the motivational form of the paradox of *wu-wei*: one does not have to try not to try, because music can get in and do the work of transforming one's emotions directly. Moreover, the concept of resonance, metaphorically borrowed from music, serves as a means for verifying that this transformative process has worked, ensuring social trust and the smooth functioning of all levels of government.

9 The Lost School of Zisi or Gaozi?

In Slingerland 2003b, I argued that the paradox of *wu-wei* generally inspires two resource-based responses. The first is the "internalist" position that we should not try: we already *are wu-wei* at some level or in some sense, and merely need to gently develop, uncover, or release this potentiality. The second is the "externalist" response that we must try, and try very hard: we are not naturally *wu-wei*, but we can become so through a long process of training in artificial cultural forms.[43] I argue that, with regard to the "Confucian" school, the ambiguity in the *Analects* between internalist and externalist positions is seized upon by Confucius' followers Mencius and Xunzi in opposite ways, with Mencius developing a strongly internalist position and Xunzi a strongly externalist one.

Interestingly enough, it seems that the position of the Guodian corpus lies somewhere in between these two extremes. Paul Goldin has pointed out the strong parallels between the treatment of music in the Guodian corpus and in the *Xunzi*, and has argued that this, along with other externalist elements present in the text, identifies the Guodian corpus as an antecedent to Xunzi (Goldin 2000). There are, however, important disanalogies between the Guodian corpus and the *Xunzi*. To begin with, the Guodian corpus is not consistently externalist: it is clear that, for the Guodian authors, perfected moral culture involves the harmonizing of both external and internal elements. As the *Yucong* notes, "With regard to the Way of being human, some aspects of it emerge from the inside, some enter from the

[41] This metaphor of the metal bell and jade chime also appears in *Mencius* 5B1, and there is a fair amount of commentarial debate over its meaning. Csikszentmihalyi has made a convincing case for the "resonance" interpretation adopted here (although I render the passage slightly differently); see his discussion of this passage (2004: 178–192) for more details.

[42] Another diagnostic tool extolled by both Mencius and the Guodian texts is assessment of others' physiological appearance, especially their eyes and facial expression or coloration (*se* 色). See Csikszentmihalyi (2004: 127–160) for a discussion.

[43] T.C. Kline has referred to these as the "inside-out" versus the "outside-in" models of self-cultivation (Kline 2000: 157); also see Ivanhoe (forthcoming) for a recent and similar argument concerning the tension between "untutored" versus "cultivated" spontaneity in early Chinese thought.

outside" (人之道也, 或由中出, 或由外入) (*Yucong* 1: 18–20). Those aspects that come from the inside appear to be the family-based virtues—*xiao* 孝 or "filial piety" and *di* 悌 "obedience to elders" (lit. "being an obedient younger brother")—and the public virtue of benevolence (*ren* 仁) that arises from these familial virtues. Those aspects that come from the outside seem related to the virtue of rightness (*yi* 義), which is why the *Liu De* declares that "benevolence is internal, and rightness is external" (*rennei yiwai* 仁內義外). For Xunzi, in contrast, *all* of the socially-desirable virtues are external.

The Guodian texts are also quite fond of root (*ben* 本) and source (*yuan* 源) metaphors, which have clear internalist entailments and serve as the dominant metaphors in the *Mencius*:[44]

> For this reason the degree to which the gentleman seeks it within himself is profound indeed. If one does not seek for it at its root, but works instead upon its branches, one will not obtain it. For this reason, with regard to his words the gentleman does not seek out the [supposed] value to be found in branching tributaries, but rather [pursues] the value to be found in exhausting the source and returning to the root (是故君子之求諸己也深。不求諸其本而攻諸其末, 弗得矣。是〔故〕, 君子之於言也, 非從末流之貴, 窮源反本者之貴). (*Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi* 9–10)

We also find a complete absence of the sorts of externalist metaphors that *Xunzi* is so fond of, such as metaphors referring to measuring tools (*guiju* 規矩, *shengmo* 繩墨, *heng* 衡), to craft processes such as "cutting and polishing" or "steaming and bending," or external intrusion metaphors such as "soaking" or "infusion" (*jian* 漸). Moreover, the general portrayal of the self-cultivation process seems to share many similarities with Mencian extension. Consider this passage from *Wu Xing*, which describes the gradual expansion of kin-based affection to encompass benevolence toward non-kin:

> When the facial coloration and appearance are warm, this is affection; to use what is in one's inner heart-mind to interact with others is joy. When the inner heart-mind takes joy in it, and this feeling is transferred to one's older and younger brothers, this is closeness; feeling closeness and trusting in it, this is kinship; feeling kinship and being sincere about it, this is caring; a caring father's extending this feeling to others, this is benevolence (顏色容貌溫, 變也; 以其中心與人交, 悅也; 中心悅焉, 遷於兄弟, 戚也。戚而信之, 親; 親而篤之, 愛; 愛父其攸[45]愛人, 仁也). (*Wu Xing* 31–32)

