

Xunzi and Early Han Philosophy

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THE cultural prestige of the philosopher Xunzi (third century B.C.) has reached extreme highs and lows over the centuries. In his own day, he was revered as “the most senior of the masters” (*zui wei lao shi* 最爲老師)¹ and numbered among his students some of the most influential men in the Chinese world, including Han Fei (d. 233 B.C.) and Li Si 李斯 (d. 208 B.C.). He was still widely celebrated in the Western Han dynasty, when Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (fl. 152–119 B.C.) is reported to have written a paean to him (now lost).² However, by Eastern Han times, although Wang Chong 王充 (A.D. 27–ca. 100) still took him seriously as a philosopher³ and Ban Gu 班固 (A.D. 32–92) quoted him approvingly in his “Treatise on Penal Methods” 刑法志,⁴ Xunzi

¹ The source of this oft-repeated phrase is “Mengzi Xun Qing liezhuan” 孟子荀卿列傳, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 74.2348.

² Stated in Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (79–8 B.C.) preface, included in Wang Xianqian 王先謙 (1842–1918), *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解, ed. Shen Xiaohuan 沈嘯寰 and Wang Xingxian 王星賢 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 558.

³ See Nicolas Zufferey, *Wang Chong (27–97?): Connaissance, politique et vérité en Chine ancienne* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1995), pp. 100–103.

⁴ *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 23.1110–11, translated in A. F. P. Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law: Introductory Studies and an Annotated Translation of Chapters 22 and 23 of the History of the Former Han Dynasty* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), pp. 347–48. Cf. Ma Jigao 馬積高, *Xunxue yanjiu* 荀學研究 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 210–11; and J. L. Kroll, “Notes on Ch’in and Han Law,” in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China: Studies Dedicated to Anthony Hulsewé on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*, ed. W. L. Idema and E. Zürcher (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), p. 64.

had largely been eclipsed by Mencius (371–289 B.C.?) in the minds of most literati.⁵ Thus the first three or four centuries after Xunzi's death witnessed a slow but continuous decline in his reputation.

Thereafter the pace of this decline quickened. By the Tang dynasty, even admirers like Han Yu (768–824)⁶ were careful to note that Xunzi's works contained grave mistakes. A few voices, such as those of Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019–1086)⁷ and Chen Liang 陳亮 (1143–1194),⁸ still praised him in the Song, but the opinion with the greatest long-term consequences was that of Zhu Xi (1130–1200), who declared that Xunzi's philosophy resembled those of non-Confucians such as Shen Buhai 申不害 (fl. 354–340 B.C.) and Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 B.C.), and that he was indirectly responsible for the notorious disasters of the Qin dynasty.⁹ Throughout the rest of imperial history,¹⁰ Xunzi was rejected by the cultural mainstream. Into the twentieth century, he was criticized by intellectuals such as Kang Youwei (1858–1927),¹¹ Tan Sitong (1865–1898),¹²

⁵ Cf. Ma Jigao, p. 214. On the rise of Mencianism in this period, see Wolfgang Ommerborn, "Einflüsse des Menzies und seiner Theorie der Politik der Menschlichkeit (*renzhen*) in der Zeit vom 3. Jh. bis zum Ende der Tang-Zeit," *Archiv Orientalni* 73 (2005): 111–39.

⁶ "Du Xun" 讀荀, *Han Changli wenji jiaozhu* 韓昌黎文集校注, ed. Ma Tongbo 馬通伯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 1.20–21, translated in Charles Hartman, *Han Yu and the Tang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 181–82. Cf. Kong Fan 孔繁, *Xunzi pingzhuan* 荀子評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1997), p. 281.

⁷ See Peter K. Bol, "This Culture of Ours": *Intellectual Transitions in Tang and Sung China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), p. 234.

⁸ See Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Ch'en Liang on Public Interest and the Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), p. 15.

⁹ Zhu Xi's fullest exposition of his distaste for Xunzi appears in the preface to his commentary on the poem "Chengxiang" 成相 in *Chuci houyu* 楚辭後語, Siku quanshu edition, 1.1a–2a. See also Li Jingde 黎靖德 (fl. 1263), *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, ed. Wang Xingxian (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), 137.3255. Cf. Ma Jigao, p. 267; Kong Fan, pp. 291–95; and Hui Jixing 惠吉星, *Xunzi yu Zhongguo wenhua* 荀子與中國文化 (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1996), pp. 121–24 and 269–72. Possibly Song Neo-Confucians were deeply indebted to Xunzi even as they excoriated him. See Dai Junren 戴君仁, *Dai Jingshan xiansheng quanji* 戴靜山先生全集 (Taipei: Dai Gu Zhiyuan, 1980), 2:1021–30 and 1310–39.

¹⁰ With the important exception of Ling Tingkan 凌廷堪 (1755–1809), for which see Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 191–97.

¹¹ See Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A Modern China and a New World: Kang Yu-wei, Reformer and Utopian, 1858–1927* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1975), pp. 46–47 and 79.

¹² Tan laid out his objections to Xunzi in Sections 29 and 30 of his *Renxue* 仁學. See the bilingual edition by Chan Sin-wai, *An Exposition of Benevolence: The Jen-hsüeh of Tan Ssu-t'ung* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1984), pp. 146–52 (English) and 270–72 (Chinese). Cf. also Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1957–62), 2:423–24.

and Liang Qichao (1873–1929)¹³ as the progenitor of the Confucian scriptural legacy that, in their view, had derailed the original Confucian mission and plunged China into a cycle of authoritarianism and corruption that lasted for more than two thousand years.¹⁴

Today the tide has reversed almost completely. Xunzi is one of the most popular philosophers throughout East Asia¹⁵ and has been the subject of more books published in English over the past two decades than any other Chinese philosopher, vastly outstripping Mencius.¹⁶ From a twenty-first-century perspective, this revival of interest in Xunzi is not hard to explain: his body of work has always been one of the best preserved, and with the commonplace scholastic objection to his philosophy—namely, that he was wrong to say human nature is evil (*xing e* 性惡)—having lost most of its cogency, it is only to be expected that philosophical readers should be attracted to his creative but rigorous arguments. In this sense one could say that Xunzi has finally been restored, more than two millennia after his death, to his erstwhile position as *zui wei lao shi*.

¹³ See Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 74–76; Carsun Chang, 2:425; and Joseph R. Levenson, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Mind of Modern China*, revised edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 35.

¹⁴ For an idiosyncratic view of this material, see Michael Twohey, *Authority and Welfare in China: Modern Debates in Historical Perspective*, Studies on the Chinese Economy (New York: St. Martin's, 1999), p. 28, where it is argued that “Xunzi's outlook was central to China's modern reformers.” In prosecuting this thesis, Twohey mischaracterizes several of the studies he cites; for example, see p. 164 n. 22, where he says: “The flexibility of Xunzi's political system is discussed in Creel's chapter, ‘The role of compromise in Chinese culture.’” In fact Creel *criticizes* Xunzi for not encouraging his students to think for themselves and thereby straying from the paradigm of compromise that Creel attributes to Confucius. See Herrlee G. Creel, “The Role of Compromise in Chinese Culture,” in *Chinese Ideas about Nature and Society: Studies in Honour of Derk Bodde*, ed. Charles Le Blanc and Susan Blader (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1987), p. 146.

¹⁵ Kam Louie shows that the rehabilitation of Xunzi (along ideological lines) was already well underway during the first two decades of the People's Republic. See his *Inheriting Tradition: Interpretations of the Classical Philosophers in Communist China, 1949–1966* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 165–78.

¹⁶ The following have appeared since 1999 alone: Paul Rakita Goldin, *Rituals of the Way: The Philosophy of Xunzi* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999); T. C. Kline III and Philip J. Ivanhoe, eds., *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000); Masayuki Sato, *The Confucian Quest for Order: The Origin and Formation of the Political Thought of Xun Zi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Antonio S. Cua, *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005); and Janghee Lee, *Xunzi and Early Chinese Naturalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005). Also germane are the studies by Kurtis Hagen, which are forthcoming in book form as well.

However, it is worth examining the reasons for the vast intervening trough. Though the best-known criticisms of Xunzi belong to the Song dynasty (especially to philosophers, like Zhu Xi, of the fellowship known as *daoxue* 道學), a radical change in literati sentiment is detectable as early as the Six Dynasties. The two tirelessly repeated clichés about Xunzi were that he propagated the doctrine of “*xing e*,” and that, by serving as Li Si’s and Han Fei’s teacher, he furthered the cause of Qin Legalism and thus represented the antithesis of true Confucianism.

Both these accusations are woven into a Jin 晉 dynasty rhapsody by Zhongchang Ao 仲長敖.¹⁷ Since no other work of Zhongchang Ao survives, there is no hope of dating this difficult piece precisely, but it cannot be from later than the fifth century. The extant text¹⁸ is here translated in full, since it is illuminating and, to my knowledge, has never been discussed in English:

The writings of Master Xun of Zhao say that human nature is evil. His disciples Li Si and Han Fei turned to him and said, “Teacher, your saying that human nature is evil fits the facts, but you have not clarified how talent can be good or bad.¹⁹ We would like to hear your explanation.”

