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Building a Way: Becoming Active in One's Own Subjectivation through Deleuze and Xunzi

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Abstract: While Continental thought has no shortage of criticism and diagnosis of social, political, and ethical issues, it tends to avoid offering guidance on what to do about such issues. In *Reconsidering the Life of Power*, Garrison argues for a radical new alternative for the Continental tradition: it ought to stage an encounter with the Confucian tradition. This is because, he argues, both traditions have at the center of their political thought a focus on the social formation of subjects, that is, the process of subjectivation. While Continental thought often takes this process to empty the subject of all but nominal forms of autonomy, the Confucian tradition sees subjectivation as the very source of real human autonomy. This paper explores one such possible encounter by synthesizing Deleuze's account of individuation with the constructivist reading of Xunzi's view that artifice is the source of human autonomy and virtue. Ultimately, I argue that coupling Deleuze's defense of the possibility of the New with Xunzi's transformational account of human nature provides an understanding of subjectivation that is optimistic about the shaping of human autonomy as well as practical guidance for how to do so.

Keywords: Deleuze; Xunzi; subjectivation; confucianism; individuation

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1. A New Encounter

Recent French philosophy has no dearth of commentary on difficult times. However, most of what it has to say is critical, diagnostic, quietist, cynical, or defeatist. On the critical and quietist sides, it often seems Continental thinkers are engaged in a game of seeing who can say the most about the world without accidentally implying an ethical imperative. On the cynical and defeatist sides, the retreat from normativity often becomes a norm of retreat, where any intervention is seen as suspect. One need look no further than Agamben's shameful and paranoid response to the COVID-19 Pandemic for an admittedly extreme example. Less extreme but no less ineffective examples abound, such as responses to climate change that counsel a Heideggerian letting beings be. This retreat from normativity is not without its merits, especially when understood as a response to the horrors of the 20th Century and the Rationalist, Idealist, and Utopian normative reasons taken to have led to or attempted to justify them. It is explained that individuals can take part in such horrors because their subjectivity is produced socially, and so their autonomy and capacity for normative evaluation is constituted and bounded by various social forces. Furthermore, the supposedly ethical norms that function in and through these social forces are shown to actually help produce and license the horrors they are naively taken to oppose. And so autonomy is emptied out into social forces, and one finds no ground on which to justify norms. Yet, I take it to be an uncontroversial statement that we find ourselves in an age of well-diagnosed problems in the face of which many of us nevertheless feel lost and hopeless. These are problems that we know will not be solved without human intervention, and, lacking a positive (in the metaphysical sense) account of autonomy, we are left without guidance for such intervention.

There are exceptions to this characterization (e.g., Badiou, Deleuze, Fanon, Guattari, or Habermas) as well as attempts to move beyond the presumed critical stance altogether as

in Latour and Felski [1,2], and, to various degrees, Speculative Realism, New Materialism, and New Realism. I am broadly in support of these projects to reevaluate, extend, and supplement recent French thought to steer it in new directions. However, while these attempts have done much to move past the critical stance in order to make doing metaphysics possible again, they have yet to offer robust new approaches to ethics and politics (the exception here is New Materialism, which, with its feminist roots, has always been expressly political in interesting ways). Anyone who has read Spinoza knows that metaphysics can itself be a form of therapy, consolation, and joy, yet difficult times demand the articulation of new ethics and new politics.

James Garrison proposes a fascinating and original response to these lacks in continental thought: a symbiosis between Continental thought and the Confucian tradition. At first blush, this may seem to be a strange pairing, but Garrison makes a convincing argument that the two traditions have much in common. In *Reconsidering the Life of Power*, Garrison proposes several general commonalities between the two traditions. Both traditions have robust accounts of subjectivation, that is, of how social forces form subjects, in which the subject is understood as fundamentally relational, discursive, bodily, and ritual impelled. [3] In other words, the subject is not an isolated, monadic individual. Rather, it is the effect of social forces, the languages one is taught and by which one is shaped, the body one finds oneself in, and the accumulation of practices one engages in and undergoes. Furthermore, both traditions agree that these subject-forming forces must be understood both in their aesthetic dimensions (how one is receptive to their world, what affects they possess, and how they evaluate and get evaluated) as well as in terms of the techniques subjects are trained in and have applied to them.

As many of the details of these accounts are seen as either unique to or at least distinctive of the Post-Structuralist and Critical Theory strands of Continental Thought in the so-called Western tradition, it should be shocking and fascinating for one steeped in these strands to find such similar ideas in a context so distant in time and space. More to the point, Garrison argues that "having had such a long history in which to develop its own terms, Confucianism can address the conjunctions of ethics, aesthetics, and politics that occur in person-making in ways that the best, though still ultimately tradition-bound and reactive efforts from Euro-American critical theory cannot", [3] (p. 1). Given these common commitments, the Confucian tradition must have much to offer the significantly younger Continental tradition, even if the latter should not adopt the former's insights wholesale.

In making this connection, Garrison is aiming to ameliorate one of Continental thought's most glaring issues. This issue can be framed in as many different ways as there are figures or projects in the tradition. One could cite, as Garrison does, the reduction of the subject's options to resistance or melancholy one finds in Butler, or Foucault's avoidance of offering explicit normative judgments, which provide, Garrison argues, "a well-developed, rigorous, worst-case way of thinking through the issue of the socially formed subject bereft of resources and without any deus ex machina to come to the rescue" [3] (p. 22). We ought include Heidegger's lament that "only a god can save us". One could also point to Critical Theory's trust in the power of the negative and its primarily reactive stance. Admittedly, even the more joyous and optimistic thinkers of the tradition, including Deleuze, can be found wanting in the vagueness of their calls for experimentation and the building of new practices. These are, I think, all manifestations of the same ambivalence towards the reality of subjectivation. Generally speaking, one working in the Continental tradition today finds an atmosphere of righteous indignation at the world in which we have found ourselves coupled with a pessimism about any possibility for change and improvement, or for human action guiding us there. This ambivalence results from the main ethical and political question raised by subjectivation: if we are products of our social realities down even to our bodily comportment, speech, and unconscious, from where is something better to be produced? The answer, generally, is "resistance", yet it is quickly followed by the caveats that powers for resistance are formed by precisely the structures one sets out to resist, and, like an electrical circuit, resistance is most often a part of the flow

of power in these structures, not opposed to it. Whatever such a worldview's virtues are (and it has many), a feeling of futility is a reasonable effect of holding it.

