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This chapter relies on a distinction between Confucianism and Daoism made during the Han dynasty (漢朝: 206 BCE–220 CE) and further perpetuated in Chinese intellectual history. It examines the connections between pre-Qin (秦朝: 221– 206 BCE) Daoist and Confucian philosophies, focusing on their differences as well as similarities. While it has been traditionally accepted that there are many tensions, and even antagonism, between concepts and approaches in Daoist and Confucian thought, the discussion here also focuses on the historical linkages and philosophical continuities that at times blur the distinction between the two. The primary comparison here will be conducted at three levels: the individual within its environment, the socio-political world, and the cultivation of the self. These three levels of analysis are organized in three sections, from the more inclusive to the more specific. However, the sections are only theoretical divisions, since both Daoist and Confucian philosophies emphasize a concept of selfhood that focuses on an individual's relationships with others, within a larger natural and cosmic environment. To more fully understand these comparisons, it is important also to examine the intellectual climate within which interactions between so-called Daoism and Confucianism took place. These details, including information gleaned from relatively recently discovered texts, are not merely tangential to our understanding of both philosophies. Representations of the two philosophical traditions by thinkers and in texts through history are central to how we understand the relation between them. Due to restrictions of length, my discussion here will concentrate on the foundational period in Chinese intellectual history.[1]

[1]It is important to note here that the relation between Daoism and Confucianism fluctuated through different periods. For example, during the Song dynasty (Song Chao 宋朝: 960–1279 CE), Confucians such as Cheng Hao (程顥: 1032–1085) and his brother Cheng Yi (程頤: 1033–1107), as well as Zhu Xi (朱熹: 1130–1200), were fierce critics of Daoist thought.

1 Introduction

How do we make sense of Daoism and Confucianism in the pre-Qin and Han periods? The most influential early narrative of their relationship appears in the *Shiji* (史記, Records of the Grand Historian), which relates an account of the meeting between Kongzi (孔子) and Laozi (老子).[2,3] There, Kongzi is overawed by Laozi's insights on the rites (*li* 禮), and he pays tribute to Laozi by characterizing him as a dragon. This theme is given play in a number of texts of around the same period, including in the *Zhuangzi* (莊子)[4] and the *Liji* (禮記, Record of Rites).[5]

Although these accounts do not explicitly mention hostility between Laozi (Lao Dan) and Kongzi, there is an implicit suggestion that these key figures belong to different traditions. To appreciate the implications of this narrative, we need to understand that the *Shiji* was written in a period when historiographers (*taishi* 太史) held office in the imperial administration. Two significant histories of the Han period, the *Shiji* itself, and the *Qian Hanshu* (前漢書, History of the Former Han), did not simply "recount" the events and people of the past. They used the past as illustrations of examples to follow, behaviors to avoid, exemplars of benevolent rule, and so on.[6] Thus ideas were brought into the service of political and administrative enterprise (see Schwartz 1985: 237–54; Graham 1989: 374–6; 379–80; De Bary and Bloom 1999: 298–9).

In this regard, the antagonism between Daoism and Confucianism is at least partly a creation of historiographers to justify their ideologies and secure their positions (refer to Loewe 1999; and G.E.R. Lloyd 2002: 126–147). Still, the theme of antagonism between the traditions continues

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[2]In the *Shiji*, there are two references to encounters between the two men. The first occurs in a chapter on the details of Kongzi (*Shiji* 47; "Kongzi Shijia" 〈孔子世家〉) and the second in a chapter relating to the details of Laozi and Han Fei (*Shiji* 63; "Laozi Han Fei Liezhuan" 〈老子韓非列傳〉).

[3]Angus Graham believes that the earliest reference to Kongzi's learning experience with Lao Dan is from the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (*Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* 呂氏春秋), a text dated to around 240 BCE. It mentions three people Kongzi has learnt from: Lao Dan (老聃), Meng Su Kui (孟蘇夔) and Jing Su (靖叔) (Graham 1998: 27).

[4]In the fifth chapter of the *Zhuangzi* ("De Chong Fu" 〈德充符〉), Kongzi does not speak directly with Lao Dan. However, Lao Dan comments that Kongzi has not acquired complete freedom from a number of worldly concerns. In the fourteenth chapter of *Zhuangzi* ("Tianyun" 〈天運〉), there is an account of the meeting between Kongzi and Lao Dan that resembles the *Shiji* account. It is unclear whether the *Zhuangzi* account may have been the source of the *Shiji* account (refer to Graham 1998: 25).

[5]In the *Liji*, a work of the last century BCE, Lao Dan, a senior, addresses Kongzi by his name Qiu (Graham 1998: 26).

[6]Burton Watson discusses the nature of these writings: "The function of history…is twofold: to impart tradition and to provide edifying moral examples as embodied in the classics. These two traditions, one recording the words and deeds of history, the other illustrating moral principles through historical incidents, run through all Chinese historiography" (1999: 368).

to be a subject of study into the present. While many scholars believe that the encounter story between Laozi and Kongzi was perpetuated by those of Daoist persuasion to assert the superiority of Daoist thought, in an interesting twist, Angus Graham has argued that the Confucians were responsible for promoting these encounters because they were keen to establish Kongzi's flexibility in his willingness to learn from others (1998: 27, 36).[7]

It is important also to note that not all thinkers during the Han advocated either a Confucian or a Daoist doctrine. Some of them synthesized and integrated themes and ideas from different traditions. For example, although DONG Zhongshu was of Confucian persuasion, he drew upon the concepts *yin-yang* (陰陽), *qi* (氣), and the Daoist notion of passivity to explicate the (Confucian) triadic relation between Heaven, earth and humanity (Queen, in De Bary and Bloom 1999: 295–310).

A good example of a text that brings together Confucian and Daoist themes is the *Huainanzi* (淮南子, The Masters of Huainan), written around the middle of the second century BCE, either by LIU An (劉安, 180?–122? BCE), the king of Huainan, or under his patronage (Major 1993: 3–5). The text quotes extensively from a range of sources including the *Zhuangzi*, the Laozi (老子), the *Hanfeizi* (韓非子) and the *Lüshi Chunqiu*. It integrates seemingly conflicting views, such as those of Zhuangzi and HAN Fei. It also combines the Daoist themes of quiescence (*jing* 靜) and non-action (*wuwei* 無為) with the Confucian concept of human nature (*xing* 性), which is grounded in Heaven's way (*tiandao* 天道). The 21 chapters of the *Huainanzi* embody the spirit of Chinese philosophy during the Han period, with its tendency to combine concepts and themes from different strands of thought.[8]