Master Xun said: “There are millions of clans spread between Heaven and Earth. They are alike in their endowment and physical substance; there is no difference among them. Among the three hundred naked animals, human beings are the weakest. Their nails, teeth, skin, and hair are not adequate to defend themselves with. They can only rely on deception and artifice; they take turns preying upon one another. Briefly said, there are few Yaos 堯 but many Jies 桀; one sees only a Shang Yang 商鞅 and never hears of a Ji 稷 or Xie 契.²⁰ Among fathers and sons and elder brothers and younger brothers, there are diverging passions and differing schemes. Among lords and ministers and friends, there are separate aspirations and entangling resentments. Neighboring states and communities take it as their duty to swallow each other up. The lowliest slaves and servant boys only steal and pilfer. They obey with their faces and rebel with their backs.²¹ Their intentions and their mouths oppose each other:

¹⁷ Cf. Ma Jigao, pp. 223–24. The name is misconstrued as Zhong Zhang’ao in David McMullen, *State and Scholars in Tang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 299 n. 65.

¹⁸ It is unknown whether the text translated below represents the entirety of the rhapsody. The title, *Hexing fu* 覈性賦, suggests that this may be only one section of a longer work.

¹⁹ This distinction between *cai* 才 and *xing* 性 is typical of the Six Dynasties. See Liao Qifa 廖其發, *Xian-Qin Liang-Han renxing lun yu jiaoyu sixiang yanjiu* 先秦兩漢人性論與教育思想研究 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 1999), pp. 33–55.

²⁰ Yao was one of the first sage-kings, Jie the tyrannical last ruler of the legendary Xia dynasty, Ji the patron saint of agriculture, and Xie a worthy minister.

²¹ The phrase is *mian cong bei wei* 面從背違; this could also mean “they obey to one’s face but rebel behind one’s back,” though I think the more salient contrast is between what people profess to do and what they actually do, not between how they behave when supervised and when unsupervised.

their speech is like syrup and honey, their minds aggressive and violent. Until they know whether they will succeed or fail, they bully and disparage each other. They do not tread on the path of decency, instead vying to follow aberrant tracks. Engaging and contending with each other for profit and loss, would they respect decrees and institutions? Those who cherish humanity and embrace righteousness merely earn their extinction. The Duke of Zhou and Confucius labored in vain; the Doctrine of Reputation [*mingjiao* 名教, a deprecating epithet for conventional Confucianism]²² is a vacuous construction. Their wisdom was not very different from that of all the imbeciles. If we carry this point further—who is more foolish and who more clever? You gentlemen with legalistic skills, are you able to keep from gnashing your teeth, now grabbing your wrist, now pushing up your sleeves?” [These are all standard tropes for the expression of anger and frustration.]

Before Master Xun had finished speaking, Han Fei leapt up from his mat and started to dance; Li Si beat the rhythm, and they sang out loud: “There is an end to the life of our bodies, but no limit to desires. Whether we perceive it with our nose and ears, or we open our mouths and eyes, we take in the whole host of evil and keep a distance from all good things. The tiny space of the human heart is a dizzying cliff. It is easy for human beings to make difficulties [for themselves], so that impediments can arise in an instant. Many thanks, fathomless master. It is not too late for us to recognize this.”²³

Zhongchang Ao begins with premises that Xunzi would have accepted: people are essentially the same, regardless of their birth, and are puny unless they use their social skills to form collectives. But Zhongchang Ao’s Xunzi departs from the real Xunzi by proceeding from these initial claims to state that the Duke of Zhou and Confucius were no wiser than anyone else. Xunzi himself would never have assented to anything of the kind. Rather, he would have argued that they cultivated themselves for a lifetime and thereby distinguished themselves from “all the imbeciles” (*chun’er yigai* 蠢爾一概) by attaining wisdom of the rarest kind.

²² The implication is that Confucius’s teaching is an ostentatious sham. *Mingjiao*, a term used most commonly by detractors, refers to the ethos of cultivating one’s reputation by means of exhibitionistic acts of virtue. See John Makeham, *Name and Actuality in Early Chinese Thought* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 99–111 and 172–78; Sun Shuqi 孫述圻, *Liuchao sixiangshi* 六朝思想史 (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1992), pp. 63–82; Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Zhongguo zhishi jieceng shi lun: gudai pian* 中國知識階層史論：古代篇 (Taipei: Lianjing chubanshiye gongsi, 1980), pp. 346–58; Richard B. Mather, “The Controversy over Conformity and Naturalness during the Six Dynasties,” *History of Religions* 9.2–3 (1969–70): 160–80; and Tang Yongtong 湯用彤 (1893–1964) and Ren Jiyu 任繼愈, *Wei Jin xuanxue zhong de shehui zhengzhi sixiang lietan* 魏晉玄學中的社會政治思想略談 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1956), pp. 26–43.

²³ The source-text is Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557–641) et al., *Yuwen leiju* 藝文類聚, ed. Wang Shaoying 汪紹楹, 2d edition (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1999), 21.385. I am grateful to Moss Roberts and David R. Knechtges for their help in translating this rhapsody.

Zhongchang Ao ends Xunzi's harangue by referring to "gentlemen with legalistic skills" (*fashu zhi shi* 法術之士),²⁴ a phrase apparently connoting the charge that Xunzi was merely a *fajia* 法家 in Confucian raiments. Nowhere in the rhapsody, neither in Xunzi's speech nor his disciples' song, is there any discussion of self-cultivation—a glaring omission. Whereas Xunzi's *fajia* epigones used the theory of human nature to advance administrative protocols that appeal to the population's irremediable greed, Xunzi himself insisted that all human beings had both the duty and the capacity to refashion themselves into moral paragons.²⁵

What is interesting about Zhongchang Ao's rhapsody is not that it misrepresents the historical Xunzi, but that it illustrates the tendency of literati in the Six Dynasties to portray him as the founder of the imperial ideology that had recently collapsed and that the aristocracy regarded with attitudes ranging from indifference to seething contempt.²⁶ Various works from this time denigrate Xunzi obliquely but in terms that their readers would not have mistaken; modern scholarship has generally missed the significance of these materials because they often avoid mentioning Xunzi's name explicitly.

Consider, for example, the dispute between Ji Kang 嵇康 (223–262) and Zhang Miao 張邈 (d. 291) over the question of whether learning is natural. As the documents have come down to us, Zhang Miao stated his position first, arguing, essentially, that, because people delight in the benefits of education even though these are not inborn, they must naturally love learning. Ji Kang responded:

By nature, people love security and hate danger; they love idleness and hate toil. If they are not disturbed, they attain their wishes; if they are not oppressed, they follow their inclinations.

In the past, in the era of primeval chaos, Great Simplicity had not yet waned. Lords

²⁴ If this were a Warring States document, *fashu zhi shi* would have to be translated along the more neutral lines of "men-of-service with methods and techniques," but in Zhongchang Ao's late usage, *fashu* is more plausibly construed as an accusation that Xunzi was a partisan of the *fajia*.

²⁵ On this point, see Lee, pp. 75–78; Paul Rakita Goldin, "Xunzi's Piety," in *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Herder and Herder, Crossroad, 2003), 1:297–301; Wei Zhengtong 韋政通, *Xunzi yu gudai zhixue* 荀子與古代哲學, 2d edition (Taipei: Shangwu chubanshe, 1992), pp. 218–43; and Léon Vandermeersch, *La formation du Légisme: Recherche sur la constitution d'une philosophie politique caractéristique de la Chine ancienne* (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1965), pp. 202–9.

²⁶ On the range of post-Han attitudes, see, e.g., Paul Rakita Goldin, *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), pp. 111–22, and the references cited therein.

were not contriving above, the people not quarrelsome below. Things were whole and the Plan flowed smoothly; no one failed to attain [satisfaction]. If people were full, they slept peacefully; if they were hungry, they went in search of food. They drummed on their bellies cheerfully. Unbeknownst to them, this was the era of ultimate virtue. How could they know the principles of humanity and righteousness or the contrivances of ritual and law?

When such “ultimate men” no longer existed, the Great Way deteriorated and became decrepit; it was then that people first produced writing and ink in order to transmit their ideas. They differentiated among the teeming things, causing there to be species and clans. They invented humanity and righteousness and thereby hampered their minds. They instituted titles and duties in order to regulate [the world] around them. They “encouraged learning” and lectured on writings to make their teachings seem spiritual. Thus the farrago of the Six Canons and the multifarious Hundred Schools opened the road to glory and profit, and people raced along, astonished and unaware.²⁷

Any educated reader would have recognized “They ‘encouraged learning’” (*quanxue* 勸學) as an allusion to the first chapter of the *Xunzi*.²⁸ This was a popular chapter title in early imperial times²⁹—it is attested in *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The springs and autumns of Mr. Lü),³⁰ the *Xinshu* 新書 (New writings) attributed to Jia Yi 賈誼 (201–169 B.C.),³¹ and *Da Dai Liji* 大戴禮記 (The ritual records of Dai the Elder),³² and was also the title of a lost book by Cai Yong 蔡邕 (A.D. 133–192)³³—but the oldest and most famous work to contain an “Encouraging Learning” chapter is the *Xunzi*. Interpreting Ji Kang’s essay as a veiled criticism of Xunzi only adds to the argument’s coherence. “They differentiated among the teeming things” can be unpacked as a reference to Xunzi’s theory that the fundamental characteristic of human beings

²⁷ “Nan Ziran haoxue lun” 難自然好學論, in *Ji Kang ji jiaozhu* 嵇康集校注, ed. Dai Mingyang 戴明揚 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1962), 7.259–60. Cf. the translations in Jean Lévi, *Éloge de l’anarchie par deux excentriques chinois: Polémiques du troisième siècle* (Paris: L’Encyclopédie des Nuisances, 2004), pp. 59–60; and Robert G. Henricks, *Philosophy and Argumentation in Third-Century China: The Essays of Hsi K’ang* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 139–40.