Garrison does not reject either the concepts or practices of resistance found in these thinkers; rather, he argues the Confucian tradition offers a new avenue to Continental thought via its understanding of autonomy as a result of subjectivation itself [3] (p. 19). Garrison is humble about his contribution which "is meant to supplement rather than supplant resistance strategies", [3] (p. 19). While I agree that resistance strategies should not be devalued or supplanted, I think this project contains the promise of a new future for the Continental tradition. In showing that the accounts of the subject one finds in Continental thought and Confucianism share so much, one is forced to reckon with the fact that subjectivation is precisely the source of Confucian optimism. Though they disagree on how, the great Confucian thinkers are in agreement that it is because we as humans are shaped by social relations, power, aesthetic capacities, and techniques in all aspects of our being that the problems we face are surmountable, especially when these problems are social in nature. In fact, if one accepts subjectivation in general, there is no other source from which individual autonomy and the ability to alter our world could spring. This alternative ought be jarring to the Continental thinker who sees subjectivation precisely as a reason to doubt or heavily curtail the possibility of human autonomy. One could respond that the promise of a positive reconciling of autonomy and subjectivation has always been in the strands of Continental philosophy that embrace Spinoza. Again, I would agree, but add then that an encounter with the Confucians can allow us to actually make good on that promise.

We should wonder why there is such a difference in appraisal of subjectivation between the two traditions. Giving a full explanation would be beyond the scope of this article, but it is worth staking a reason to think that the Continental tradition's pessimism is unwarranted, doubly so if that reason is stronger than the appeal to tradition that Confucianism has been around longer, or the mere hope that something better than circumscribed resistance is possible. I would stake the claim that we should give more credence to Confucian autonomy than Critical pessimism because the latter has had to deal with the fallout of losing more a robust view of autonomy. For example, we see from the *Nicomachean Ethics* onward an equation between the Good and the notion of self-sufficiency [4] (I.7). Barring important exceptions, this is distinctive of the Euro-American tradition through to today. Nor is it merely a leftover Aristotlean imprint as this tradition came to increasingly embrace this equation more fully than Aristotle himself did (for example, in Christianity's doctrine of individual salvation coupled with Augustine's idea of free will, Stoicism's carving up of the world into what we can control and what we cannot, or the American transcendentalist's value of rugged individualism). Its culmination is perhaps Kant's account of noumenal autonomy beyond the bounds of the phenomenal world. Critical Theory and the Continental tradition more generally are an inheritance of and reaction against this history, with accounts of subjectivation putting the lie to the belief in the self-sufficient individual. And yet, even if one agrees that these criticisms are true, one formed in these traditions often cannot help but feeling the rejection of self-sufficiency as a loss of a good, if not the Good. Perhaps this is why the tradition continually deals with charges of relativism and nihilism from its opponents who, knowingly or unknowingly, retain the equation between the self-sufficient and the Good. Continental thought may have banished the figure of the self-sufficient, autonomous individual separated from their environment and sociality of previous Euro-American traditions, but it has not completely overcome the desire to be such an individual. Hence the pessimism.

For the Confucian tradition, no such loss has taken place. This is not to repeat the stereotypical oversimplification that "western culture is individualistic; eastern culture is collectivist". There are important individualists in Chinese philosophical history. The most important of such thinkers whose ideas survive in text to today is perhaps Zhuangzi, who is obviously no small influence on (again, so-called) Eastern traditions. The ancient Confucians respond to such individualist thinkers throughout their texts, with Mengzi

being particularly concerned by the popularity of the ethical egoism of the Yangists, a school whose texts are now lost to us. However, such individualist positions are the Confucians' contemporary rivals; they do not constitute a historical orthodoxy that Confucianism is a reaction to in the way that the Continental tradition is reacting to its Aristotelian history. In that sense, there is no loss of a perceived good that comes along with the view of the subject as socially, discursively, bodily, and ritually produced. This socio-historical fact seems to me to be good reason to challenge Critical pessimism and the return to the Greeks seen in Foucault's later care of the self project. This is not to say that Continental thought or Western traditions more generally cannot overcome their historical equation of the good and the self-sufficient, but that it will likely be easier to do so through an encounter with a tradition that does not have the same historical baggage. It also gives us reason to think the Confucian view of autonomy through subjectivation is not merely mistaken in its optimism, even if an embrace of Confucianism needs to be tempered.

In this vein, I will note before moving on that there is of course much in the Confucian tradition (especially the ancients who this paper will focus on) that is to be rejected out of hand by those in the Continental tradition. For example, the unquestioned favoring of order over disorder and their equation of order with Good and disorder with Bad common to many ancient traditions is especially pronounced in Confucianism. Furthermore, this leads Confucian thinkers to understand hierarchy *qua* order as inherently good and justified. Confucian thought's sanguine appraisal of hierarchy, order, and the state's role in encouraging and enforcing morality often appear to the modern reader as (and in some cases, are) naïve. Continental thought's critical bent, especially regarding the abuses made possible by norms, institutions, and subjectivation themselves, can offer a useful corrective. Equally, the equation of Good and order is to be rejected as chaos is necessary to the formation of structure in the first place as well as its change and alteration (I will return to this below in Deleuze's account of individuation). Similarly, Continental thinkers have good reason to critique Confucian values such as *ren* (often translated as "humaneness") and filial piety as too anthropocentric, too humanistic, too naturalized, and too conservative. This is, I take it, not a reason to reject the symbiosis Garrison posits, but rather an argument in favor of it. If both traditions agreed on subjectivation but the Confucians had useful practical advice and the Continental tradition had no good critiques to offer of that advice, then there would be little more to say than that the Confucians are right, or at least more useful. Fortunately for us Continentalists, this is not the case. The point is not to become Confucians today, but to seek something new. To that end, I will for the most part leave these critiques of Confucianism to future work and instead focus on producing a productive encounter between the two traditions.

2. Mengzi vs. Xunzi Revisited

A project as large as synthesizing two complex and fecund philosophical traditions will require many minds. I see this article mainly as an attempt to defend and add to Garrison's project. That said, the point of departure for my addition will be a circumscribed critique of one of Garrison's positions. He argues that of the ancient Confucians, Mengzi should be preferred to Xunzi for projects which seek a positive, potentially optimistic understanding of subjectivation [3] (pp. 176–180). In response, I will make a case for the advantages Xunzi's account offers specifically to our understanding of subjectivation. This is not to reject Mengzi's usefulness to Continental thought, nor Garrison's particular constellation of Butler-Foucault-Mengzi. Instead, I offer a supplement constellation of Deleuze-(and Guattari)-Xunzi. We ought let a thousand symbionts bloom. I will then take the first steps towards a symbiosis between Xunzi and Deleuze. I will mainly make use of Deleuze's solo work, but I will include some details from his work co-authored with Guattari[1] [5]. In doing so, I will argue that adding Deleuze's ontology to Xunzi's anthropology and his constructivist[2] [6–10] account of the *Dao* (Way) provides a useful understanding for how to experiment with new ways of living such that we can become an active part of our own subjectivation, as well as that of others. This will not amount to a

practical manual for such experimentation, but it will provide some guidance. Moreover, it will show Critical pessimism about subjectivation to be mistaken.