The *Yijing* (易經, Classic of Change) also played a prominent role in shaping the debates of this period. Although its earliest sections are dated to around the ninth century BCE, later additions date perhaps from the late Zhou dynasty (周朝, 1122–256 BCE). These additions were called the "ten appendices" (*Shi Yi* 十翼 or *Yi Zhuan* 易傳). The commentaries are philosophically significant for their explorations of the rationale for using hexagrams in divination and their focus on the underlying worldviews of

[7] Graham also argues that the identification of Lao Dan with Laozi, the founder of Daoism, was not current with the story but established in stages: (a) Confucians promote the story about the willingness of Kongzi to learn from Lao Dan, probably an archivist. This story was current in around the 4th century BCE. (b) The adoption of Lao Dan as a spokesperson for "Chuangism" in the "Neipian" (〈內篇〉) of the *Zhuangzi*, by about 300 BCE. (c) Lao Dan is identified with Laozi; this helps to mark out "Laoism" as a distinctive doctrinal stream. (d) In order to render the *Laozi* acceptable to the Qin, various stories were promoted. These include Lao Dan as the Grand Historiographer who in 374 BCE predicted the rise of Qin, journeyed to the west and wrote the book of 5,000 characters for the gatekeeper, Yin Xi (尹喜). This stage and the previous one were completed by about 240 BCE. (e) Existing schools of thought were classified, as for instance, into the six doctrinal groups in the *Shiji*. According to this classification, both "Laoism" and "Chuangism" came under one doctrine, "*Dao*-ism" (Daojia). Since Lao Dan's dates are prior to those of Zhuangzi's, Lao Dan was identified as the founder of Daoism (Graham 1998: 36–7).

[8] Refer to Charles Le Blanc 1985, John Major 1993, Roger Ames 1994, and Paul Goldin 1999 for discussions of synthesis and/or syncretism in the *Huainanzi*.

the *Yijing*. During the Han dynasty, themes from the *Yijing*, especially those of interdependency, change and transformation, were applied to a wide range of issues in cosmology, astronomy, politics, society and its institutions, ethics, health and personal well-being.

Other texts from the late Warring States (*Zhanguo* 戰 國) and Han periods, including the *Guanzi* (管子, Writings of Master Guan) and the *Huangdi Neijing* (黃帝內經, The Inner Canon of Huangdi), also incorporate syntheses of ideas from different doctrinal groups.[9]

While the close examination of these texts lies beyond our discussion, the issue of synthesis is important to our understanding of Confucian and Daoist philosophies. It underlies questions including: Did thinkers of this time consider Confucianism and Daoism antithetical? If there were distinctions between Confucianism and Daoism at different points in Chinese intellectual history, what were they, and what were the key characteristics of each of these philosophies?

A set of texts discovered in 1993 at Guodian (郭店), Hubei (湖北) Province, were published in 1998 as a collection, the *Guodian Chumu zhujian* (郭店楚墓竹簡, *The Bamboo Slips from the Chu Tomb at Guodian*). More than 800 bamboo slips were found in the tomb, and from these, fourteen Confucian texts and two Daoist texts, including portions of the *Laozi*, were identified. Robert Henricks suggests that these slips could have belonged to a teacher's philosophical library (2000: 5). The texts are believed to date from no later than 278 BCE, and perhaps even before 300 BCE (Liu 2003a: 149).

This collection presents numerous instances where Confucian texts seem to have "borrowed" from Daoist ideas. These discussions obfuscate precise distinctions between Confucianism and Daoism (Liu 2003a: 150–1). Recent work on the Guodian texts focus on their significance for philological issues, intellectual history and philosophical matters. While the literature is too vast to list here, it is important to note that the discussions in the texts draw from ideas and vocabulary of what had previously been thought of as distinct, Confucian and Daoist, traditions (Holloway 2008; Meyer 2008: 309–16). One example of this is the Guodian *Laozi* which, dated earlier than received versions of the *Laozi*, does not on the whole seem to disagree with Confucian values and concepts as the received versions do. For example, received versions of *Laozi* 19 are critical of Confucian concepts such as sageliness (*sheng* 聖), wisdom (*zhi* 智), benevolence (*ren* 仁), and rightness (*yi* 義), while

[9]An issue of philosophical interest concerns the nature of these syntheses: were those who articulated the various views successful in integrating concepts and themes from different strands of thought? Or were the attempts at synthesis only partially successful, resulting in views that incorporated inconsistent mixes of concepts and themes? It has been suggested that earlier attempts (during the late Warring States and early in the Han period) at drawing together strands from different traditions had limited success; these

the same passage in the Guodian *Laozi* takes issue with intelligence (*zhi* 知) and disputation (*bian* 辯) (Liu 2003b: 231). According to Liu, the Guodian texts prompt us to rethink the relationship between pre-Qin Confucianism and Daoism (Liu 2003a: 151). This is an important challenge to the view that antagonism between these traditions rests only on deep-seated philosophical and axiological differences, rather than historical circumstance as well.

Let us now turn to a comparison of Confucian and Daoist philosophies at three different but interrelated levels: the individual within the environment, the socio- political world, and cultivation of the self.

2 The Individual Within the Environment

Both Confucianism and Daoism uphold a notion of self that is understood in terms of its relationships and its place within a broader environment. Daoist texts such as the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* express this awareness at a number of levels. They emphasize natural events as well as human interdependence with other life- forms. They also consider the effects of the social and political environment on the individual. Discussions within the Confucian tradition show similar awareness of the individual's embeddedness within a larger environmental context. There is, however, an important difference between Daoist and Confucian conceptions of self- in-environment as the latter highlights the exclusive capacities and achievements of humanity. We will examine this and other comparisons in the following discussion. In Confucian thought, awareness of the environment is articulated first in terms of the contexts within which human interactions occur. The family context, neighborhoods, and communities are critical to the development of individuals (*Lunyu* 論語 2.5–8, 4.1, 2.20, 12.19, 13.11 and 13.13). The right kinds of contexts and interactions with paradigmatic people will facilitate the inculcation of relational values such as *xiao* (孝 filial piety) and *ren*. Where the leaders of society are not guided by a vision of collective human good, individuals cannot thrive. This theme occupies a central position in the Confucian vision of good government (*renzheng*仁政). This vision is articulated in different ways by different Confucian thinkers. For example, Xunzi (荀子 310?–219? BCE) argues that a regulatory socio-political framework comprised by *li* (rites, social ritual), *yi* (rightness) and *fa* (法standards, penal laws) is necessary for the establishment of orderly society (*Xunzi* 荀子, "Xing E" 性惡). In Mengzi's (孟子: 385?–312? BCE) philosophy,

attempts and their resultant philosophies are often labeled 'syncretic'. In contrast, the method of synthesis—drawing together different concepts and themes in a more or less coherent unity—is thought to be a characteristic of Chinese thought of the (later) Han period. See, for example, the chapter divisions and titles in De Bary and Bloom's *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. Chapter 9, "Syncretic Visions of State, Society, and Cosmos," cover texts from the late Warring States to the early Han period (pp.