²⁸ “Quanxue,” *Xunzi jijie* 1.1.1–20.

²⁹ Cf. Anne Behnke Kinney, *The Art of the Han Essay: Wang Fu’s Ch’ien-fu lun* (Tempe, Ariz.: Center for Asian Studies, Arizona State University, 1990), pp. 57–58.

³⁰ Chen Qiyu 陳奇猷, comp., *Lüshi chunqiu xin jiaoshi* 呂氏春秋新校釋 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2002), 4.198–207.

³¹ Yan Zhenyi 閻振益 and Zhong Xia 鍾夏, eds., *Xinshu jiaozhu* 新書校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 8.296–301.

³² Wang Pingzhen 王聘珍 (fl. 18th century), *Da Dai Liji jiegou* 大戴禮記解詁, ed. Wang Wenjin 王文錦 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), 7.130–36. The first part (to p. 134) is almost identical to the “Quanxue” chapter in *Xunzi*.

³³ See the entries in Sun Qizhi 孫啓治 and Chen Jianhua 陳建華, *Gu yishu jiben mulu (fu kaozheng)* 古佚書輯本目錄 (附考證) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), p. 97.

is to make distinctions.³⁴ Although Ji Kang uses the phrase “humanity and righteousness” (*renyi* 仁義) while Xunzi preferred “ritual and righteousness” (*liyi* 禮義),³⁵ Ji goes on to mention another favorite theme of Xunzi, namely, the establishment of hierarchies that enable human society to colonize the rest of the world.³⁶ And the reference to the “Six Canons” is perhaps the most pointed of all his allusions, since Xunzi has been renowned since the dawn of the empire as the primary transmitter of the Confucian canon.³⁷ In sum, Xunzi emerges from Ji Kang’s account as the chief architect of everything that he and his group disdained: artificial ritualism, counterfeit erudition, and an oppressive network of laws that serve only to interfere with the innocuous enjoyment of life. These are not exactly the same charges conveyed by Zhongchang Ao in his rhapsody, in which Xunzi rejects the “Doctrine of Reputation.” Ji Kang, by contrast, sees him as one of the figures who worked to impose the detested social code. What Ji Kang and Zhongchang Ao have in common, however, is that they both regard Xunzi as an apologist for the Qin and Han empire.

Although Xunzi is sometimes caricatured, even today, as a kind of Legalist Confucian,³⁸ any allegation that he was an intellectual cat’s-paw for the Qin regime is baseless.³⁹ In Ji Kang’s and Zhongchang

³⁴ See Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, pp. 72–74. My practice here will be not to repeat the arguments and references presented in this book.

³⁵ See the chart in Sato, pp. 441–42. Cf. also Cua, pp. 126–32.

³⁶ Cf. Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, pp. 75–77.

³⁷ The classic study of Xunzi’s role in transmitting the classics is Wang Zhong 汪中 (1745–1794), “Xun Qingzi tonglun” 荀卿子通論, reprinted in “Kaozheng xia” 考證下, *Xunzi jijie*, pp. 21–33. See also Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, p. 108 n. 5; Wang Zhongjiang 王中江, “Chuanjing yu hongdao: Xunzi de ruxue dingwei” 傳經與弘道：荀子的儒學定位, in *Zhongguo jingxue sixiang shi* 中國經學思想史, ed. Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2003), 1:207–41; Zhang Tao 張濤, *Jingxue yu Handai shehui* 經學與漢代社會 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 50–53; Ma Jigao, pp. 148–66; and Ma Zonghuo 馬宗霍 (1897–1976), *Zhongguo jingxue shi* 中國經學史, 5th edition (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1937), pp. 24–26.

³⁸ E.g., Zhengyuan Fu, *China’s Legalists: The Earliest Totalitarians and Their Art of Ruling* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 29; and Lao Siguang 勞思光, *Zhongguo zhexueshi* 中國哲學史 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue Chongji xueyuan, 1968), 1:282–84.

³⁹ The anachronism of such views is especially noticeable in that they tend to overlook the one viewpoint for which Xunzi might have been seen by his contemporaries as a strong supporter of dynastic rule: his arguments against abdication as an appropriate system of succession. Not more than one or two generations before Xunzi, the idea that an aged ruler should abdicate and choose a worthy successor from among the general populace, instead of bequeathing the throne to his son, was still being taken seriously. Xunzi criticized the practice and the standard justifications for it in “Zhenglun” 正論, *Xunzi jijie* 12.18.331–36; thereafter, abdication was no longer

Ao's day, however, it might have rung true if Xunzi was indeed commonly seen as one of the founding fathers of the loathed imperial state. In order to gauge the likelihood of this association in the minds of Six Dynasties literati, one must examine afresh Xunzi's influence on early Han philosophy.

What little has been written on this subject is often based on obsolete scholarly assumptions. For example, John Knoblock declares that, after the establishment of the Han dynasty, "Xunzi's influence . . . markedly declined, especially in the reign of Emperor Wu when the intellectual atmosphere was at odds with Xunzi's basic views."⁴⁰ Presumably, Knoblock is referring to Dong Zhongshu, whose omenology has conventionally been understood as incompatible with Xunzi's *Tianlun* 天論 (Discourse on heaven). Nevertheless, as the following discussion will show, Dong Zhongshu stands with Lu Jia 陸賈 (ca. 228–ca. 140 B.C.) as one of the two early Han philosophers who were most eager to apply Xunzi's theories to the new circumstances presented by the creation of the imperial state. It is not surprising that scholars have had a hard time limning Xunzi's status in the early Han when they cannot even agree as to whether Dong Zhongshu followed or repudiated him.

There are other reasons why this subject has not been studied carefully. The first has to do with the condition of the extant sources. Not one of the four great early Han political advisors, namely Shusun Tong 叔孫通 (fl. 209–188 B.C.), Lu Jia, Jia Yi, and Dong Zhongshu, has had his works transmitted to the present day in uncontested editions. Shusun Tong's *Han liqi zhidu* 漢禮器制度 (Han ritual institutes) survives only in fragments,⁴¹ and the collected works of Lu Jia, Jia Yi, and Dong

considered viable by literati. See Yuri Pines, "Disputers of Abdication: Zhanguo Egalitarianism and the Sovereign's Power," *TP* 91.4–5 (2005): 243–300.

⁴⁰ *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988–94), 1:49. Most standard surveys of the period do not consider the question at all. For example, Lü Simian 呂思勉 (1884–1957) does not even mention Xunzi in the section on "Confucian studies" 儒家之學 in his *Qin Han shi* 秦漢史, in *Lü Simian wenji* 呂思勉文集 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2005), pp. 671–85.

⁴¹ Sun Qizhi and Chen Jianhua, pp. 177–78. For the controversy over whether the surviving fragments of *Pangzhang* 傍章 are also to be attributed to Shusun, see Zhang Jianguo 張建國, "Shusun Tong ding *Pangzhang* zhiyi—Jianxi Zhangjiashan Hanjian suo zai lü pianming" 叔孫通定《傍章》質疑——兼析張家山漢簡所載律篇名, *Beijing daxue xuebao: zheshe ban* 北京大學學報: 哲社版 1997.6: 44–53. For a fine overview of Shusun Tong (reproducing all the known fragments), see Hua Yougen 華友根, "Shusun Tong wei Han ding liyue zhidu jiqi yiyi" 叔孫通為漢定禮樂制度及其意義, *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 1995.2: 53–57 and 71.

Zhongshu—respectively, *Xinyu* 新語 (New speeches), *New Writings*, and *Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露 (Luxuriant dew of the springs and autumns)⁴²—have all been impugned as at least partially forged. Though nothing approaching a consensus has been reached regarding these texts, the majority view holds that there is little reason to doubt *New Speeches*,⁴³ while *New Writings* presents a more difficult case⁴⁴ and *Luxuriant Dew* has extensive spurious sections.⁴⁵ *New Writings* must contain some authentic material, because sizable passages are quoted (though often with significant variants) in the *Shiji* (Records of the historian) and *Han shu* 漢書 (History of the Han), but it is not clear how confidently one can rely on the rest. Similarly, most scholars accept the first seventeen chapters of *Luxuriant Dew*, which focus on exegesis of the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳 (Gongyang commentary),⁴⁶ but the authenticity of the other chapters

⁴² For the meaning of this title, see the discussion by Su Yu 蘇輿 (d. 1914) in *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 春秋繁露義證, ed. Zhong Zhe 鍾哲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 1.1.1; cf. also Gary Arbuckle, “Some Remarks on a New Translation of the *Chunqiu fanlu*,” *Early China* 17 (1992): 220.