While Garrison argues for a productive encounter between the two traditions generally, he gives an argument for the preference of Mengzi over Xunzi [3] (pp. 174–184)[3] [11]. Garrison does not reject Xunzi completely. Instead, he gives a limited endorsement of Xunzi's defense of and insight into the usefulness of ritual in shaping subjects. Yet, this endorsement comes with a steep condition. Garrison councils that we should separate Xunzi's defense of ritual and practical advice from his account of human nature [3] (p. 180)[4] [3,12]. Two major points of Garrison's argument for the preference of Mengzi over Xunzi on human nature are that (1) Mengzi's view of human nature as always potentially good provides a better starting point for an optimistic view of subjectivation than Xunzi's authoritarian harshness, and (2) Xunzi maintains an ontologically flawed distinction between the internal and the external. I will provide arguments against both points as a way of developing Xunzi's usefulness for Continental philosophy and what Deleuze's ontology can both offer and make use of in Xunzi[5].

Beginning with (1), the human nature debate between Mengzi and Xunzi is the most discussed debate in studies of the ancient Confucian thinkers, and I have little new to say about it. However, it is likely new to many Continental scholars, so I will briefly recount the debate. This debate is generally glossed as an argument over the moral status of human nature, with Mengzi claiming it is Good and Xunzi claiming it is Bad/Evil, but this is a gross oversimplification. Van Norden describes this debate instead in terms of moral agency and cultivation [13]. With this framing, we can see these positions as providing the metaphysics needed to explain how best to produce virtuous people.

By saying human nature is good, Mengzi does not mean that humans are already, inherently good or virtuous by nature alone. Rather, he tells us "As for what [human beings] are inherently, they can *become* good. This is what I mean by calling their nature good. As for becoming not good, this is not the fault of their potential," [14] (6A6.5-6, my emphasis added). Here, the inherent potential towards goodness is the central point. Mengzi's view is that humans, by nature, have four "sprouts" that make morality possible: compassion, deference, disdain, and feelings of approval and disapproval [14] (2A6.4—6). These sprouts are either nurtured or hampered by one's environment. They are then minimal capacities for the good that humans, in the right environment, will tend to develop as an internal tendency. If people are in an environment that provides what they need and they have virtuous models to imitate (usually family members and local officials), then, Mengzi argues, these sprouts will flourish into the virtues of humaneness, shame, propriety, and wisdom, respectively. Mengzi gives a phenomenological argument for such sprouts. One sees a child who one does not know standing on the edge of a well. As the child walks along the edge, they stumble, falling towards the well. Mengzi claims that any human watching this event unfold would feel compassion and concern for the child, even if that feeling is a mere twinge [14] (2A6). It does not matter if one acts on such an impulse; the existence of this feeling of concern is a sign of the four sprouts of virtues. That such moral impulses contain within them even a modicum of motivation to act on them means they are signs of the tendency to become good.

The sprout metaphor is enlightening to Mengzi's position. He sees all humans as by nature containing basic faculties of virtue that lend human nature a sort of potential goodness. This potential has the virtues as their natural tendencies. For example, if properly nurtured, the sprout of compassion will grow into the virtue of *ren* (humaneness or benevolence), the chief virtue of the Confucians. Like seeds, the four sprouts cannot be forced to grow; they can only be nurtured and given the right environment that allows them to flourish. By environment, Mengzi does not mean something like nature in itself, or the non-human aspects of the world alone. He also means the social arrangements that people find themselves in, the actions of their rulers, their family life, etc. So having a nurturing environment is not just having basic material needs met (though these are centrally important), but also living in a well-ordered society wherein most members

behave in ritually appropriate ways and regard each other well. Promoting such an environment is, for Mengzi, how one follows the *Dao* (Way), or proper moral way of life, and it is especially beneficial because it helps nurture others' innate goodness. Similarly, if a person becomes wicked, it is not the fault of their nature, but their environment. We do not have countervailing potentials and tendencies to badness, evil, or the like on his view. Mengzi specifically argues against the doctrines that human nature is neutral (becoming whatever its environment makes of it) and that human nature contains tendencies to become either good or wicked, given one's environment. "In years of plenty, most young men are gentle; in years of poverty, most young men are violent. It is not that the potential Heaven confers on them [i.e., human nature] varies like this. They are like this because of what sinks and drowns their hearts," [14] (6A7.1-2). Mengzi then gives the famous parable of Ox Mountain to illuminate his claim [14] (6A8). Ox Mountain, he tells us, had all its trees felled for lumber and its vegetation harvested. When left alone, sprouts of new vegetation began to grow, but these sprouts were continually grazed on by livestock until Ox Mountain became bare. If one happened upon Ox Mountain, they would mistakenly believe it to be barren, or lacking even the potential to harbor vegetative life. "But could this be the nature of the mountain?" Mengzi asks. In other words, the mountain has no potential barren tendency within it, only the potential to grow vegetation. It is what happens to it that makes the mountain appear as if barren. And despite it all, the sprouts still try to grow. According to Mengzi, such is the same for human nature even in the most wicked of people.

Xunzi, responding to Mengzi, argues instead that human nature is chaotic and detestable [15] (p. 248). While his position is often glossed in English as 'human nature is evil', this is an oversimplification. First, a good bit of this moral overcoding results from this English translation. In such a translation, Xunzi's position simultaneously takes on Manichean resonances that are of course not in the original text. When Xunzi describes in detail what he takes to be good and bad, he generally gives a distinction between the noble and the base, and between acting based on projects, goals, socials ends, or virtue versus acting based on self-interest or partiality. Rather than evil, Xunzi argues we have haphazard acquired and often inconsistent desires, and we are by nature inconsistent in ways that make it likely that we will do harm (hence, chaotic). This leads us to act in ways that ought to be despised by those who are properly cultivated. We may also do good things, and even act on a good motivation from time to time in our uncultivated state, but we will not be consistent. Base and partial desires will usually win out. In short, Xunzi sees human beings as, by nature, a haphazard collection of desires and capacities with no innate normative tendencies.