235–282). Chapter 10, "The Imperial Order and Han Synthesis," discusses texts of the Han period (pp.283–352).

a compassionate society is a natural extension of inherent human goodness:

> Mencius said, "The ability possessed by humans without having been acquired by learning is intuitive ability [人之所不學而能者, 其良能也]. The knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of further thought is their intuitive knowledge. Children carried in the arms all know to love their parents [孩提之童, 無不知愛其親者]. When they are grown a little, they all know to respect their elder brothers. Filial affection for parents is a manifestation of benevolence. Respect for elders is a manifestation of righteousness. That is all; these belong to all under heaven." (*Mengzi* 7A.15, trans. adapted from the translation by Legge 1981: 943–4)

In the *Mengzi* and later Confucian texts, the concept "heaven" (*tian* 天) is the source or ground of human morality (although we need to note that *tian* is not an absolute or transcendent basis of morality). In the *Xunzi*, *tian* is not only associated with human morality, it also encapsulates the idea of the natural world within which humans are situated. The *Zhongyong* (中庸, Doctrine of the Mean), a Confucian text dating from around the third century BCE,[10] places humanity within a broader cosmological context. It emphasizes the partnership of humanity with heaven and earth (*di* 地):

> 唯天下至誠, 為能盡其性, 能盡其性, 則能盡人之性, 能盡人之性, 則能盡物之性, 能盡物之性, 則可以贊天地之化育, 可以贊天地之化育, 則可以與天地參矣. (*Zhongyong* 22, Legge 1981: 92–93)

> Of all under Heaven, only the person of complete sincerity can realize his nature to the greatest extent. Given that he is able to do this, he can help others realize their natures to the greatest extent. Given that he is able to do this, he can help the realization of the naturesof animals and things to the fullest extent. Given that he is able to do this, he can assist in the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth. Able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, he may with Heaven and Earth form a trinity. (Adapted from the translation by Legge, *ibid.*)

This doctrine of the human partnership with Heaven and Earth situates the Confucian concept of humanity, as well as human achievements and human well- being, in a larger cosmological perspective. At the same time, it amplifies the status of humanity. In contrast, Daoist philosophy tends not to elevate the status of humanity but rather to emphasize the intertwined circumstances of humans with other beings and aspects of the environment. While the *Zhongyong* passage above stresses the heightened role and responsibilities of humanity, *Laozi* 5 draws attention to the relative equality of all things (*wanwu* 萬物: lit. ten thousand things):

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[10]The *Zhongyong* was originally thought to have been written by Kongzi's grandson, Zisi (子思) as part of the text *Zisizi* (子思子). Contemporary scholars doubt this on the basis of extensive examination of its intellectual content (An 2003).

天地不仁, 以萬物為芻狗;
聖人不仁, 以百姓為芻狗. (WANG Bi version, Liu 2006: 129)

Heaven and Earth are not centrally focused on humaneness. They regard the ten thousand things as straw dogs.[11]
The sage is not centrally focused on humaneness. He regards all people as straw dogs. (Author's translation)

The suggestion that Heaven and earth are "not humane" (*bu ren*) can be interpreted in a number of ways. It may be understood as a firm denial of the key Confucian concept, *ren*. Secondly, it may be taken in a more neutral manner to suggest that Heaven and Earth are not circumscribed by humanly-constructed notions of morality, especially as encapsulated in the concept *ren*. Third, there is a more positive understanding of this phrase, where *tian di bu ren* is taken to mean that Heaven and Earth are impartial and bring positive benefit to all things, not just humanity alone.[12] All interpretations of the phrase *bu ren* involve, at some level, rejection of the artificial elevation of humanity as a singularly select group. Daoist attention to the environment is most prominent in the concept *ziran* (自然), which may be understood in terms of naturalness or "unadorned simplicity" (Liu 1999: 229). While the concept *ziran* may refer to physical aspects of the natural environment, it most appropriately refers to *processes*

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[11]The notion of "straw dogs" is philosophically interesting. Wang Bi interprets the phrase to mean "straw and dogs," referring to the different categories in the natural world and how they are interdependent (Rump 1979: 17). D.C. Lau notes in his translation that "[i]n the *T'ien yun* chapter in the *Chuang tzu* it is said that straw dogs were treated with the greatest deference before they were used as an offering, only to be discarded and trampled upon as soon as they had served their purpose." (1963: 61). According to Lau's analysis, the straw dog is central to the sacrifice. However, taken out of that context, the straw dog loses its significance. If all things are as straw dogs, they are significant only within particular contexts. Furthermore, all things, including humanity, must pass on when the 'sacrifice' is over. Ames and Hall note: "There is nothing in nature, high or low, that is revered in perpetuity" (2003: 85). Could this passage also be understood as an ominous warning about attempts to elevate humanity?

[12]Wang Bi's analysis of this passage presents the positive rendition of "*tian di bu ren*": "Heaven and Earth leave what is natural (Tzu-jan [*ziran*], Self-so) alone. They do nothing and create nothing. The myriad things manage and order themselves. Therefore they are not benevolent. One who is benevolent will create things, set things up, bestow benefits on them and influence them. He gives favors and does something. When he creates, sets things up, bestows benefits on things and influences them, then things will lose their true being … If nothing is done to the myriad things, each will accord with its function, and everything is then self-sufficient" (trans. Rump 1979: 17).

rather than the *substance* of nature. Chung-ying Cheng expresses this succinctly:

> … *tzu-jan* [*ziran*] is not something beyond and above the Tao [Dao]. It is the movement of the Tao as the Tao, namely as the underlying unity of all things as well as the underlying source of the life of all things. One important aspect of *tzu-jan* is that the movement of things must come from the internal life of things and never results from engineering or conditioning by an external power. (1986: 356)

Two important aspects of *ziran* are evoked in this analysis. First, its approach is oppositional to that which seeks to regulate and coordinate. In this regard, *ziran* is associated with the concepts of simplicity (*pu* 樸) and stillness (*jing* 靜) (*Laozi* 37). Second, the approach is articulated in conjunction with a philosophical framework that upholds the spontaneous and mutual transformation of all things:

> Tao [Dao] invariably takes no action [*wuwei*], and yet there is nothing left undone [道常無為, 而無不為].
> If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform spontaneously [侯王若能守之, 萬物將自化]. (*Laozi* 37, trans. Chan 1963: 166)

The concept *ziran* expresses a commitment to a more inclusive view of life than that articulated in Confucian philosophy, which is, as we have seen, fundamentally grounded in human relationships (*qin qin* 親親) (Liu 2006: 61). Even though these personal relationships gradually flourish into general compassion for everyone (*fan ai zhong* 汎愛眾), the concept *ziran* is resolutely inclusive. It incorporates a broader concern for all life without preferring the human.