⁴³ For a survey of the issues, see Mei-kao Ku, *A Chinese Mirror for Magistrates: The Hsin-yü of Lu Chia* (Canberra: Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University, 1988), pp. 7–36. See also Miyazaki Ichisada 宮崎市定, *Miyazaki Ichisada zenshū* 宮崎市定全集 (Iwanami shoten, 1991–94), 5:338–46; and Michael Loewe, “*Hsin yü*,” in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe (Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993), pp. 171–77.

⁴⁴ See Michael Nylan, “*Hsin shu*,” in Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, pp. 161–70; Wang Xingguo 王興國, *Jia Yi pingzhuan fu Lu Jia Chao Cuo pingzhuan* 賈誼評傳附陸賈晁錯評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 39–72; Cai Tingji 蔡廷吉, *Jia Yi yanjiu* 賈誼研究 (Taipei: Wenshi-zhe chubanshe, 1984), pp. 23–79; and Chen Weiliang 陳煒良, “*Jia Yi Xinsu tanyuan*” 賈誼新書探源, in *Jia Yi yanjiu* 賈誼研究, ed. Jiang Runxun 江潤勳 et al. (Hong Kong: Qiuqing yinwu gongsi, 1958), pp. 1–30.

⁴⁵ The two most detailed studies (in any language) come to similar general conclusions: Sarah A. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, According to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 39–112; and Gary Arbuckle, “Restoring Dong Zhongshu (BCE 195–115): An Experiment in Historical and Philosophical Reconstruction” (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1991), pp. 315–542. See also Joachim Gentz, *Das Gongyang zhuan: Auslegung und Kanonisierung der Frühlings- und Herbstannalen (Chunqiu)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001), pp. 408–22; Marianne Bujard, *Le sacrifice au ciel dans la Chine ancienne: Théorie et pratique sous les Han Occidentaux* (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2000), pp. 37–41; Gary Arbuckle, “Some Remarks on a New Translation of the *Chunqiu fanlu*,” esp. pp. 218–26; Steve Davidson and Michael Loewe, “*Ch’un ch’iu fan lu*,” in Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, pp. 77–87; and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀, *Liang-Han sixiangshi: di’er juan* 兩漢思想史: 第二卷 (Hong Kong: Xianggang Zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 1975), pp. 187–95.

⁴⁶ It is probably not a coincidence that, of the five titles mentioned in “Dong Zhongshu zhuan” 董仲舒傳, *Hanshu* 56.2525f, namely, “Wenju” 聞舉, “Yubei” 玉杯, “Fanlu” 蕃露, “Qingming” 清明, and “Zhulin” 竹林, the only three corresponding to chapter titles in the extant *Chunqiu fanlu* (“Yubei,” the second chapter; “Zhulin,” the third chapter; and “Fanlu,” which is probably the original title of the first chapter, now called “Chu Zhuangwang” 楚莊王) are found within this opening block.

cannot be assumed, and the chapters that espouse Five Phases cosmology are surely to be disregarded as later insertions—a relatively new insight that invalidates most twentieth-century studies of Dong Zhongshu.⁴⁷ With so much longstanding doubt hovering over all these texts, intellectual historians have tended to give them short shrift.

Yet another reason why Xunzi's imprimatur has so rarely been noticed in this body of literature is that early Han philosophers do not generally focus on the problem of human nature. Dong Zhongshu has a theory of human nature (*xing* 性), to be discussed below, but it is not the centerpiece of his philosophy; Jia Yi and Lu Jia seldom refer to it in their works.⁴⁸ As we have seen, the chestnut that "*xing e*" was Xunzi's central argument was already widespread by the Tang dynasty, and thereafter attempts to discover Xunzi's influence on later thinkers almost always took *xing* as their focus. But one can infer from the earliest extant comments about Xunzi that his arguments concerning *xing* were not taken to be his most distinctive contribution until the Eastern Han at the earliest. Not until Wang Chong is there even any external confirmation that Xunzi did indeed advance the "*xing e*" theory.⁴⁹ Moreover, the newly discovered Guodian 郭店 and Shanghai Museum documents show that Xunzi's understanding of *xing* was unexceptional for its time and that Mencius's use of the term, rather, would have been considered eccentric.⁵⁰ All this means that one will rediscover Xunzian themes in early Han philosophy only if one is prepared to set aside the notion that Xunzianism begins and ends with *xing e*.

It is reasonable to begin a reassessment of Xunzi's influence on Han philosophy with Lu Jia, since this figure may have belonged to Xunzi's own pedagogical lineage. Tang Yan 唐晏 (the alternative name of the Manchu scholar Zhenjun 震鈞, 1857–1920), reported that "some"

⁴⁷ Especially that by Xu Fuguan.

⁴⁸ According to Wang Xingguo, pp. 245–49, Jia Yi held that there is both good and evil (in varying ratios) in human nature, but this appraisal is based on a synthesis of Jia Yi's views expressed in other contexts. There is no evidence that Jia Yi ever felt obliged to construct an explicit theory of *xing*. Cf. also Liao Qifa, pp. 27–30; and Mori Mikisaburō 森三樹三郎, *Jōko yori Kandai ni itaru seimeikan no tenkai—jinseiron to ummeikan no rekishi* 上古より漢代に至る性命觀の展開—人性論と運命觀の歴史 (Sōbunsha, 1971), pp. 193–219.

⁴⁹ "Benxing" 本性, in *Lunheng jiaoshi (fu Liu Pansui jijie)* 論衡校釋 (附劉盼遂集解), ed. Huang Hui 黃暉 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 3.13.138. Cf. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, p. 52.

⁵⁰ See Paul R. Goldin, *After Confucius: Studies in Early Chinese Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), p. 55.

(*huo* 或) have called Lu Jia a direct disciple of Xunzi, but, regrettably, provided no references,⁵¹ and the two men's dates make this relationship inherently unlikely. (The dates of Xunzi's birth and death are an unsettled question, but he may well have been dead before Lu Jia was even born.) More plausible is the thesis that Lu Jia was a disciple of Xunzi's student Fuqiu Bo 浮丘伯, whose other famous pupils included Shen Pei 申培 (d. after 139 B.C.) and Liu Jiao 劉交, Prince of Chu 楚 (r. 201–178 B.C.).⁵² Lu Jia speaks highly of Fuqiu (whom he calls Baoqiu 鮑邱) in an enigmatic passage in *New Speeches*,⁵³ where he seems to have originated the rhetorical trope of comparing Fuqiu favorably with the more widely acclaimed Li Si.⁵⁴ Lu Jia also quotes frequently from the *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳 (Guliang commentary) to the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (Springs and autumns), a tradition that Fuqiu Bo's student Shen Pei is known to have transmitted to others, so it is possible that Lu Jia learned it from Fuqiu Bo himself.⁵⁵ However, if Lu Jia really was a student of Fuqiu Bo, this fact must have been forgotten even in antiquity, as he is never mentioned alongside Fuqiu's other disciples.⁵⁶

At any rate, the strongest evidence of Lu Jia's indebtedness to Xunzi lies on the level of ideas.⁵⁷ Like Xunzi, Lu Jia appealed to the classics as

⁵¹ "Tang Yan *Luzi Xinyu jiaozhu xu*" 唐晏陸子新語校注序, reproduced in *Xinyu jiaozhu* 新語校注, ed. Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), pp. 222–23.

⁵² Cf. Ku, p. 152 n. 8. On Fuqiu Bo, see also Michael Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods (221 B.C.–A.D. 24)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 111; Ma Jigao, pp. 151–52; and Knoblock, 1:38.

⁵³ "Zizhi" 資質, *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.7.112.

⁵⁴ For another example, see the opening of the "Huixue" 毀學 chapter of *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論, in *Yantie lun jiaozhu* 鹽鐵論校注, ed. Wang Liqi, revised edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 4.18.229.

⁵⁵ See the insightful note by Dai Yansheng 戴彥升 in *Xinyu jiaozhu*, B.7.112 n. 1, as well as his preface to *Luzi Xinyu* 陸子新語 (dated 1826), *Xinyu jiaozhu*, pp. 216–19. Cf. also Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (1883–1955), *Siku tiyao bianzheng* 四庫提要辨證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 10.521–22.

⁵⁶ A similar link to Xunzi can be established for Jia Yi, whose first patron, a certain Commandant Wu 吳公, was a former student of Li Si. See "Qu Yuan Jiasheng liezhuan" 屈原賈生列傳, *Shiji* 84.2491; and "Jia Yi zhuan" 賈誼傳, *Han shu* 48.2221. Cf. Cai Tingji, p. 1; and Chen Weiliang, "Jia Yi yu ru fa dao gejia zhi guanxi" 賈誼與儒法道各家之關係, in Jiang Runxun et al., pp. 43–44. Moreover, Jia Yi is said to have received the *zuozhuan* 左傳 from the redoubtable scholar and statesman Zhang Cang 張蒼 (d. 151 B.C.), who in turn received it from Xunzi. See the chain of transmission recorded in Lu Deming 陸德明 (556–627), *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文, *xulu* 序錄, *Siku quanshu* edition, 1.31b. Cf. Ma Yong 馬勇, *Handai Chunqiu xue yanjiu* 漢代春秋學研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1992), pp. 175–78.