Important here is that Xunzi's view of human nature is not just normatively different, but also metaphysically different from Mengzi's. While Xunzi agrees that humans are capable of change and acquiring new traits, he claims that we do not have any inherent developmental tendencies, whether for good or bad [15] (p. 249). His view here is similar to Aristotle's argument that virtue must be a habit because humans can acquire or lose them, and one cannot acquire or lose a nature (though Aristotle's account of potentiality relative to the virtues is closer to Mengzi). A thing's nature, humans included, is that aspect of the thing that is "the accomplishment of Heaven [*Tian*]" [15] (p. 249). By *Tian* or Heaven, Xunzi is not citing a supernatural force (he is explicitly anti-supernatural[6] [15]). Rather, he means that our nature is a product of the natural workings of the world, and it is thereby outside of our control. Interestingly, Xunzi is not saying human nature is neutral and that one may become good or bad while remaining in line with human nature. This is the position of Gaozi, who Mengzi distinguishes his own view from[7] [14]. For Gaozi, human nature may be made good or bad by what happens to it. For Mengzi, human nature is inherently good, and can only be thwarted by something external to it. For Xunzi, human nature is chaotic and detestable, and it is only through external means that we can become good.

For all of this, Xunzi is not saying that humans cannot become good. In fact, most of his philosophical energy goes towards explaining how such a transformation is possible. Nature, for Xunzi, only gives us the raw materials with which we must work; it does not

set the values, the goals, or even the idea of the good that we should follow. Xunzi tells us that "Blue dye derives from the indigo plant; and yet [the dye] is bluer than the plant. Ice comes from water, and yet it is colder than water. Through steaming and bending, you can make wood as straight as an ink-line into a wheel," [15] (p. 1). In short, a thing's (or a person's) nature does not circumscribe its possibilities. If the straight wood can become a wheel, then it is possible for the chaotic and detestable human to become good. And for Xunzi, it is the same general process that makes such transformation possible: artifice. To make a wheel from straight wood, one requires the artifice of steaming and bending. To make a morally exemplary human, one needs the artifice of ritual and discourse.

Since one of the raw materials of a human being is desire, Xunzi councils us to preferentially reward or deny desires in order to cultivate them, and to do so according to ritual provisions that maintain society. The key here is cultivation, not merely control. Cultivation takes place through the satisfying of desires in ritually appropriate ways so as to shape future desires. It is not merely giving food to the hungry but giving good food and enjoying it in the comfort of others[8] [16]. This shapes desire so that one no longer just desires the base necessities. Instead, desire is cultivated such that it is now "able to be satisfied in cultured forms through ritual," [16] (p. 458). It is actions such as these that, consistently applied over time, shape and transform human beings [17] (p. 223). Since another raw human material is cognition, we must exercise a proper, though creative and situation responsive, use of discourse. That is, we must maintain and creative useful "names" or concepts that make the right distinctions that allow us to recognize when and how to employ the proper rituals. The holistic synthesizing of human nature, ritual, discourse, and the natural and social environment into a way of life that consistently produces human cultivation and flourishing is Xunzi's version of the *Dao*. This synthesizing does not happen by or according to nature, but only through human artifice and effort (*wei*) [15] (pp. 248–249), though because this process must be responsive to the materials it has to work with, it is equally not a mere externalization of human will or intention. Xunzi goes so far as to treat artifice as external to the humans it works on, as opposed to their internal original desires. This is obviously opposed to Mengzi's view that good is already internal to us as a potential; for Xunzi, any possibility of becoming good comes from the outside. Thereby, we are not good, nor made good by nature; we only become good through artifice. We have a nature, but that nature is not normative, that is, it does not prescribe or make possible on its own what is good for humans. Instead, we must change our nature through artifice in order to become good. This is then a source of autonomy in a strong sense. Because we can create new objects, practices, institutions, etc., we create new ways of shaping ourselves. In such shaping, we transform our nature and gain new abilities [17] (pp. 220–221). The possibility of playing an active role in both applying and creating the artifice that shapes us is the source of human autonomy. One would only need their tongue slightly in cheek to call Xunzi the first transhumanist.

3. Argument for Xunzi and the Continental Tradition

With this debate in mind, we can look to Garrison's support of Mengzi. As said above, Garrison supports Mengzi over Xunzi for an account of subjectivation based on (1) Mengzi's optimism versus Xunzi's harshness, and (2) the fact that Mengzi does not maintain Xunzi's problematic internal/external distinction. It must be said that I will be focusing only on subjectivation here whereas Garrison's work deals with both subjectivation and subjectality. Subjectality is a term introduced by contemporary philosopher Li Zehou to refer to the long-term, historical process of shaping the human species and its cultures[9] [3,18]. Subjectivation is then seen as a more short-term process of producing particular humans within particular cultures. In working out his account of subjectality, Li is drawing together Confucian, Kantian, and Marxist strands of thought. This leads Garrison to a further argument in support of Mengzi: Mengzi's account of the goodness of human nature also implies that we as a species are good at producing societies. That is, we are capable of producing cultural artifacts, practices, and institution, in short, ritual, that all sediment into society

over generations. This sedimentation happens at the level of subjectality. While such long-term concerns are no less pertinent in difficult times, I leave subjectality for later work and focus merely on the short-term process of subjectivation. My argument then is not a rejection of Mengzi outright, but rather the claim that for an optimistic understanding of subjectivation, Xunzi is more useful.

To begin with, I will grant Garrison that Mengzi's political prescriptions line up much better than Xunzi with the prescriptions we would like to see from those in the Continental tradition. For example, Mengzi tells us that to stop banditry, we should be generous with social spending rather than increase state violence to deter theft [14] (1A7). Or when, when a warlord asks Mengzi whether killing a leader is justified, Mengzi says no, but in the sense that if one acts improperly in a position of power, they do not deserve that title, and so if such a ruler's subject kill them, it was not a ruler who was slain, but a criminal [14] (1B8). Xunzi, on the other hand, regularly uses particularly harsh metaphors of forcing wood out of its shape, and he is also more likely to council obedience to authoritarian rule[10]. At his worst, Xunzi can read like a prison warden who thought *Discipline and Punish* was a manual of best practices[11] [15].

Yet, this commonality between Mengzi and common Continental leanings on political policy masks a deeper conflict between the two views, a conflict not found between most Continental thinkers and Xunzi. This conflict happens at the level of human nature. Mengzi's account of the sprouts of goodness is rife with potential abuses of the kind Foucault so adroitly diagnoses. In his view of human nature as inherently good-in-potential, Mengzi naturalizes normativity. This is particularly pernicious given he also maintains the Confucian centrality of ritual, and the traditionalist strain thereof. For Mengzi, the proper rituals are the (even in his time) centuries old ritual order of the Zhou Empire at its height, an order that tradition ascribes to its highest moral exemplars, the sage-kings. This connection between traditional ritual and human nature is exactly the sort of naturalizing of historical norms of which Continental thought, especially its Foucaultian strand, should be extremely critical. More generally, on a view such as Mengzi's, knowing human nature would imply knowing what is good for humans. Continental thinkers generally critique such views because they ultimately license an easily abusable relationship between knowledge and exercises of power over others in the guise of knowing what must be good for them. This clearly makes Mengzi a difficult fit for the Continental tradition.