Appreciation of other species and awareness of the natural environment are also expressed in the *Zhuangzi*. While the text does not single out human-centeredness for criticism, it offers accounts from the perspective of many other different beings, hence implicitly challenging the human perspective as the only valid and authoritative one. The *Zhuangzi* is concerned more broadly with those who claim exclusivity and, in the allegory that compares (human) speech with the cheeping of chickens, the text rejects those whose views claim to be singularly correct (*Zhuangzi,* "Qi Wu Lun" 齊物論). To facilitate these discussions, the *Zhuangzi* sets out arguments from the perspectives of birds, fish, crickets and monkeys, which parody the confined nature of particular doctrines and their attendant conceptions of human good.

Notwithstanding the subtle differences in Daoist and Confucian conceptions of selfhood, both philosophies share a view of the individual-in-environment. An interesting expression of this idea is presented by David Hall and Roger Ames. They articulate the idea of embeddedness with reference to the concepts of field and focus. According to this view, an individual, a focus or focal point, is necessarily situated within a field, its context. It is only with respect to an individual's place in the field that we

can fully understand its actions, commitments, achievements, and the like:

> A particular is a focus that is both defined by and defines a context—a field. The field is hologrammatic; that is, it is so constituted that each discriminate "part" contains the adumbrated whole. (Hall and Ames 1987: 238)

According to Hall and Ames, the theme of embeddedness is present in both Daoism and Confucianism; they suggest that the schema of focus and field best captures the distinctiveness of this theme.[13] As we will see later, the conception of individual-in-environment has many important implications for Chinese philosophy. Not only does it support a distinctive conception of selfhood, it also generates a practical approach to matters by focusing on contextual factors.[14]

With respect to our increasing awareness of the natural environment and the urgency of the environmental crisis in the present, we should draw on conceptual resources in Confucian and Daoist philosophies to enlighten our debates.

For example, the idea of self-in-environment casts doubt on adversarial conceptions of humans, nonhumans and the natural environment. More specifically, it focuses on relationships, interactions and processes; these are aspects of the environment that are overlooked in a simplistic

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[13]Hall and Ames state that "Our basic claim is that the early Confucians and Taoists in large measure share a common process cosmology defined in terms of "focus" and "field."" (1987: 238– 9). See also Ames and Hall 2003: 11–29. According to Hall and Ames, the criteria for assessing the focus-field self are based on the appropriate or most fitting action given the circumstances of that particular situation. This aesthetic mode of evaluation, which in Confucianism "permits the mutual interdependence of all things to be assessed in terms of particular contexts defined by social roles and functions" (Hall and Ames 1987: 248), is called '*ars contextualis*'—the art of contextualization. Ames explains how *ars contextualis* works in practical terms: "[The Classical Chinese] expressed a "this-worldly" concern for the concrete details of immediate existence as a basis for exercising their minds in the direction of generalities and ideals. They began from an acknowledgement of the uniqueness and importance of the particular person and the particular historical event to the world, while at the same time, stressing the interrelatedness of this person or event with the immediate context" (Ames 1986: 320).

[14]Naturally, we would expect many insightful comparisons between Chinese and Western philosophy in their conceptions of selfhood and views of embeddedness. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to examine the comparisons.

understanding of the natural world in purely physicalist terms. To make the most of resources available in Chinese philosophy, contemporary scholarship might undertake more substantive explorations in this area.[15]

3 The Socio-political World

In the unstable political climate of the Chunqiu period (春秋, 722–476 BCE), Kongzi believed that social rectification was necessary to restore the ethico-political order that had prevailed in the earlier part of the Zhou dynasty (*Lunyu* 3.14, 7.5). The Confucians placed the onus on those in power, urging them to live ethically- cultivated lives and, through that, to provide standards the common people could follow (*Lunyu* 12.17–19). The leader is visible and unshakable, like the North Polar Star (*Lunyu* 2.1). He implements institutions and practices such as *zhengming* (正名, rectification of behaviors to accord with titles), *li* and *yi* (*Lunyu* 13.3, 2.3, 16.10). These practices are grounded in the ideal of humaneness (*ren*), a distinguishing characteristic of humanity that must be nurtured in order that all may thrive in their shared environment.

While some aspects of this vision of moral leadership are desirable, there is concern about elements of paternalism and authoritarianism in the Confucian model of ideal government. Debates on these issues are complicated by the fact that the Confucian texts seem to express a range of views on the subject matter. The *Lunyu* itself supports different pictures of the roles and responsibilities of those in government and, correspondingly, of the people. Some passages in the *Lunyu* (especially in the "Zi Lu" 子路 chapter) express a view of compassionate government, while others such as 8.9 seem to deny initiative to ordinary people.[16] A well-known passage, *Lunyu* 12.19, may be interpreted to support either of these views. That passage reads:

> Chi K'ang Tzu [Ji Kangzi] asked Confucius about government, saying, "What would you think if, in order to move closer to those who possess the Way, I were to kill those who do not follow the Way?"
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> Confucius answered, "In administering your government, what need is there for you to kill? Just desire the good yourself and the common people will be good. The virtue of the gentleman is like wind; the virtue of the small man is like grass. [君子之德風. 小人之德草.] Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend. [草上之風必偃.]" (trans. Lau 1979: 115–6)

[15]Lauren Pfister raises some thoughtful questions about the gaps in scholarship in this area; refer to his "Environmental Ethics and Some Probing Questions for Traditional Chinese Philosophy."

[16]"The common people may be made to follow a path, but not to understand it." "民可使由之, 不可使知之." An interesting discussion of the tension between the complementary roles—or competing roles, as the case may be—is provided by William De Bary 1991.

On the one hand, this passage seems to emphasize the moral influence of the ruler who uses nonviolent measures to bring about social stability. On the other, there is an element of unequal power: the grass must (*bi* 必) bend when the wind is upon it.

Among the early Confucians, Mengzi's view of the government and the populace is considered the most compassionate, since he emphasized the centrality of benevolence to ideal government (*Mengzi* 2A.3–6, 1A.7). In contrast, Xunzi's view of government is often criticized for its authoritarian overtones, especially as he also emphasized *fa* (penal laws) as an instrument of governance. The issue of how we are to understand the Confucian theory of leadership cannot be resolved here (see Angle 2002). However, below we will revisit some aspects of Confucian government as we compare the roles of government and the people in Daoist and Confucian thought.