We also have some tantalizing fragments from text 3 of the *Yu Cong*, one of which refers "is/are the sprout(s) of …" (□□之端也) (*Yu Cong* 3: 23), and another that states that "if things are not completely present [within oneself?], one cannot perfect benevolence" (物不備, 不成仁) (*Yu Cong* 3: 39). This, along with the appearance of Confucius' grandson Zisi in *Lu Mugong Wen Zisi* 魯穆公問子思 (*Duke Mu of Lu Asks Zisi*), has led many scholars to concur with the position that the Guodian corpus represents the lost works of Zisi, linked

[44] Cf. Chen Ning's observation, concerning the text *Cheng Zhi Wen Zhi*, that "the words to 'grow' and to 'extend' …strongly suggest an awareness that morality, however small, has already been planted incipiently in nature" (Chen 2002: 31), although Chen ultimately concurs with Paul Goldin's suggestion that the Guodian texts represent a "forerunner of Xunzi's theory of human nature as being evil" (Chen 2002: 36).

[45] Reading 攸 in the sense of *di* 迪 (advance, progress) (Jingmenshi Bowuguan editors) or *ji* 繼 (follow, continue, carry on) (Qiu Xigui).

with Mencius by Xunzi in his famous condemnation of "the followers of Zisi and Mencius" ("Contra Twelve Philosophers"; Knoblock 1988: 224).[46]

However, it should also be noted that the position of the Guodian corpus is not identical to that of Mencius. To begin with, Mencius is much more optimistic that natural family virtues can be "extended" in an unforced, harmonious way to apply to the political realm. Consider, for example:

> Treat the aged of your own family in a manner that respects their seniority, and then cause this treatment to reach the aged of other families. Treat the young ones in your family in a manner appropriate to their youth, and then cause this treatment to reach the young of other families. Once you are able to do this, you will have the world in the palm of your hand. The *Odes* say, "Setting a model for his chief wife/ He extended it to his older and younger brothers/ And in this way became the leader of the families and states." The point is that all that is required is to pick up this heart here and apply it to what is over there. Thus one who is able to extend his kindness will find it sufficient to care for everyone within the Four Seas, whereas one who cannot extend his kindness will find himself unable to care for his own wife and children. That in which the ancients greatly surpassed others was none other than this: they were good at extending what they did, that is all. (*Mencius* 1A7)

In this regard, Mencius is expanding upon an internalist position found in *Analects* 1.2:

> Master You said, "A young person who is filial and respectful of his elders rarely becomes the kind of person who is inclined to defy his superiors, and there has never been a case of one who is disinclined to defy his superiors stirring up rebellion. The gentleman applies himself to the roots (*fuben* 務本). 'Once the roots are firmly established, the Way will grow.' Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the root of Goodness?" (*Analects* 1.2)

Perhaps most tellingly, the position expressed in *Liu De* that "benevolence is internal, and rightness is external" (*rennei yiwai* 仁內義外) is one that, as we know, is attributed in the *Mencius* to a certain Gaozi, and of course strongly rejected by Mencius himself. The position of Gaozi, as far as we can glean from the *Mencius*,[47] is that human beings need significant external guidance to get their inner potentialities to develop into properly shaped outer virtues—that virtue education cannot simply rely on biology-like inner teleology with nothing more than unstructured nourishment from the outside. This seems to accord with certain aspects of the Guodian corpus, such as very Xunzian-sounding sentiment in *Xing Zi Ming Chu* that reads: "The nature of everyone within the Four Seas is the same. That each becomes different in his application of his heart-mind is brought about by education" (四海之內, 其性一也。其用心各異, 教使然也) (*Xing Zi Ming Chu* 9). Mencius, of course, is adamantly opposed to the idea that any aspect of the Confucian Way comes from the outside, or that instruction involves more than merely developing the incipient sprouts of human morality.

We might conclude, then, that whether the Guodian corpus is the product of the mysterious Gaozi or represents lost pieces of the *Zisizi* 子思子, the position on human nature

[46] For helpful summaries of the arguments for the Guodian corpus as the product of the Zisi school, see Goldin 2000: ftn. 8, Guo 2000, Yang 2000, and Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 86–100.

[47] For more on Gaozi and his potential school-affiliation, see Shun 1997: 123–126; for Gaozi and his potential relationship to the Guodian corpus, see Goldin 2000, Tao 2001, and Scarpari 2002.

and self cultivation that it presents seems to be somewhere between the thorough-going internalism of Mencius and the externalism of Xunzi.[48] Along with the new philosophical texts collectively known as the "Shanghai Strips" that are gradually being organized and published by the Shanghai Museum, the Guodian corpus clearly forces us to develop a more nuanced and complex picture of the landscape of early Chinese thought.

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[48] Cf. Erica Brindley's comment that the *Xing Zi Ming Chu* "differs from Xunzi's writings in that it posits a more organic connection between an individual's natural dispositions and the goal of moral self-cultivation," but also "differs from Mencius' writings in that it denies the existence of an innate tendency toward morality and moral behavior" (Brindley 2006a: 248). Also see Cook 2004 on the relationship between culture and human nature in the Guodian Confucian texts.

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[49] This is a clever wordplay on the traditional saying, “explaining books from Ying according to a Yan interpretation” (originally from the *Hanfeizi*), which refers to a distorted interpretation. Pang’s point is that the loss of character diversity after the Qin unification has caused us to systematically misread ancient texts.

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