One might wonder if given the centrality of the debate over human nature, the maintenance of ritual practice, and an idolization of previous sage-kings as virtuous paragons and the givers of ritual, might the Confucian tradition in general fall to this critique? Yet, such a critique misses the mark if applied to Xunzi. While Xunzi is conservative about ritual practice and the reverence of the sage-kings, he does not naturalize either. Because of this, he already shares important commitments with Continental thought that Mengzi does not; namely, that no amount of knowledge of human nature would ever produce a transhistorical set of norms for human good. Ritual, on Xunzi's account is historically situated. He does share the Confucian belief that rituals were the creation of morally perfected sage-kings; however, this does not on his account make such rituals the ideal or only possible good social arrangement. Instead, they are merely the ones that have proven themselves useful of those that have been tried. The same is true for "names" or concepts. Xunzi recognizes that the sign by which we refer to an object is arbitrary, yet there is an art to crafting the proper names for things because of the content and logical[12] relations between names. Here, Xunzi goes so far to say that if a new sage-king appeared, they "would surely follow the old names in some cases and create new names in other cases," [15] (p. 237). While this act of creation is conservative in the sense that it requires a moral exemplar and king, it further cements Xunzi as a thinker of the New. It is also worth noting that for Xunzi, and for the ancient Confucians generally, anyone in principle can become a sage, even if sages are rare in actuality (compare this to Aristotle who argues one must be born into relatively comfortable circumstances in order to have a chance at becom-ing a moral exemplar). It is worth noting that while Mengzi and Xunzi agree anyone in principle can become of sage,

it is for different reasons. For Mengzi, it is because all humans have the four sprouts. For Xunzi, it is because all humans are capable of transforming their nature [17] (pp. 215–216).

Similarly, there is a practical concern that makes Mengzi ill fit for our contemporary world. If our nature contains the four sprouts of virtue, and these sprouts depend first on material resources to grow, then one should expect that our contemporary times of overproduction and abundance would give a head start on virtue (in proportion to production and distribution of goods meeting basic needs). While proper ritual would be needed to complete one's moral cultivation, Mengzi's account would lead us to predict that the American middle class, for example, would be moral prodigies merely awaiting proper ritual instruction. This prediction is of course directly at odds with most forms of ideology critique and the forms of subjectivation undergone due to capitalism diagnosed by the Continental tradition. While of course not having a critique of capitalism, Xunzi's account of human nature can at least handle this clam because, as Tang points out, "even if we have unlimited resources, we could not live a good life if our nature is not transformed," [16] (p. 459).

Finally, we should ask what would it mean for a view of autonomy through subjectivation to be optimistic? In his debate with Mengzi, Xunzi is regularly seen as the more pessimistic of the two because of his view that human nature is disordered and detestable. Mengzi, on the other hand, tells us the human nature has in it the potential sprouts of goodness, and so we only require the proper environment to flower into truly *ren* people. I think this characterization is a mistake. Believing that a potentiality could become actualized is not particularly optimistic. If anything, it is damning to think that something can only become what it by nature has the potential to become. If a human lacked the four sprouts, if one saw a child fall into a well and did feel the twinge of concern, Mengzi would be forced to conclude such a person is an aberration or inhuman, and would thereby lack any possibility of becoming good. If optimism is to believe that the world can *become* better, not just realize its already inherent potential goodness, then Mengzi's view is insufficient for optimism. Xunzi, on the other hand, gives us a way for something to change or grow beyond its nature, to become what it is not. To believe that what is not good and also lacks the power to make itself good on its own can still yet become so is the only form of optimism worthy of the name. Because Xunzi's account argues for this possibility, I agree with Hagen that of the two great followers of Confucius, Xunzi is the optimist[13] [6,8].

Given all of this, I think we have good reason to reject Garrison's first point in favor of Mengzi. To respond to Garrison's critique of the internal/external distinction in Xunzi, we must do more work. This critique points to Xunzi's separation between humans and *tian*, that is, the heavens. Again, heaven should not be understood as a supernatural aspect of the world, nor as transcendent to the world. Rather, *tian* means something like the proper orderly aspect of nature and its workings (even if nature sometimes produces unruly things, like humans). One could make a too quick analogy between Xunzi's *tian* and Spinoza's God = Nature to get the rough shape of the concept. On Xunzi's account, human disorder means that while their nature is produced by *tian*, humans are by that very nature ill-suited to actually living in accord with *tian*. To produce such an accord, humans create artifice, that is, something external to themselves and the workings of nature. We then find in Xunzi a dualism between nature and artifice, between internal and external. It is here Garrison presses his critique that not only does this dualism present conceptual problems (how is artifice outside of nature?) but perhaps more importantly, it means the "the bodily dimension of human nature is devalued, degraded, despised, detested, or otherwise diminished," [3] (pp. 175–176).

As far as I can see, there is not an explicit response in Xunzi to this problem. There is, however, a space to supplement and work out a response. Simply put, Xunzi's ethical system only works if the new is possible. This is at the heart of his embrace of the internal/external distinction: if we can become good, it must mean good is not already internal to us. A potential goodness giving rise to actual goodness as in Mengzi is not

an example of true becoming. And so, for Xunzi, the source of this becoming must come from a source external to us (here, artifice). Yet, if the good already exists external to us and is simply imprinted onto the one who undergoes ritual while putting in the right effort, then this is not a true becoming either. This is recognized in Xunzi scholarship as the problem of the origin of goodness [19]. Li gives a response to this problem by which the power to institute ritual (or artifice) in order to carry out non-moral motivations or satisfy non-moral desires may yet result in a good outcome [19]. Furthermore, undertaking this process repeatedly will cultivate the persons who institute and follow the ritual. This will then produce a good individual without any innate goodness in them. This solution on its own, however, does not overcome Garrison's objection based on the internal and the external, and it raises the further question of how the New in general is possible. To both respond to Garrison's critique and to fill out Xunzi's account of the *Dao* as an optimistic view of autonomy through subjectivation, I will turn to Deleuze to provide Xunzi with a metaphysical account of how the new is possible.