The Daoist view of government is often explained in terms of the concept *wuwei* (non-action or non-conditional action) (e.g., *Laozi* 3, 37, 57, 64). The meaning of *wuwei* varies across the passages in the *Laozi* and it is not possible to spell out a definitive Daoist vision of government from the text alone. One possible way to understand Daoist *wuwei* government is to emphasize its non-coercive nature and democratic approach:

> 聖人無常心,
> 以百姓心為心…
> 聖人在天下歙歙,
> 為天下渾其心 ... (*Laozi* 49, WANG Bi version, Liu 2006: 486).

> The sage does not have an inflexible mind-heart
> He takes on the people's mind-heart as his own . . .
> In the world, the sage regards all without conscious judgment (like breathing in and out). He merges his mind-heart with those of the people (Author's translation)

Unlike the paradigmatic Confucian leader who stands apart from the common people, as visible as the North Polar star (*Lunyu* 2.1), the Daoist sage does not establish standards on behalf of the people in order to regulate their lives. Benjamin Schwartz describes this as a "laissez-faire" approach to government (1985: 213). Yet, on the other hand, there are passages in the *Laozi* that seem to suggest methods of statecraft—such as the strategy of "stooping to conquer" (*Laozi* 36, 66)—and military strategy (*Laozi* 30) (*ibid*. 213–4).[17]

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[17]Schwartz suggests that these passages on methods of statecraft and military strategy are aligned with the Huang-Lao tradition (1985: 213–4).

The *Laozi* rejects attempts by government to (over-)regulate the lives of the people: "The more proscriptions there are in the world, the more impoverished the people's lives will be The more laws and orders are pronounced, the more thieves there will be." [天下多忌諱, 而民彌貧; . 法令滋彰, 盜賊多有.] (*Laozi* 57, author's translation; Chinese text from WANG Bi version, Liu 2006: 552–3). The *Laozi* challenges conventional values and pursuits:

> 為學日益, 為道日損。
> 損之又損,
> 以至於無為 .... (*Laozi* 48, Wang Bi version, Liu 2006: 480)
>
> Pursue learning and one increases daily, pursue *dao* and one decreases daily. One decreases and further decreases until one is no longer conditioned [in one's thoughts and actions]. . (Author's translation. See also *Laozi* 2, 10, 63)

In this regard, if we understand Confucianism simply to be promoting a conventional set of values and practices,[18] then Daoist philosophy would be antagonistic to Confucianism. Yet, as we have seen in our discussions about the interactions between Confucianism and Daoism, this is only one way of understanding the relationship between the two.

The few references to *wuwei* in the *Zhuangzi* "Neipian" refer directly to the comportment and inner tranquility of the Daoist sage. The most significant reference to *wuwei* appears in connection with the perfect man who applies his mind-heart (*xin* 心) like a mirror[19]:

> 無為名尸, 無為謀府, 無為事任, 無為知主. ... 至人之用心若鏡, 不將不迎, 應而不藏, 故能勝物而不傷. (*Zhuangzi ji shi*, "*Ying Di Wang*" 應帝王 1961: 307)
>
> Do not attempt to be the owner of fame, do not act only according to plans, do not be burdened with affairs, do not be the master of wisdom. The perfect man employs his heart-mind like a mirror; he does not support things or receive them, he responds but does not store. Hence, he deals successfully with things and does not injure them. (Author's translation)

This passage must be understood in connection with the text's disquiet about the nature of the sage's political involvement. More specifically, it is cautious about tensions arising from the enlightened sage's engagement with the concerns of society.[20] Despite differences in the two views of political involvement, Confucianism also emphasizes the equanimity of the leader (*Lunyu* 9.29), especially when he deals with different and new situations (*Lunyu* 2.11).

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[18]Refer to the discussion by Hourdequin 2004 on understanding Confucian thought primarily in terms of the institutionalization of convention within society.

[19]Graham argues that the mirror metaphor is not associated with a 'surrender to passions' but rather 'impersonal calm which mirrors the situation with utmost clarity' (2001: 14;16).

[20]Four of the seven "Neipian" of the *Zhuangzi* are preoccupied with this question ("*Ren Jian Shi*" 〈人間世〉; "*De Chong Fu*" 〈德充符〉; "*Da Zong Shi*" 〈大宗師〉 and "*Ying Di Wang*" 〈應帝王〉.

A number of questions concerning the concept *wuwei* will illuminate our discussion of Daoist and Confucian conceptions of government. The first concerns the level of regulative activity: just how much regulation is enough or optimal? Should there be *no* regulation at all such that people live in a primitivist society of the kind evoked in *Laozi* 81? Or, if there are optimal levels of regulation, what are their criteria? While Confucian philosophy upholds particular measures and institutions as prerequisites of good government, Daoist *wuwei* is notoriously ambiguous. This could be because *wuwei* is incompatible with the promotion of standards in the way other thinkers, including the Confucians, have proposed. To steer clear of imposing measures that serve only to restrict the lives of the people, Daoist government might have to refrain from being prescriptivist. However, if Daoist philosophy cannot supply clear answers regarding regulative activity, the Confucian might say to the Daoist:

> All very well for the Daoists who relish philosophical activity and who encourage directionless wandering. This promotes the free, individual human spirit. But we need to find the *best* way—the most effective in achieving social harmony through human attachment. And it must be the best way for us all, not just the best from where each of us sits. *Collectively* we must explore paths that lead to better conditions for humanity than what we now have. (Lai 2006: 148–9)

A second and related question probes further: to what extent does the government control or regulate the life of society? Might we understand *wuwei* as a *passive* form of government, in contrast to Confucian government that *actively* sets out standards for the common people? Or is the contrast along these lines too simplistic? Perhaps important differences lie not in the *level* of activity but in the *type* of activity undertaken by the government.[21] *Laozi* 17 presents a description of different governmental styles:

> 太上, 下知有之。
> 其次, 親而譽之。
> 其次, 畏之。其次, 侮之。
> 信不足, 焉有不信焉。悠
> 兮其貴言。
> 功成事遂, 百姓皆謂我自然。 (Wang Bi version, Liu 2006: 205)

> With the most excellent rulers, their subjects only know that they are there,
> The next best are the rulers they love and praise,
> Next are the rulers they hold in awe,
> And the worst are the rulers they disparage.
> Where there is a lack of credibility,
> There is a lack of trust.
> Vigilant, they are careful in what they say.
> With all things accomplished and the work complete
> The common people say, "We are spontaneously like this." (trans. Ames and Hall 2003: 101–3)

[21]For extended discussions of *wuwei* in the *Laozi*, refer to Ames 1994: 33–46, Lai 2007: 332–4, Schwartz 1985: 210–5 and Slingerland 2003: 107–17.