⁵⁷ One of the most cogent studies of Xunzi's influence on Lu Jia is Li Dingfang 李鼎芳, "Lu Jia *Xinyu* jiqi sixiang lunshu—*Xinyu hui jiaozhu* daixu" 陸賈《新語》及其思想論述——《新語會校

the best practical guide to government and moral self-cultivation,⁵⁸ and held up the later, rather than the earlier, sages as models because their achievements are recorded more fully in the sources and the problems they faced were more similar to those of later times.⁵⁹ But Lu's most important philosophical thesis is that human beings bring about auspicious and inauspicious omens through their own actions. As is well known, Xunzi argued strongly against the old idea that weird occurrences on earth can be rationalized as monitory signs from Heaven.

When stars shoot down and trees squall, the citizens are all terrified. They say, "What is this?" I say, "It is nothing." These are the shifts in Heaven and Earth, transformations of *yin* and *yang*, material anomalies. It is acceptable to wonder at them, but it is not acceptable to fear them. No generation has been without eclipses of the sun and moon, untimely winds and rains, or the appearance of wondrous stars. If the ruler is enlightened and the government peaceful, even if such things arise all together, they cannot cause any harm. If the ruler is benighted and the government precarious, even if none of these things should happen, [their absence] will confer no benefit.⁶⁰

What is crucial, in other words, is not how loudly the trees may have squalled this year, but how people have behaved. Xunzi goes on to expound his theory of "human portents" (*renyao* 人祲), a term denoting the many shortsighted and immoral acts through which human beings bring on their own ruin. "When ritual and morality are not cultivated" (*liyi bu xiu* 禮義不修) and "when men and women engage in licentious disorder" (*nannü yinluan* 男女淫亂) are typical examples of "human portents." Heaven has no part in such affairs. Now and then strange things may happen in the skies, but they have happened at all moments in history, and they have never been sufficient to destroy a prudent and moral society—whereas an imprudent and immoral society will fail even if it is spared an eclipse. Good acts have good consequences; bad acts have bad consequences; and only fools (and hypocrites) wait for Heaven to intercede.⁶¹

注》代序, *Hebei daxue xuebao* 河北大學學報 1980.1: 63–74. The title refers to what sounds like an annotated edition of Lu Jia by the same author, but I do not believe this was ever published.

⁵⁸ Cf. Michael J. Puett, *To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), pp. 253–54; and Jin Chunfeng 金春峰, *Handai sixiangshi* 漢代思想史, revised edition (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1997), p. 80.

⁵⁹ Cf. Ku, p. 44; also Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), *Zhongguo zhonggu sixiangshi changbian* 中國中古思想史長編 (Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 1996), p. 88.

⁶⁰ "Tianlun," *Xunzi jiji* 11.17.313.

⁶¹ Cf. Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, pp. 47–51.

Lu Jia accepted this framework, but with a single, consequential innovation: people bring about their own fortune or misfortune by emitting *qi* 氣.

Thus when societies fail and the Way is lost, it is not the work of Heaven. The lord of the state has done something to cause it. Bad government breeds bad *qi*; bad *qi* breeds disasters and abnormalities. Locusts are born in accordance with the *qi*; rainbows appear in accordance with the government. When the Way of Order is lost below, the patterns of Heaven change above. [This is a reference to comets and other celestial prodigies.] When bad government flows among the people, locusts are born in the wilderness.⁶²

By adding the element of *qi*—a term that Xunzi almost never used, and certainly did not build into his metaphysics—Lu Jia retains Xunzi's volitionless and mechanistic Heaven but forges a novel philosophical justification for the arcane science of omenology, which Xunzi mercilessly deprecated. Where Xunzi counseled us to ignore abnormalities, Lu Jia accepts their validity as “admonitions” (*jie* 誡). However, for Lu Jia as for Xunzi, Heaven itself has no effect on our success or failure. If a cloud of locusts appears, we should know that we are responsible for their generation through our own maleficent conduct.⁶³

This nuance helps to explain arguments in *New Speeches* that might otherwise seem mutually contradictory. A typical example is furnished by the following passage, in which Lu takes pains to describe the kind of behavior that will educe auspicious and inauspicious natural responses. He calls these responses “tallies” (*fu* 符).

If those located in superior positions are not indolent, they will cause no harm to those below. If you grasp the One in governing all things, then even if [your power] is sparse, it will certainly become massive. If your mind is self-indulgent and your passions dissipated, then even if you are lofty, you will certainly collapse. If your *qi* leaks, this will engender disease; your allotted lifespan will not be long. If you turn things upside-down

⁶² “Mingjie” 明誡, *Xinyu jiaoshi* B.11.155. Cf. the translations in Jean Lévi, *Lu Jia: Nouveaux principes de politique* (Paris: Zulma, 2003), pp. 98–99; Miyazaki, 5:372; Ku, p. 125; and Annemarie von Gabain, “Ein Fürstenspiegel: Das Sin-yü des Lu Kia,” *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 33 (1930): 60.

⁶³ Cf. Puett, *To Become a God*, pp. 249–50; and *The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 152–57; Aihe Wang, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 177–80; Liao Qifa, p. 292; Zhou Guidian 周桂鈺, *Qin Han sixiangshi* 秦漢思想史 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 51–53; Jin Chunfeng, pp. 86–87; Wang Xingguo, pp. 433–35; Ku, pp. 56–58; Uchiyama Toshihiko 內山俊彦, *Chūgoku kodai shisōshi ni okeru shizen nishiki* 中國古代思想史における自然認識 (Sōbunsha, 1987), pp. 247–48; and Li Dingfang, pp. 68–69.

without principle, you will lose the Way and not succeed. Thus the tallies stimulated by *qi* may be pure and bright; the expression of one's unvarnished inner state may be serene and harmonious. One who is complaisant is firm; one who is tranquil is blessed. If your will is settled and your mind at peace, your veins will be strong.⁶⁴

The same chapter, however, contains a scathing condemnation of omenology:

People of this generation do not study the *Odes* and *Documents*, perpetuate humanity and righteousness, respect the Way of the Sages, or plumb the depths of the canonical arts. Instead, they present unverifiable sayings, study things that are not so, chart the shape of Heaven and Earth, explain abnormalities such as disasters and prodigies. They rebel against the methods of the Former Kings; they depart from the intention of the Sages; they delude the minds of scholars and seduce the will of ordinary people. They approve or disapprove of current affairs by pointing to Heaven and demarcating the Earth. They motivate people with evil prodigies and alarm them with wonders. Those who listen to them think they are like spirits; those who look at them think they are extraordinary.⁶⁵

Does Lu himself not “explain abnormalities such as disasters and prodigies”? At first blush it may seem odd that Lu spares no venom in censuring augurs and seers, when portents clearly have a place in his own cosmology. The first of these two excerpts goes so far as to imply that one can perceive people's virtue by studying their countenance—a practice commonly known as “physiognomy” (*xiang* 相), which Xunzi, as one might expect, bitterly criticized.⁶⁶ Why is physiognomy permissible if astromancy is not? Such seeming discrepancies can be reconciled by assuming that Lu's ire is aimed at those who fail to apply his *qi*-based theory of omenology, which locates the ultimate source of all portents firmly within the human realm. In Lu's view, one who purports to explain prodigies by decoding supposed changes in Heaven is a charlatan; one who explains them as the natural reaction to offensive *qi* released by human beings in the process of committing immoral acts, is a philosopher.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ “Huailü” 懷慮, *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.9.139. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, p. 88; Miyazaki, 5:369; Ku, p. 117; and von Gabain, p. 55. Cf. also “Mingjie,” *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.11.157: “It is said in the *Changes*: ‘Heaven dispenses its images and reveals auspicious and inauspicious [signs], which the Sages take as their model. Heaven issues its good Way; the Sages grasp it.’ This is to say that they master the marvels of divination, bibliomancy, and calendography.”

⁶⁵ “Huailü,” *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.9.137. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, pp. 86–87; Miyazaki, 5:368–69; Ku, pp. 115–16; and von Gabain, p. 54.

⁶⁶ “Feixiang” 非相, *Xunzi jijie* 3.5.72–76.

⁶⁷ Puett has a somewhat different explanation: “Those who try to attain such powers [as divination]

Xunzi himself would not have tolerated these kinds of distinctions; to him, any unusual phenomena other than “human portents” are at most passing freaks of nature with no conceivable prognosticative significance. Lu Jia’s conception of omens is, therefore, informed by that of Xunzi, but not identical to it. What Lu Jia kept intact, however, was Xunzi’s image of an eternal and constant Heaven that does not willfully interfere in human affairs; Lu drew from this premise the same distinctive conclusion as Xunzi: creating a good world is a task that Heaven began but human beings must “complete.” After giving us the necessary faculties and resources, Heaven thrust us into an incomplete world that awaits transformation at our hands. Xunzi’s formulation of this idea was “Heaven and Earth give birth to it; the Sages complete it” 天地生之，聖人成之，⁶⁸ to which Lu Jia alludes at the beginning of his book: “It is handed down: ‘Heaven gives birth to the Myriad Things, Earth nourishes them, and the Sages complete them’” 傳曰：天生萬物，以地養之，聖人成之。⁶⁹ Lu Jia goes on to assert, in line with Xunzi, that the Sages provided the people with morality and civilization, which they fashioned on the basis of principles observed in nature:

Then the first sage [Fuxi 伏羲]⁷⁰ looked up and observed Heaven’s patterns, looked down and investigated the principles of Earth. He graphed *Qian* 乾 and *Kun* 坤 [the trigrams representing Heaven and Earth] in order to fix the Way of Humanity. For the first time, the people became aware; they came to know the intimacy between father and son, the righteous relationship between lord and minister, the separation between husband and wife, the precedence between elder and younger. Then the Hundred Offices were established and the Way of Kings was born.⁷¹

There follows a lengthy sequence of sages, from the Divine Farmer 神農 and the other heroes of highest antiquity, who furnished the

may claim for themselves, and influence others to claim, complete autonomy from the teachings of the sages.” See his *To Become a God*, p. 248. Cf. Aihe Wang, p. 178; and Hu Shi, p. 93.