4. Deleuze and the New

We can now turn to the other half of our symbiosis: Deleuze's account of the new. While Xunzi provides some anthropological and ethical material for an account of human improvement, Deleuze can provide the metaphysics to undergird and supplement this account. What Xunzi does not explain is how is it that something can change its nature using means completely unlike itself. Whatever good is, it is not within our nature already, nor is ritual in any way "like the good". We saw that if we simply call the external means, artifice, good, then we similarly fail to account for becoming, which Xunzi clearly wants to account for. If so, then Xunzi requires a metaphysics where something new can be produced from components unlike what is produced. In short, his account requires a non-representational metaphysics of the new. This is precisely what Deleuze has to offer. In addition to this metaphysical supplement, there are also good reasons to think Deleuze and Xunzi would pair particularly well. Both thinkers give desire a fundamental role in their account of human action and subject formation, both thinkers are explicitly against any form of supernaturalist explanation, and both a fundamentally concerned with the formation and transformation of subjects through technology and social institutions.

Let us begin the reconstruction of Deleuze's ontology. Here, I will be building from recent work in Deleuze that interprets him through the more recent movement of Speculative Realism. In particular, I will be making use of and extending the accounts of Bryant [20] and Kleinherenbrink [21], who both read Deleuze through the concerns the Object-Oriented Philosophy of Graham Harman. This account breaks with common readings of Deleuze that see him only as a thinker of process and relations-without-*relata* to instead show that he provides an important and novel account of how identity, stability, and objects are produced from the forces of flux, chaos, and, ultimately, difference itself. For Deleuze, anything at all has three aspects: the actual, the intensive, and the virtual. This is true of whatever may be called an object in the most general sense, including humans, natural phenomena, artificial things, ideas, fictional characters, etc. The actual aspect is the qualities and extensions that it is current manifesting; it is whatever the object is right now. The virtual is the structural aspect of an object that relates and maintains the various parts of an object. In doing so, the virtual defines a field of potentialities or capacities and affects: the different ways an object can be or become while still remaining the thing it is, to be affected by other objects, and its powers to affect others. Deleuze will often talk of these capacities as a field or as defining a phase space for an object. When these virtual capacities are enacted, they alter the actualities of the object. This is what Deleuze calls actualization. Finally, the most obscure aspect, the intensive is the orders of differences that make up these capacities, that is, it is the ways in which an object differs from itself. This will be clarified in the account of individuation below.

What is central here to understanding how we may change what we are and produce new ways of living together is not just the structure of objects, but more importantly,

the process of generating new objects. Deleuze calls this process, following Simondon, individuation [22] (p. 246). These metaphysical details may seem far afield from the ethical and political questions that occupy Xunzi and our search for wisdom in difficult times, but this misses the fact that subjectivation is a particular form of individuation, the individuation of humans into subjects of a social order. By understanding individuation, we then gain an understanding of what is common between the different ways that a subject is formed. First, let us distinguish actualization and individuation [22] (p. 247). Actualization is the manifestation of a virtual capacity. In doing so, actualization does not, on its own, produce anything ontologically new. It may be the first time such a capacity is manifested, which could be remarkable in its own right, but as the potential for that manifestation already pre-existed, nothing new has been brought into being. Here, we can rephrase our criticism of Mengzi: in his account, becoming good is merely actualizing a potential already inside of ourselves. If so, then becoming virtuous would be a mere change in actuality alone, not in the structure, that is, the virtual aspect of the person. Individuation, on the other hand, produces an ontological novelty: something which has not existed before, nor did its potential pre-exist it in or as a virtual capacity. Insofar as Xunzi is giving an account of how humans can *become* virtuous, his account is one of individuation, not actualization. We see this in Li's account in that actualizing our capacity for instituting ritual is morally neutral; the capacity itself is not good, nor is its actualization. It is rather the way ritual comes to shape those who institute and follow it that good is produced, and this shaping is neither a capacity of the person following the ritual, nor a capacity of the ritual itself. Goodness or virtual is instead a result of their interaction that is found in neither of elements of the interaction, and so is a result of individuation.

Let us briefly account for how individuation is the process of producing the new. First, we said above that actualization does not produce something ontologically new because the potential for that actualization already exists virtually. If all things that could exist already exist in potential, then whatever could be is already prescribed and de-limited. All possible objects would already exist in a sort of potential pre-formation. This would be the exact confusion of the virtual and the possible that Deleuze critiques [22] (pp. 211–212). What this means for us here is that individuation cannot begin with the virtual. Similarly, it is for obvious reasons that the process cannot begin with the actual. Instead, the first stage of individuation as a process is the intensive encounter. Two or more intensities encounter each other through their differences. Different temperatures on the surface of a material, differences in electric potential between elements in a milieu, and so on. In the right sort of encounter, these differences form gradients, zones of distinctions, etc., all of which amount to forming a field of intensities that coheres. In cohering, this field generates a "path in advance but in reverse," [22] (p. 119). This obscure phrase is clarified if we think of electrical circuits. Different paths in a circuit will often have different resistances. The current that passes through each branch does so relative to the resistance in that branch. This is not, as popular imagination might have it, because the electrons that make up the current find the right distribution of current through trial and error, either passing through or bouncing off the resistance of one path and heading down other. Instead, the field that organizes the circuit guides the different currents down their respective paths. That is, in the formation and powering of the circuit, the field is quickly cohering itself as it is also guiding the charges that moves in the field. The path is formed by the bringing together of the components. Such a path is not formed by the intensive alone. Rather, the intensive encounter sets of a "cascade of actualizations". This cascade establishes a continuity of parts through the flow of that which follows the path. It is important to remark that this cascade is not an actualization of *the* virtual, whatever that could be, but rather myriad actualizations of the various components involved outside of pre-existing virtual structures. There is no virtual whole that encompasses the cascade; in fact, the reverse is true.

This cascade is the second stage of individuation: the formation of a new virtuality. If individuation is completed, it is because the new object coheres into something capable of maintaining itself in at least some limited sense. This results from the production of a

structure, that is, of a new virtuality that maintains the components that have been brought together as a whole [23] (pp. 256–257). This virtuality amounts to new capacities, including the capacity to resist some attempts to separate the components. In our example, one should expect the circuit, once established, to provide some new potentialities or capacities for acting in its environment. Finally, this new virtuality makes possible new actualizations, and so new actualities are at least potentially brought into being through individuation. And so, through individuation, something new is produced. Importantly, this new thing has new powers that were produced through this process; they were not found previously in the components nor the environment in which the process of individuation took place. To use another example from Xunzi, once the virtuous person is produced, they have capacities they did not have before, such as the capacity to discern what actions would be proper and what actions would not.