The Confucian sage is held in high moral regard by the people (*Lunyu* 12.7, 2.1) and hence it cannot be said that his existence is barely known. However, like the Daoist leader, he is neither despised nor feared. Furthermore, the interdependence between the ruler and the people in the Confucian ideal society may also be described in terms of *wuwei*: if the ruler is capable in facilitating the institutions of *li* and *yi*, social order will eventuate as if naturally. *Lunyu* 15.5 states that the sage-king Shun (舜) adopted a *wuwei* approach to government. Although this is an isolated occurrence of *wuwei* in the *Lunyu*, the *Zhongyong*, a later Confucian text, picks up on the theme of the subtle effectiveness of the Confucian sage:

> "[Zhong Ni, Confucius] handed down the doctrines of Yao and Shun … taking them as his model… He may be compared to heaven and earth in their supporting and containing, their overshadowing and curtaining, all things. He may be compared to the four seasons in their alternating progress, and to the sun and moon in their successive shining. All things are nourished together without their injuring one another" (*Zhongyong* 30, trans. Legge 1981: 110–1).

Although the Confucian leader is by comparison more actively involved in leading the people and coordinating the institutions and social processes, like the Daoist leader, he avoids coercion. The Confucian leader seeks to transform society through example rather than coercion (e.g., *Lunyu* 13.6; *Mengzi* 2A.3). We see elements of this model of leadership in Kongzi's own behavior toward his students: he does not coerce students into sharing his views (e.g., *Lunyu* 17.21, 7.8; see Liu 2006: 211–3).

A further similarity in both philosophies is that the sage-ruler creates or facilitates situations and environments that benefit the people. In Daoism, the image of water is used to represent the beneficence of the sage's government (*Laozi* 8). Confucian government seeks also to benefit the people: "wishing to establish himself, he also establishes others; wishing to extend himself, he also helps others extend themselves." (己欲立而立人, 己欲達而達人, from *Lunyu* 6:30, author's translation). In *Mengzi* 1A:7, in conversation with King Xuan (宣王), Mengzi considers certain conditions of life that are a prerequisite (本*ben*) for the cultivation of morality. He advises the King to ensure that these conditions are met so that people have time to develop and practice commitment to propriety (*li*)

and rightness (*yi*). Households should have five *mu*[22] of land on which mulberry trees are planted for silk. There should be chickens, pigs and dogs, and labor to work the fields. Finally, it is important to provide for education in village schools. These details are not merely of anecdotal worth. Rather, they demonstrate a level of thoughtfulness in Mengzi's vision of good government. We should also note the remarkable comment made by Mengzi that "The people are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler" (*Mengzi* 7B.14, trans. Lau 1979: 315).

While Confucian and Daoist views of government differ in regard to their idea of regulative activity, they both emphasize government that benefits the people. In this sense, both philosophies stand in contrast to Legalist philosophy that conceives of political power in terms of the tension between the ruler and the people.[23]

In the final comparison, we turn to the nature of harmony in Daoist and Confucian philosophies. The Confucian conception of ideal society is grounded in reciprocal (*shu* 恕) and complementary relationships. Relationships are complementary in that they embody specific responsibilities and obligations of particular relational positions (e.g., *Lunyu* 1.2, 13.18). The *Mengzi* highlights three relationships in particular: father and son, sovereign and minister, and husband and wife (3A.4). While these are unequal relationships, they should not be construed simply in terms of a power-hierarchy. Confucian thought emphasizes the responsibilities of each person in a relationship to attend to the needs of the other. For example, the filiality of children is a fitting response to parental care and nurturing through the years (e.g., *Lunyu* 2.6–8). A main task of the Confucian leader is to ensure that people understand their responsibilities and obligations in specific relationships so that interactions can occur smoothly; this is a basic requirement of social order (*Lunyu* 13.3). On one occasion, Kongzi comments that a youth had overstepped boundaries:

> A youth from the Que village would carry messages for the Master. Someone asked Confucius, "Is he making any progress?" The Master replied, "I have seen him sitting in places reserved for his seniors, and have seen him walking side by side with his elders. This is someone intent on growing up quickly rather than on making progress." (*Lunyu* 14.44; trans. Ames and Rosemont 1998: 183)

[22]Measure of land area.

[23]See for example the discussions in Schwartz 1985: 321–49 and Graham 1989: 267–92.

The youth's attempts to assume equal status with people more senior were inappropriate: " ... such violations have the potential to undermine the finely tuned harmony in Confucian society" (Lai 2006a: 61–5).

Daoist conceptions of complementarity and harmony are more philosophically complex. In the *Laozi*, opposites are not the antitheses of each other. Although one polarity is emphasized (non-assertiveness [*buzheng* 不爭], softness [*rou* 柔], tranquility [*jing* 靜]), both polarities are embraced (*Laozi* 36, 66, 78). Instead of potential conflict between opposites, the *Laozi* upholds flux: first one polarity gains precedence, then the other, almost as if in cyclical turn-taking (Lau 1963: 27).

The *Zhuangzi's* stance on contrast and difference was another unusual one for its day. Most other thinkers believed that a common standard would bring about social cohesion. To that end, the Confucians emphasized *zhengming* and *li*, and Mohists and Legalists both upheld *fa* explicitly in recognition of the importance of standards. For the Mohists, *fa* would regulate many areas of life, ranging from carpentry to human behavior. For the Legalists, however, *fa* was a standard for behavior backed by the threat of penal law. In his response to the oppositional verbal wrangling, Zhuangzi celebrates the diversity of perspectives as they reflect the plurality in the natural world:

> When a human sleeps in the damp his waist hurts and he gets stiff in the joints; is that so of the loach? When he sits in a tree he shivers and shakes; is that so of the ape? Which of these three knows the right place to live? (*Zhuangzi*, "Qiwulun," trans. Graham 2001: 58)

Both the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* seem to suggest that a cacophony of different voices or views is the optimal condition for society. While some *Laozi* passages advocate non-conformism (*Laozi* 20, 48, 58, 64), the *Zhuangzi* goes further to highlight the importance of having different criteria for assessing different situations (especially in the "Qiwulun" chapter). Here, we may again draw on the concept *ziran*. In addition to its other inflections, *ziran* may also be understood in terms of spontaneity, in other words, "what-is-so-of-itself" (Waley 1934: 174). This aspect of *ziran* refers to the spontaneity of individuals uncompromised by conformism. In this sense, *ziran* is the fitting corollary of the concept *wuwei*: if spontaneity is to be encouraged, *wuwei* must be the *modus operandi* of Daoist government (Lai 2007: 332–7). To put it in negative terms, a government that seeks to instill standard

practices and patterns of behavior is not allowing people to express initiative and spontaneity. Hence, the concepts *ziran* and *wuwei* may be understood to have important ethical implications both in the political realm and in personal life:

> From the Daoist point of view, the common people under the Confucian, Moist, and Legalist schemes will not possess the flexibility to respond in a way that expresses their spontaneity—either because they are constrained . . . or they have not been encouraged to do so. At the socio-political level, non-coercive measures include avoidance of inflexible, absolutist ideals, and unilateral and dictatorial methodologies, as well as promotion of those that engender a measure of individual self-determination. These are fundamental elements of a government that encourages participation of its people in its governing processes. At a personal level, an individual moral agent embraces *wuwei* by recognizing the distinctness, separateness, and spontaneity of the other. (Lai 2007: 334)

In summary, we have seen that both Daoist and Confucian visions of government incorporate the welfare of the people as an important objective. However, while Daoism supports plurality, Confucianism emphasizes unity. From a Confucian perspective, harmony is the result of careful orchestration. The government (or the Confucian paradigmatic person, the *junzi*, 君子) may be likened to a conductor of an orchestra. He is in charge of how the orchestra performs, setting the pace and the tone of the "performance" (Lai 2006b). In contrast, Daoist society may be likened to an ensemble of skilled musicians who are attuned to, and respond spontaneously to, each other. If one of these musicians is also the leader of the ensemble, his or her presence *qua leader* is barely felt; perhaps he or she only cues the ensemble in and thereafter does not dominate in their performance.

The idea of spontaneity and responsiveness is emphasized in Zhuangzi's many examples of skill—like those of Butcher Ding (丁) or the hunchback cicada catcher. In the following section, we extend our discussion of spontaneity and skill in Daoist philosophy, and compare them with models of self-cultivation in Confucian philosophy.

4 Cultivation of the Self

The Confucian and Daoist conceptions of self-in-environment draw attention to the vulnerabilities, as well as the potential, of the individual. Changes in the environment may impact on the individual, just as an individual's actions may have far-reaching effects on others and its environment. According to this view of the self, a plausible conception of the good life must include consideration of an individual's character, relationships, circumstances, adaptability and so on. To this end, Confucian philosophy focuses on self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身), while

Daoist philosophy discusses methods such as *wuwei* for navigating through situations and optimizing one's benefits. Naturally, we would expect that these conceptions of self- in-environment are associated with accounts of ethics that differ significantly from those derived in abstraction from the vicissitudes of lived practical life.

In Confucian philosophy, the paradigmatic person assists in the processes and institutions of society to bring about a better life for all (e.g., *Lunyu* 6.30; *The Great Learning* (*Daxue*) 大學). The deliberations in Confucian texts from pre-Qin and Han periods, as well as later Neo-Confucian discussions, attempt to work through the details of the cultivation of such a person. *Xiushen* in Confucianism involves the gradual attunement of the individual to the broader, more inclusive concerns of humanity, and, finally, to those of *tian*. *Lunyu* 2:4 sets out the developmental path of Kongzi:

> The Master said: "From fifteen, my [heart-mind] was set upon learning; from thirty I took my stance; from forty I was no longer doubtful; from fifty I realized the propensities of *tian* (*tianming* 天命); from sixty my ear was attuned; from seventy I could give my [heart-mind] free rein without overstepping the boundaries." (Trans. Ames and Rosemont, Jr. 1998: 76–7)

Xiushen is not mere behavioral compliance. It refers to a deeper moral com- mitment to the orientation of *ren* and *tian*. A key Confucian concept, *xin* (心 the heart-mind), is the distinctively human capacity for compassion and empathy (e.g., *Mengzi* 2A.6). Properly developed, it underlies expressions of human affection and concern. In that sense, the concept *xin* brings together the "inner" and "outer" in two important ways. First, it draws attention to the centrality of relationships to the self. Second, it emphasizes the importance of the social environment to the life of an individual. The discussions of *xin* and its cultivation both in primary texts and contemporary debates are too extensive to dwell on here. Suffice to note at this point that Xunzi, whose philosophy has often been criticized for its authoritarian undertone, nevertheless articulates an elegant picture of the cultivated person. Passages like the following establish Xunzi's significance as a Confucian thinker:

> The gentleman, knowing well that learning that is incomplete and impure does not deserve to be called fine, recites and enumerates his studies that he will be familiar with them, ponders over them and searches into them that he will full penetrate their meaning, acts in his person that they will come to dwell within him, and eliminates what is harmful within him that he will hold on to them and be nourished by them. Thereby he causes his eye to be unwilling to see what is contrary to it, his ear unwilling to hear what is contrary to it, his mouth unwilling to speak anything contrary to it, and his mind [心] unwilling to contemplate anything contrary to it. When he has reached the limit of such perfection, he finds delight in it. (*Xunzi*, "Quanxue" 1.15; trans. Knoblock 1999: 21–3)

Xunzi expresses optimism in the ability of individuals to bring about moral transformation. Needless to say, this task is an arduous, lifelong commitment (see also *Lunyu* 1.14–15, 8.7). It involves discipline in all areas of life: looking (見*jian*: e.g., *Lunyu* 2.18), listening (*wen* 聞 : e.g., *Lunyu* 7.28), observing (*guan* 觀 : e.g., *Lunyu* 2.10), practicing behavioral propriety (*li* 禮: e.g., *Lunyu* 12.1), learning from others (*xue* 學: e.g., *Lunyu* 6.3), having discussions with others (*yan* 言: e.g., *Lunyu* 1:15), reading and discussing classical texts such as the *Classic of Odes* (*Shijing* 詩經) and the *Record of Rites* (*Liji*) (*Lunyu* 16.13), engaging in reflective activities (思*si*: e.g., *Lunyu* 2.15) and cultivating friendships (*qingren* 親仁) with those who are committed to humaneness (*Lunyu* 1.6).[24]

While a significant portion of Confucian cultivation involves learning from precedent (for example, from the sage-kings), classical texts and tradition (such as behavioral rituals, *li*), Daoist philosophy rejects learning from conventional sources:

> The person who takes conventionally-prescribed action (*wei* 為) fails. The person who grasps will lose.
> Therefore the sage takes unconditioned and non-controlling action (無為) and hence does not fail . . .
> He learns (*xue* 學) not to abide by conventional norms (*buxue* 不學)... (*Laozi* 64, author's translation. See also *Laozi* 20)

The *Zhuangzi* likewise rejects appeals to received wisdom. Examples of skill there involve people in ordinary occupations—such as the butcher Ding (庖 丁 in "Yang Sheng Zhu"), the wheelwright Bian (扁 ["flat"] in "Tian Dao" 天 道) and the cicada catcher (in "Da Sheng" 達 生). Nevertheless, their command of their respective skills is extraordinary. Although these skills have been variously described by scholars as involving intuition, it is clear that they are not untrained responses (Lai 2008: 112). They have been painstakingly nurtured over long periods of time. The butcher, for instance, has trained in his profession for nineteen years. Unlike the case in Confucianism, however, these skills are not the result of official training but of everyday practice.