⁶⁸ “Fuguo” 富國, *Xunzi jijie* 6.10.182. Though it is inexplicably missing from the text of the “Dalüe” 大略 chapter in *Xunzi jijie*, the same apophthegm is found there in other editions of *Xunzi*; see, e.g., Liang Qixiong 梁啟雄, *Xunzi jianshi* 荀子彙釋 (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1936), 27.372. This was probably a common saying in ancient times; see the references in Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, p. 117 n. 40. Cf. also Ma Jigao, p. 205.

⁶⁹ “Daoji” 道基, *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.1.1.1. Cf. David Schaberg, “Platitudes and Persona: *Junzi* Comments in the *Zuozhuan* and Beyond,” in *Historical Truth, Historical Criticism, and Ideology: Chinese Historiography and Historical Culture from a New Comparative Perspective*, ed. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 182; and Uchiyama, pp. 244–45.

⁷⁰ Cf. Wang Liqi’s note in *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.1.9 n.1.

⁷¹ “Daoji,” *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.1.9. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, p. 21; Miyazaki, 5:332 and 347; Ku, p. 65; and von Gabain, p. 19.

basic technologies of human civilization, down to the unnamed sages of more recent times who combated iniquity by instituting canonical texts and houses of learning. All these achievements required the genius of human beings. Although the Sages were careful to accord with Heaven's principles in their works ("they governed the Earth by making themselves subalterns of Heaven" 承天統地),⁷² Heaven itself did nothing to bring these advances about.⁷³

Lu Jia returns to this theme on several occasions, as below:

The Sages received the brilliance of Heaven; they took the movements of the sun and moon as a standard of rectitude, recorded the measurements of the stars and constellations, accorded with what is profitable in Heaven and on Earth, ranked the gradations of lofty and base, and set up [ways of exploiting] the commodious mountains and rivers. They pacified the Four Seas, divided the Nine Continents, made everyone's likes and dislikes similar, and unified customs.⁷⁴

Sometimes Lu depicts the human achievement of creation in literal terms, as in the following passage, where he implies that the sage kings and ministers of antiquity, by deposing wicked rulers and thereby ushering in a golden age of peace and morality, induced the Yellow River and Luo River to yield their precious scriptures:

Lords like Tang 湯 [of Shang 商] and Wu 武 [of Zhou 周] and ministers like Yi Yin 伊尹 and Lü Shang 呂尚 carried out punishments in accord with the Heavenly seasons; they moved in concert with *yin* and *yang*. Above, they observed Heaven's patterns; below, they examined people's hearts. They subdued the many [troops of their enemies] with the few [troops at their disposal]; they controlled the strong despite their weakness. With but three hundred armored chariots and three thousand armed soldiers, they chastised their enemy and quashed his hosts. In this way, they requited their great enmity; they suppressed contrary and disorderly lords, and eliminated the source of unruly turpitude. The world was at peace, and families and individuals were adequately supplied; ordinary men practiced humanity, and even merchants were trustworthy. [These sages] pacified Heaven and Earth and restored the ghosts and spirits; the Yellow River produced its *Tu* 圖 (Chart), the Luo River its *Shu* 書 (Writing).⁷⁵

⁷² "Daoji," *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.1.18.

⁷³ Cf. Puett, *To Become a God*, pp. 248–49; Zhou Guidian, pp. 60–62; Wang Xingguo, pp. 450–52; Li Dingfang, pp. 70–71; Hu Shi, pp. 84–87; and Alfred Forke (1867–1944), *Geschichte der mittelalterlichen chinesischen Philosophie* (1934; rpt., Hamburg: Cram, de Gruyter, 1964), pp. 7–8.

⁷⁴ "Mingjie," *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.11.157. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, pp. 100–101; Miyazaki, 5:373; Ku, p. 126; and von Gabain, p. 61.

⁷⁵ "Shenwei" 慎微, *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.6.95. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, pp. 64–65; Miyazaki, 5:361–62; Ku, p. 98; and von Gabain, pp. 41–42. On the *Hetu* and *Luo-shu*, see, e.g., Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954–), 3:55–62.

The notion that we are enjoined by circumstances to complete our own creation manifestly rests on the belief that Heaven, like an absentee god, withdrew after producing the natural world, leaving it behind for humanity to cultivate. The philosophy of Huang-Lao 黃老, though it differs from that of Lu Jia in many respects, proceeds from a similar conception of Heaven and the Way as forces that abide by knowable laws, rather than as conscious beings who can be swayed with prayers or blandishments.⁷⁶ Xunzi's lingering prestige must have contributed to the popularity of this kind of cosmology. On the one hand, he was not the sole parent of this way of thinking, since the conception of the universe as a place governed by constant principles rather than capricious spirits characterizes much of the late Warring States literature. It is obviously anticipated in the *Laozi* 老子, and permeates such texts as *Pheasant-Cap Master* (*Heguanzi* 鶡冠子)⁷⁷ as well. On the other hand, Xunzi did the most to make this outlook intellectually respectable at the turn of the third century B.C.⁷⁸

Two other passages in Lu Jia's work bespeak Xunzi's influence. Though less central to his philosophy than his theories of Heaven and omenology, these are in some respects even more revealing, because they may shed light on the type of material that was used in his education. In the first of these passages, Lu Jia refers to the obscure story that Confucius executed a man named Petty Officer Mao 少正卯.⁷⁹ To my knowledge, the oldest extant source of the tale is the *Youzuo* 宥坐

⁷⁶ On Huang-Lao, see Ding Yuanming 丁原明, *Huang-Lao xue lungang* 黃老學論綱 (Jinan: Shandong daxue chubanshe, 1997); and R. P. Peerenboom, *Law and Morality in Ancient China: The Silk Manuscripts of Huang-Lao* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1993).

⁷⁷ See A. C. Graham, *Unreason within Reason: Essays at the Outskirts of Rationality* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1992), pp. 121–35; and *idem*, “A Neglected Pre-Han Philosophical Text: *Ho-kuan-tzu*,” *BSOAS* 52.3 (1989): 497–532.

⁷⁸ Cf. Goldin, “Xunzi's Piety,” pp. 299–300; and, for a different perspective, Robin McNeal, “The Development of Naturalist Thought in Ancient China: A Review of W. Allyn Rickett's *Guanzi*,” *Early China* 28 (2003): 161–200.

⁷⁹ “Fuzheng” 輔政, *Xinyu jiaozhu* A.3.55. For parallels, see “Zhiwu” 指武, in *Shuoyuan jiaozheng* 說苑校證, ed. Xiang Zonglu 向宗魯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 15.380–81; “Jiangrui” 講瑞, *Lunheng jiaoshi* 16.50.725; “Dadao xia” 大道下, in *Xinyi Yinwenzi* 新譯尹文子, ed. Xu Zhongliang 徐忠良 and Huang Junlang 黃俊朗 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996), pp. 125–26; “Shizhu” 始誅, in Yang Zhaoming 楊朝明, *Kongzi jiayu tongjie fu chutu ziliao yu xiangguan yanjiu* 孔子家語通解附出土資料與相關研究 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou, 2005), 1.2.20; and “Xinyin” 心隱, in *Liuizi jiaoshi* 劉子校釋, ed. Fu Yashu 傅亞庶 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), 5.22.217. The meaning of *shaozheng* 少正 is explained in Knoblock, 3:372 n. 10; cf. also R. P. Kramers, *K'ung tzu chia yü: The School Sayings of Confucius* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1950), pp. 263–64.