With this account of individuation in hand, we begin to see that Deleuze's metaphysics is practically cut to fit for Xunzi's optimism about our ability to change our nature for the better. The new is possible, and it is possible not through some otherworldly power or creator, but possible immanently through communication and interaction via difference. The conditions of the possibility of different ways of life, different subjects, and different worlds all exist right here, lurking between and within the objects we already have and are. Furthermore, Deleuze's ontology provides a weakened account of the internal/external distinction that Garrison criticizes. If we were to completely reject any internal/external distinction, we would be unable to make the connection to Xunzi. Yet, we can supplement such a distinction to give a reading that it is no longer a dualism. To say that virtue or goodness are not internal to human nature is merely to say that whatever powers, whatever human capacities one has by birth, virtue and goodness are not among them. However, through individuation within social milieus and other forces, a person's capacities, their virtual structure, are changed and shaped by that milieu. We may call that shaping external because it produced through powers that are not those of the individual. Yet, it is not a hard dualism of the internal/external because each are capable of altering each other. Internal and external merely mark the location of the powers. This may indeed be more in line with Xunzi's position than the dualist reading in that he argues that ethical transformation is possible. If so, then it seems that such external powers must have internalized effects. One may here make a comparison with Xunzi's student, Han Feizi, who believes it is possible only to manage the unruliness of human nature, not to transform it. Han Feizi may maintain a problematic dualism between the internal and the external precisely because he claims that the external cannot produce real change in the internal. On the other hand, if one argues as Xunzi does that such a transformation of the internal by the external (and vice versa) is possible, then a sharp dualism between the two would be untenable.

In short, we have here established a metaphysics that justifies Xunzi's defense of artifice as the means to improve ourselves and our societies. If hope is not foolish, if one can be a wise optimist, these facts are precisely because of and given their distinct limits by the power of individuation. To furnish an optimistic account of autonomy through subjectivation, we must employ this power of the new in some way that is relevant for human projects. Answering this will complete our symbiosis. We will require one more idea from Deleuze to do so.

5. Synthesis: Building *a* Way

Deleuze famously makes use of the indefinite singular to denote haecceities. For example, he speaks of *a* life as a living, impersonal singularity [24] (p. 27). A life is not *the* human in general or as a universal, and it is also not the particular person or personality. To explain this, Deleuze gives an example from Dickens' last novel, *Our Mutual Friend*. A scene in the story revolves around attempting to save a particularly unlikeable man. The characters act not out of a love of this particular man, nor out of a duty for humankind in general. They are not trying to save *any* life; they are attempting to save *a* life, this one here, in front of them. As the nearly drowned man comes back to consciousness, back to his

particular personality, he returns to being an unlikeable jerk. No one takes much comfort in having brought this particular man back from the brink. Yet, they have saved *a* life. Their shift from valiant saviors to frustrated workers tracks the stages of the drowned man from *a* life to this particular jerk. This is because, on Deleuze's account, the particular covers over the singular [24] (pp. 28–29). There is still a life there, it is just hard to see it past an obnoxious personality. What is important about a singularity in this sense is that it (1) is not substitutable for another of its type. If he died on the table, *a* life would have been lost. It cannot be replaced. (2) It is nonetheless somewhat generic or indistinguishable from others of its type.

It is in this sense that I want to speak of *a* Way. While the anglophone reader is most likely to associate the *Dao* with the Daoists, most of the Warring States era philosophers used the term. Each thinker or school who did so disagreed with the others over the specifics of the *Dao*, but each claimed an understanding of or wisdom about the *Dao* as distinctive of their school. That is, it is like the Good or the Just in that nearly every thinker claims them, but no one agrees on what they are. Distinctive of the *Dao* is that it is both a proper path to follow for a good life and it requires some accord with non-human, usually natural, forces. Hagen's central contribution is to argue that Xunzi has a unique approach to the *Dao* among the ancients. Xunzi argues that "the mind is the craftsperson and steward of the Way [*Dao*]"[14] [7,15]. That is, for Xunzi, the *Dao* is not discovered; it is constructed. Other ways of organizing life are possible, but the *Dao* of Xunzi's context is, on his view, what has been crafted by the ancient sage-kings and what has been found to work so far. It is open to modification, and it is entirely the work of human artifice, though not of human intention alone. The woodworker must learn the properties of various types of wood, the workings of various tools, etc. in order to properly join their materials into an artful creation. And so, the craftsperson of the *Dao* need do the same with the objects, human and otherwise, that are brought together into a coherent social order and ways of life.

There are critiques of Xunzi to made here from the point of view of the Continental tradition. For one, Xunzi is thoroughly conservative in his historical view. The *Dao* is justified by the fact that the sage-kings shaped it, and only new sages will be able to properly modify it. If we are critical of the idea that historical forces select the most virtuous to rule and instead believe that who ends up ruling is more likely the result of impersonal forces and grabbing of power, then such reverence is naïve. Similarly, Xunzi's view is of the *Dao* is that it is a holistic ordering of a society and the ways of life brought together within that society. If we take the reverence for the sage-kings and the holism together, the view of autonomy produced by such social forces begins to look quite thin. No doubt that such shaping creates new capacities and new possibilities for subjects to act. However, there is very little space to be had for the active shaping by the subject of the forces that will shape them unless that subject happens to an emperor or an adviser thereof. This is not a dead-end for our encounter; rather, it opens the question: can the *Dao* be fragmented so as to maintain its equally individual and collective nature while opening up the power to shape it more generally?

6. Conclusions: How to Build Yourself a Dao

In this synthesis between Xunzi and Deleuze, we can see the start of an alternative conception that would allow for a more engaged possibility for subjects to craft their own autonomy in an inherently social way. This is not a completed account, but the contours of something new can be glimpsed. Instead of *the Dao*, we may refer to *a Dao*, or *a* Way. Let us bring together the various positions worked out so far to describe how this may be done. All objects have a virtual phase space; that is, things are not just what they current are, but have powers to be otherwise and to be made otherwise. Those powers mark out a space of possible arrangements and degrees of freedom. Humans are different only in regard to our degrees of freedom and powers to shape such spaces, but we are equally shaped by them. In bringing objects together, there is a mutual constraining and an opening up of possible arrangements and degrees of freedom. Things can be brought together in ways that are

destructive, constructive, or neutral. In neutral cases, things are more beside each other than together; they do not shape a world. In destructive cases, the arrangement destroys itself and harms or destroys the objects that make it up. In constructive cases, a larger phase space is formed, a consistent world or milieu is created. To create a world, we do not simply place objects next to each other; we cobble together a world through inventing discourse, techniques, new objects, rituals, etc., each local and appropriate to what is binging brought together. We must also discern what must be excluded, removed, or prevented. When we succeed, produced within the phase space are paths that we may travel that will change but not destroy us.