The example of the wheelwright is particularly important in setting out contrasts between Confucian and Daoist approaches to cultivation. In a conversation with Huan Gong (桓公), the wheelwright says that his skills cannot be fully expressed in words. In fact, he has failed to teach them to his own son because of their ineffability:

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[24]Refer to Lai (2006a: 109–24) for a detailed discussion of the cultivation of skills in Confucianism.

> If I chip at a wheel too slowly, the chisel slides and does not grip; if too fast, it jams and catches in the wood. Not too slow, not too fast; I feel it in the hand and respond from the heart, the mouth cannot put it into words, there is a knack in it somewhere which I cannot convey to my son and which my son cannot learn from me. This is how through my seventy years I have grown old chipping at wheels. The men of old and their untransmittable message are dead. Then what my lord is reading is the dregs of the men of old, isn't it? ("Tian Dao," trans. Graham 2001: 140)

Here, the text turns the tables on aspects of Confucianism: the wheelwright, a tradesperson untutored in the comportment and intellectual accomplishments of courtly life, challenges the wisdom of Huan Gong (who happens to be reading a book). The details of this encounter are remarkable in that they reveal an astute awareness of the subtler differences between Confucian and Daoist commitments. Daoist cultivation focuses on nurturing people who can creatively implement their skills; Confucian cultivation is aimed primarily at those who can lead others to attain various levels of meaningful engagement with others in society. Although both involve mental discipline,[25] Daoist cultivation is more open-ended than Confucian cultivation as the former aims to avoid conventional and normative ways. Daoist philosophy avoids over-reliance on convention and tradition since that may stifle the spontaneity of individuals. Both the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi* discuss the extrication of lives from convention (e.g., *Laozi* 48; *Zhuangzi* "Da Zong Shi"). The *Zhuangzi* expresses this in terms of the concept *zuowang* (坐 忘 sitting and forgetting). To put it simply, *zuowang* refers to an "un-learning" process whereby a person forgets received values, traditions and practices.[26] In Daoism, the effort to realize *dao* focuses centrally on the individual while in Confucianism the realization of *ren*, *yi*, *li* and *zhi* are coordinated processes (cf., Liu 2006: 492–3, 682–3). In both traditions, however, the emphasis of cultivation is ultimately to nurture people who can effectively implement particular ideals within their contexts. In this regard, both philosophies are committed to "the primacy of practice, the arduous nature of cultivation, the rigor and intensity with which the learner or apprentice approaches his or her tasks, and the impressive fluency and beauty of their execution" (Lai 2008: 112).

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[25]Here, we only need to imagine the mental discipline of the cicada catcher. The point here is that there is mental discipline as well and practice is not simply thought of in behaviourist terms. Nevertheless, we must be mindful of attempts to characterize the mental in pre-Qin Chinese philosophy as if it were detached from the physiological. Even on its own, the notion of xin (mind- heart) challenges such simplistic dichotomies.

[26]It is important to understand the fuller implications of *zuowang* within the context of the *Zhuangzi*. We must especially focus on Zhuangzi's hesitations about involvement in political life in the terms set out by society then. See footnote 20.

Analyses of the spirit of Chinese philosophy and its reasoning strategies have noted its attention to questions concerning how best to live. FENG Youlan (FUNG Yu-lan 馮友蘭, 1895–1990), an influential Chinese thinker of the modern period, suggests that the practical orientation of Chinese philosophy is one of its distinctive characteristics. He expresses this in terms of the theme of *neisheng waiwang* (內聖外王), "inner sageliness and outer kingliness" (Feng 1948: 8–10). This theme emphasizes the continuity between "inner" ethical commitment and "outer" behavior. Feng's purpose is to note that using the terms inner (*nei*) and outer (*wai*) as exclusive categories is an inaccurate way of understanding Chinese philosophy. In Chinese philosophy, a person's ethical commitment will have practical outcomes, just as her behavior and comportment are indicative of her ethical commitment. The cultivation of the self is integral to the good life for both the individual and others around him.

It follows from the attention to individuals, their relationships and contexts in Chinese philosophy, that reasoning and evaluation are not conducted on the basis of a transcendentally- and abstractly-derived logical order. This has important implications for the reasoning style in Chinese philosophy, as noted by Roger Ames:

> [The classical Chinese] expressed a "this-worldly" concern for the concrete details of immediate existence as a basis for exercising their minds in the direction of generalities and ideals. They began from an acknowledgement of the uniqueness and importance of the particular person and the particular historical event to the world, while at the same time, stressing the interrelatedness of this person or event with the immediate context. (1986: 320)

While Feng focuses on the issue from the perspective of personal reflection in moral self cultivation, Ames focuses on the logic that underlies reasoning in Chinese philosophy. Nevertheless, common to both their analyses is attention to the practical import of reasoning in Chinese thought. Here, reasoning does not involve a top-down imposition of preconceived standards or ideals, but rather careful consideration of relevant aspects of a situation including the individuals involved, their relationships, the complex causalities, outcomes, and existing norms and values. According to this view, morality is not centrally a question of whether correct principles might have been adhered to or transgressed against but rather *how* they have been applied to maximize the outcomes not only for the individual but for others, and for society more generally. Models of cultivation in Confucian and Daoist philosophies can contribute in significant ways to contemporary discussions of morality and personal development. It is especially because the focus in both philosophies is on the methods and processes of cultivation, and not grounded in particular transcendental or normative values, that we may draw on them to enlighten contemporary debates in the globalized context.

5 Conclusion

Important differences as well as similarities exist between Confucian and Daoist philosophies. It is important to understand their subtle differences as these nuances help to deepen our understanding of each of them. The differences covered here include conceptions of individual freedom, the scope of governmental regulation, difference and complementarity, and harmony and social order. The similarities between Confucianism and Daoism are significant, too, as they are often also the distinctive characteristics of Chinese philosophy. This discussion has highlighted their common features such as the conception of the self-in-environment, attention to relationships, and a practical orientation. These are important aspects of the conceptual framework of Chinese thought and they help to establish Chinese philosophy as a unique field in philosophical studies. Our understanding of these comparisons is enhanced by greater awareness of Chinese intellectual history, in particular of cross-influences between the traditions, as well as historical contingencies and circumstances that may have shaped their ideas and reasoning styles. Since this discussion considers Daoism and Confucianism primarily during the pre- Qin period, readers are encouraged to explore the continuing engagements between the two philosophies as they continued to evolve in Chinese intellectual history. The discussions here highlights the need for more detailed comparisons of the concepts, themes, and philosophical frameworks across the Chinese philosophical traditions, as well as those between Chinese philosophies and the philosophies of other cultures.

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