(Warning vessel on the right). Though transmitted as a chapter of the *Xunzi*,⁸⁰ this is probably not by Xunzi himself, but rather, as Knoblock has suggested, may be part of a body of texts that Xunzi assembled as a “proper curriculum.”⁸¹ The same chapter may be the source of another article of Confucian lore repeated by Lu Jia: the story that Confucius and his disciples encountered hardship when they were traveling between Chen 陳 and Cai 蔡. (The *locus classicus* is *Analects* 15.2.)⁸² Significantly, Lu Jia uses this anecdote to illustrate the truism that unfavorable circumstances sometimes preclude success:

When the Master was in distress between Chen and Cai, his beans, rice, vegetables, and broth were not sufficient to stave off hunger, nor his disciples’ plain shirtsleeves⁸³ and rag gowns sufficient to ward off the cold. They were in dire straits, having placed themselves in such extremes. However, the Master took the Way as his responsibility⁸⁴ and his disciples remained close to righteousness. Though only a gentleman of plain clothes [i.e., not a salaried officer], above he [*lacuna*] the Son of Heaven and below he pacified the common people; he wearied his body in order to assist his superior. He lamented the decay of the House of Zhou and the disuse of ritual and righteousness. Although he tumbled into straitened circumstances, he peregrinated and declaimed before the feudal lords; he wished to rectify the Way of Emperors and Kings and return [proper] government to the world. But he did not have the right standing and the age did not have the right ruler. He wandered around the world, but there was no one who matched his intentions.⁸⁵

It is telling that Lu ends with the observation that the world was not ready for Confucius, because, as I have argued elsewhere,⁸⁶ “The Warning Vessel on the Right” appears to be the oldest text conjoining the two well-worn tropes on display in this passage, namely “Confucius and his disciples faced difficulties between Chen and Cai” and “even sages will suffer failure if the circumstances are not propitious.” Thus it seems likely that Lu Jia learned of this episode, as well as that of Petty

⁸⁰ *Xunzi jijie* 20.28.520–21.

⁸¹ Knoblock, 3:237.

⁸² See, generally, John Makeham, “Between Chen and Cai: *Zhuangzi* and the *Analects*,” in *Wandering at Ease in the Zhuangzi*, ed. Roger T. Ames (State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998), 75–100.

⁸³ Following the commentary of Yu Yue 俞樾 (1821–1907), *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.10.144 n. 8.

⁸⁴ Following the commentary of Wang Liqi, *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.10.144 n. 11.

⁸⁵ “Benxing,” *Xinyu jiaozhu* B.10.142. Cf. the translations in Lévi, *Nouveaux principes de politique*, pp. 91–92; Miyazaki, 5:370; Ku, pp. 119–20; and von Gabain, p. 56.

⁸⁶ *After Confucius*, p. 50. Xunzi’s version of the narrative is found in “Youzuo,” *Xunzi jijie* 20.28.526–27.

Officer Mao, from the same kind of textbook that Xunzi had compiled one or two generations earlier.

Thus far, the discussion has dwelled on Lu Jia, not because he is a particularly original thinker, but because his works have suffered relatively little damage and the derivation of his ideas from those of Xunzi is transparent. When we turn to Dong Zhongshu, however, the situation becomes more complicated. Although there is a great deal of writing attributed to Dong Zhongshu, its authenticity, as mentioned above, is difficult to evaluate. A researcher wishes neither to be waylaid by trusting a spurious document nor to dismiss one that turns out to be genuine. The most judicious approach may be to place the most stock in the quotations from Dong Zhongshu found in texts other than *Luxuriant Dew*, especially the set of memorials reproduced by Ban Gu in the *History of the Han*, but this technique has two defects of its own: first, it narrows the scope of the evidence (and removes much of it from its original context);⁸⁷ second, it places us at the mercy of those responsible for the preservation of these materials, since they may have had their own reasons for distorting Dong's work. Indeed, there is reason to suspect that Ban Gu may have habitually condensed and doctored the texts cited in his history.⁸⁸ Moreover, Dong's arguments are sometimes confusing and contradictory. For all these reasons, any modern reconstruction of his philosophy is necessarily tentative.

Critics have surmised for centuries that Dong Zhongshu was influenced by Lu Jia,⁸⁹ and in some ways, their philosophies are similar. Like Lu, Dong is most renowned for his omenology and made *qi* a crucial element of his theory. But Dong introduced a productive distinction: instead of discussing *qi* as a uniform, monadic substance, he

⁸⁷ For example, Dai Junren, 2:868–80, facing a similar methodological problem in his analysis of Jia Yi, elects to disregard *Xinshu* and limit himself to the sources quoted in *Han shu*, but ends up with an overview of Jia Yi's philosophy that deals almost exclusively with politics.

⁸⁸ See Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," pp. 66–76.

⁸⁹ See, e.g., "Anshu" 案書, *Lunheng jiaoshi* 29.83.1169. Li Dingfang, pp. 67–68 and 74 n. 24, asserts that evidence is found in *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 as well, but does not give a precise reference. Presumably he is thinking of Lu's and Dong's discussions of omenology in "Fan Kuai wen ruiying" 樊噲問瑞應 and "Dong Zhongshu da Bao Chang wen jingshi yubao" 董仲舒答鮑敞問京師雨雹, in *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記, ed. Zhou Tianyou 周天游 (Xi'an: San Qin chubanshe, 2006), 3.156–57 and 5.240–43, respectively. The best survey of the textual history of *Xijing zaji* is still William H. Nienhauser, Jr., "Once Again, the Authorship of the *Hsi-ching tsa-chi* (Miscellanies of the Western Capital)," *JAO* 98.3 (1978): 219–36.

found a new application for the old model that differentiated *qi* into aspects called *yin* and *yang*. This refinement allowed him to construct cosmological arguments of unprecedented specificity.

Good government, in Dong's view, properly attunes the *yin* and *yang* aspects of the *qi* that makes up the world, with magnificent results:

Thus one who is a ruler of men rectifies his heart in order to rectify his court, rectifies his court in order to rectify the Hundred Offices, rectifies the Hundred Offices in order to rectify the myriad people, and rectifies the myriad people in order to rectify the four quarters. When the four quarters are rectified, no one near or far dares not be at one with this rectification, and there is no perverse *qi* to cause turmoil among them. Thus *yin* and *yang* are attuned and the wind and rain timely; the teeming things are harmonious and the myriad people fertile; the Five Cereals ripen and the plants and trees flourish.⁹⁰

By the same token, bad government causes *yin* and *yang* to produce catastrophes:

Later generations, in their licentiousness and indolence, decayed, and [rulers] were no longer able to control the teeming things. The feudal lords became treacherous; they preyed on the good ordinary people in order to compete with each other for arable territory. They did away with the instruction of virtue and relied on laws and punishments. When laws and punishments are not appropriate, perverse *qi* is born. Perverse *qi* gathers among inferiors, and resentment and evil collect among superiors. When superiors and inferiors are not in harmony, *yin* and *yang* become deranged, and portents and catastrophes are born. This is the reason why disasters and abnormalities arise.⁹¹

The “Yubao dui” 雨雹對 (The conversation about rain and hail), attributed to Dong Zhongshu and a disciple named Bao Chang 鮑敞, lists the many auspicious signs of an era of utmost peace (*taiping zhi shi* 太平之世), and concludes:

In such a case, when a sage is at the top, *yin* and *yang* are harmonized and the wind and rain timely. But when there are many mistakes in government, *yin* and *yang* will

⁹⁰ “Dong Zhongshu zhuan,” *Han shu* 56.2502–3. Cf. the translations in Michael Puett, “Following the Commands of Heaven: The Notion of *Ming* in Early China,” in *The Magnitude of Ming: Command, Allotment, and Fate in Chinese Culture*, ed. Christopher Lupke (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005), pp. 63–64 (also, *To Become a God*, pp. 294–95); and Wilhelm Seufert, “Urkunden zur staatlichen Neuordnung unter der Han-Dynastie,” *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen* 23–25 (1922): 23. Seufert’s admirable work is, to my knowledge, the only complete translation of Dong’s memorials into any Western language. A good Chinese summary of this corpus can be found in Dai Junren, 3:1879–96; cf. also Michael Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 121–41.

⁹¹ “Dong Zhongshu zhuan,” *Han shu* 56.2500. Cf. the translations in Arbuckle, “Restoring Dong Zhongshu,” p. 131; and Seufert, p. 20.

not be attuned; the wind will overturn houses; the rain will flood the rivers; snow will get into oxen's eyes; and hail will kill donkeys and horses.⁹²

Thus far, Dong Zhongshu's system is in line with what Lu Jia had taught two generations earlier: our actions cause reactions in *qi*, and those reactions in turn produce desirable or undesirable natural phenomena.⁹³ However, Dong's biographies record that he applied this *yinyang* framework to rain-making rituals of his own devising.⁹⁴ Here he departs from his predecessors, as there is no record that either Lu Jia or Jia Yi performed rain-making rituals, while Xunzi, as is well known, ridiculed them.⁹⁵ In Dong's view, virtuous conduct is not the only way to guarantee a favorable climate; in an emergency, one can also implement corrective measures that quickly restore a salutary balance of *yin* and *yang*.

When Zhongshu governed the principality [i.e., of Jiangdu 江都, where he served as Chancellor], he inferred the manner in which *yin* and *yang* interact from prodigies such as the disasters and abnormalities [recorded in] the *Springs and Autumns*. Thus when he sought rain, he would close off all *yang* and set loose all *yin*; when he wished to stop the rain, he would do the opposite. Practicing this throughout the principality, he never failed to attain the end he desired.⁹⁶

Another text, ostensibly from his tenure as Chancellor of Jiangdu, confirms that Dong dealt with drought by trying to redress the superabundance of *yang* and shortage of *yin*.

⁹² Preserved in "Dong Zhongshu da Bao Chang wen jingshi yubao," *Xijing zaji*, 5.241–42; and the anonymous Tang dynasty compilation, *Guwen yuan* 古文苑, ed. Qian Xizuo 錢熙祚 (Guoxue jiben congshu edition), 11.268–69. Cf. Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, pp. 62–63.