A Way is not a metaphor; these are literal yet virtual paths that we traverse. Because such paths are virtual, they are changed (actualized) by the very walking of them. In doing so, we are changing, our world is changing, all the objects in it are changing; we are neither static nor chaotic because these mutual changes are the very maintenance of a world that produces our path. We maintain a world by traversing a path within it, along with our fellow travelers; and there will be fellow travels as a Way is not individual. In crafting a path, we make something others may walk. Yet, in the singularity (not particularity) of such constructions, they remain unfinished and open to possible connections. One chooses for others, but not all others. If this is so, then we cannot maintain the disengaged cynical posture, the purely critical reaction, or the hands-off Heideggerian retreat all common to the Continental tradition. Instead, we must be engaged, proactively shaping, and offering to and receiving from others (and I do not only mean human others).

This is the central addition this article makes to Garrison's project of an encounter between Continental and Confucian thought. Our goal is an optimistic account of subjectivation. That is, an account in which the subject is shaped by the institutions, practices, and societies they inhabit, yet their possibilities of response are not completely circumscribed by such social forces. One's possibilities of response may even be augmented by that structure beyond what it would circumscribe. What the encounter between Deleuze and Xunzi has shown is that such optimism can be reasonably grounded if we accept that natures can be transformed and that the New is possible. Understanding artifice and individuation, we see that the question of "if subjectivation means we are shaped to our very core by the world we find ourselves in, where can we find the means to a better world?" is a deeply flawed question.

This optimistic account is not complete. Chief among the open questions is how to reconcile the conservativism inherent in Confucianism, and Xunzi specifically, with the goals of opposing the status quo that are central to Critical Theory and most of the Continental tradition generally? (I include here even its quietist strands as, for example, the Heideggerian letting beings be is opposed to contemporary techno-science.) This is particularly pertinent in the Xunzi-Deleuze encounter argued for here. For Xunzi, new rituals, concepts, etc. are necessary only when the world has strayed from *the* Way and useful only insofar as they restore order (though not necessarily the old order). For all of the possibilities of transformation Xunzi's thought opens up, he remains a political conservative focused first and foremost on maintaining order. For Deleuze, experimentation may well be a good in itself, or if not, at least a necessity for human existence given the fundamental chaos of the world and the constitutive role that chaos plays even in the formation of order. While such a Deleuzian view expands and shows the true potential of a Xunzian account of human nature, there is much more work to be done on this encounter, and we should expect to find many incompatibilities. Furthermore, this encounter has only focused on the short-term process of subjectivation. To be completed, this account must also engage with Li Zehou's notion of subjectality and Garrison's account of the relationship between subjectivation and subjectality. Such work would, I think, require of thorough reappraisal of Continental accounts of history and its role in politics and subject formation.

Despite this account remaining incomplete, we have shown its conditions of possibility and thereby derived some practical advice. This advice, in summary, is that the New is produced in encounters, but that we as humans are rarely transformed quickly. Producing

something outside the current status quo is a condition of autonomy through subjectivation, but it is only transformative for us when it is integrated into and thereby alters our ways of life. It is this symbiosis between Xunzi and Deleuze that makes visible a deep lesson often missed by interpreters of the latter thinkers: the point of the New is not to chase novelty; it is to use what is New to change the path we are walking, and so craft a life worth living.

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Notes

1 To my knowledge, the only work in English that puts Deleuze and Guattari and Xunzi into conversation is [5]. Here, Yin contrasts Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-Animal against the traditional Confucian and European distinctions between human and animal, relative to the novel Wolf Totem. While I agree that these thinkers are opposed on that account, I aim to show a unique affinity between them.

2 A fundamental debate within Xunzi scholarship is whether Xunzi is a realist or a constructivist about the Dao. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to adjudicate the debate. Instead, I make use of Kurtis Hagen's reading of Xunzi, specifically [6–9], for the sake of setting up this encounter with Deleuze. For an example of a realist alternative to Hagen's view, see [10].

3 Here, Garrison is in good company. For example, when Varela [11] is looking for a thinker to help highlight the ethical dimensions of embodied cognition and phenomenology, he also turns to Mengzi. However, Garrison's use of Mengzi is worked out in much more detail.

4 Garrison arrives at this limitted endorsement through showing that Mengzi's and Xunzi's views converge when opposed to a common enemy, the Mohists. The Mohists opposed Confucian ritual, seeing it as extravagent and unnecessary, especially for laborers, and thereby a cause of poverty. They went so far as to condemn music (see chapters 7 and 32 of [12]). Xunzi responds that humans are shaped through their aesthetic senses, and so music, as well as ritual more generally, are required for human goodness to flourish. Garrison contends that such a defense does not depend on Xunzi's account of human nature, and that it could be just as easily paired with Mengzi's account [3] (p. 180)

5 To be more specific, Garrison here argues for Mengzi in regard to Shusterman's project of Somaesthetics. Shusterman himself favors Xunzi over Mengzi. However, since Garrison is making use of the program of Somaesthetics as a part of ameliorated Continental accounts of subjectivation generally, I am engaging with the issue at this more general level. For the sake of brevity, I will leave out direct discussion of Shusterman's Somaesthetics.

6 See [15] Ch.17, Discourse on Heaven where he argues against omens, and other forms of the supernatural, and in favor of a predictable, non-providential, impersonal regularity to the universe.

7 See [14] 6A1-2. Gaozi's writings, if any existed, are lost.

8 For an indepth account of the importance of the communal aspect of cultivating desire in Xunzi, see [16].

9 For a short introduction to subjectality, see [18]. For Garrison's engagment with the concept, see chapter 4 of [3].

10 There is some argument here as Xunzi appears to tailor his writing to his expected audience. His more authoritarian leanings may be aimed at a general audience so as to maintain order, or he may be writing such passages to rulers to gain their favor. Yet, he also will chastise rulers for not being properly benevolent or relying solely on power; here he is perhaps writing to those rulers, or to other scholars. It seems unlikely Xunzi would intend the latter passages for a more general audience. Even if not blatantly authoritarian, Xunzi is still irredeemable paternalistic.

11 For example, he councils that "The people can be easily unified by means of the Way [Dao], but one should not try to share one's reasons with them. Hence, the enlightened lord controls them with his power, guides them with the Way, moves them with his orders, arrays them with his judgements, and restrains them with his punishments," [15] (p. 240). Keep in mind that the Way is made up of rituals and techniques to be undergone by and applied to the people.

12 For example, the Warring States era thinkers that were the most focused on questions of logic and language were grouped together by Han compilers as "The School of Names".

13 As far as I know, Hagen first makes this claim in [6] (p. 90), but the claim reappears throughout [8].

14 This translation is taken from [7] (p. 118). Hutton translates the same passage as "The heart is the craftsman and overseer of the Way," [15] (p. 241). Xunzi does not distinguish between the rational and aesthetic/affective parts of cognition, leading the term xin to be translated as "heart," "mind," or "heart-mind." Thereby, one should be careful to read Xunzi's claims about deliberate human effort and the mind constructing the way not as a rationalist claim about the power of reason alone.

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