⁹³ Cf. Sarah A. Queen, "The Way of the Unadorned King: The Classical Confucian Spirituality of Dong Zhongshu," in Tu and Tucker, p. 311; Kanaya Osamu 金谷治, *Kanaya Osamu Chūgoku shisō ronshū* 金谷治中國思想論集 (Hirakawa shuppansha, 1997), 1:159–69; Itano Chōhachi 板野長八, *Jukyō seiritsushi no kenkyū* 儒教成立史の研究 (Iwanami shoten, 1995), p. 158; Uchiyama, pp. 276–98; and Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), *Qin Han shi* 秦漢史 (Hong Kong: Xinhua shudian, 1957), p. 90. Cf. also the summary of Dong's views offered by the camp of the literati in "Lun zai" 論齋, *Yantie lun jiaozhu* 9.54.556. I am indebted to Gopal Sukhu for the last reference.

⁹⁴ The most exhaustive account of Dong's sacrifices for rain is Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," pp. 217–36. See also Kanaya, *Kanaya Osamu Chūgoku shisō ronshū*, 1:165–66; Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, pp. 52–57 and 106–11; and Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy*, pp. 151–57.

⁹⁵ "Tianlun," *Xunzi jijie* 11.17.316.

⁹⁶ "Dong Zhongshu zhuan," *Han shu* 56.2524. Cf. the translations in Puett, *To Become a God*, p. 290; and Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," p. 218. For the parallel in Dong's *Shiji* biography, see "Rulin zhuan" 儒林傳, *Shiji* 121.3128.

[Dong] Zhongshu memorialized the Prince of Jiangdu, saying: “The method of seeking rain is to decrease *yang* and increase *yin*. I request, Great Prince, that you allow an exemption of one month’s worth of taxes to those women in Guangling 廣陵 who act as invocators on behalf of others. Grant [this concession] to the various shamanesses.⁹⁷ The various shamanesses, whether great or petty, should gather at the gate of the outer wall; they should make a small altar in order to immolate dried meat and liquor. The women should, by themselves, select a broad and convenient place for the market to be moved to. The market deputies should not let in any men, for men should not be permitted to go drink and eat with [the women]. Order each of the officials’ wives to go and see her husband. When all this has come to pass, [the procedure] will have begun; the rain will saturate the ground, and then it will stop.”⁹⁸

The cosmological underpinnings of this rite are the same as in Dong’s explanation of baleful prodigies: through their actions, human beings alter the balance of *qi* in the world, often with disastrous effects; but once the science of *qi*-manipulation is properly understood and applied, it becomes possible to reverse the negative consequences of misguided actions and re-establish an equilibrium of *yin* and *yang* through a series of precisely coordinated ceremonies. Dong’s method is reminiscent of the remedies of traditional doctors, who attack disease—construed as the manifestation of an imbalance of *qi* in the body—by attempting to restore equilibrium. This affinity with medical reasoning may even have contributed to the common misconception that Dong also subscribed to the cosmography of the Five Phases, for it is characteristic of early imperial medical texts—for example, the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Inner canon of the Yellow Emperor)—to invoke both *yinyang* and the Five Phases.⁹⁹

The *yinyang* paradigm was so congenial to Dong Zhongshu that he even employed it in trying to put to rest the never-ending debate over human nature:¹⁰⁰ “In the great warp of Heaven, there is both *yin* and

⁹⁷ The association of shamans and especially shamanesses with rain-making rituals is ancient; see, e.g., “Siwu” 司巫, *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏, in *Shisan jing zhushu fu jiaokan ji* 十三經注疏附校勘記 (1817; rpt., Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 26.816a: “If there is a great drought in the state, [the Director of Shamans] leads the shamans and dances the rain-making rite”; and “Nüwu” 女巫, *Zhouli zhushu* 26.816c: “If there is a scorching drought, [the shamanesses] dance the rain-making rite.” See, generally, Edward H. Schafer, “Ritual Exposure in Ancient China,” *HJAS* 14.1–2 (1951): 130–84.

⁹⁸ “Liyi zhong” 禮儀中, *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), *zhi* 志, 5.3118. Cf. the translation in Arbuckle, “Restoring Dong Zhongshu,” p. 220.

⁹⁹ See, e.g., Paul U. Unschuld, *Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: Nature, Knowledge, Imagery in an Ancient Chinese Medical Text* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 83–123.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Uchiyama, pp. 276–77.

yang; in the great warp of humanity, there is both passion and nature. Nature is born of *yang*; passion is born of *yin*. *Yin qi* is base; *yang qi* is humane. Those who say that human nature is good are looking at the *yang*; those who call it evil are looking at the *yin*.¹⁰¹ With this tidy solution, Dong sought to reconcile the Mencian and Xunzian camps in a typically syncretistic way: each is correct on its own terms, but both have missed the deeper truth. However, Dong's theory, taken to its logical conclusion, leads to a philosophical quagmire. If it is true that the base aspects of our being are due to *yin*, and the virtuous aspects to *yang*, then it follows that good people have a preponderance of *yang*, evil people a preponderance of *yin*. (It might even follow that one could improve oneself by augmenting one's *yang*, but if Dong ever espoused this view, there is no longer any document that attests to it.) Aside from raising grave gender problems,¹⁰² this means that, in a nation of inordinately virtuous people, *yang qi* would outweigh *yin*—precisely the condition that, as we have seen, produces drought. According to Dong's scheme, then, it would seem that the maintenance of seasonable weather requires the troubling premise that human beings stay continually suspended in a state halfway between good and evil. Whether this dilemma can be chalked up to the imperfect condition of the sources or represents a genuine contradiction in Dong's thinking is not easy to determine,¹⁰³ but it may help explain the declining esteem that Dong was accorded in the centuries after his death. Elaborate cosmologies without a commensurately robust concept of self-cultivation have not enjoyed lasting popularity in Chinese history.

Dong's cosmology is incoherent in other respects. His rationalization

¹⁰¹ From a lost text by Dong elucidating *xingqing* 性情, quoted by Wang Chong in "Benxing," *Lunheng jiaoshi* 3.13.139–40. Cf. the translations in Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, p. 52; and Alfred Forke, *Lun-heng* (1907–11; rpt., New York: Paragon, 1962), 1:389.

¹⁰² See Robin R. Wang, "Dong Zhongshu's Transformation of *yin-yang* Theory and Contesting of Gender Identity," *Philosophy East and West* 55.2 (2005): 209–31; and Bret Hinsch, *Women in Early Imperial China* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 153–54.

¹⁰³ On Dong's conception of human nature, I have benefited greatly from private correspondence with Sarah A. Queen. Some material in *Chunqiu fanlu*, especially Chapters 35 and 36, "Shenchaminghao" 深察名號 and "Shixing" 實性, presents a different image of the *xing*. "Shixing," for example, offers a straightforward post-Xunzian understanding of human nature and goodness: "[When speaking of] *xing*, one should be aware of what it denotes: what arises without being contingent on anything else, what one possesses from birth. The goodness that one possesses is [the result of] education and instruction; it is no longer *xing*. Thus edible rice emerges from the husk, but the husk cannot be called edible rice"; "Shixing," *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 10.36.312.

of disasters as the consequence of manmade disturbances in *qi* suggests that he views Heaven in the same way as Xunzi, Lu Jia, and Jia Yi: as a volitionless nexus of constant and predictable forces. But other passages in the memorials recorded in the *History of the Han* suggest that Heaven does play an active role in the generation of omens after all.

I, your servant, have carefully reviewed the contents of the *Springs and Autumns*, where I have seen the affairs carried out by previous generations. In this way I have observed that the locus of interactions between Heaven and human beings is dreadful. When a state is about to be vanquished because it has lost the Way, Heaven first produces disasters in order to reprimand [the ruler]; if he does not then know to scrutinize himself, it produces further abnormalities in order to alarm him; if he still does not know to change, his vanquishment will come to pass. One sees in this that the heart of Heaven loves the lord of men and wishes to put an end to disorder on his part. As long as his generation is not one that has utterly lost the Way, Heaven wishes only to support him and make him secure.¹⁰⁴

One might contend that Dong's characterization of Heaven as a willful entity that sincerely loves the terrestrial ruler is merely a *façon de parler*: perhaps he means that Heaven is really mechanistic, but that the mysterious cosmic processes appear to us as though guided by an intelligent divinity (rather in the way that microbiologists today sometimes speak of viri that "learn" to attack different kinds of hosts). However, the proviso in the final line that Heaven will not send omens unless the society is corrigible—which, as other documents confirm, is to be taken seriously¹⁰⁵—makes this interpretation problematic. If Heaven were merely the sum total of all natural laws, the consequences of our actions would be the same regardless of the moral standing of our epoch. A Heaven that considers whether we can profit from its omens before it produces them must have some degree of consciousness.

Whether Dong Zhongshu's Heaven is (to borrow one scholar's terminology) "naturalistic" or "anthropomorphic"¹⁰⁶ remains an unresolved

¹⁰⁴ "Dong Zhongshu zhuan," *Han shu* 56.2498. Cf. the translations in Aihe Wang, p. 185; Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, p. 216; Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," p. 130; and Seufert, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ See the memorial reproduced in "Wuxing zhi" 五行志, *Han shu* 27A.1332, astutely discussed in Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," pp. 194–95.

¹⁰⁶ Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, pp. 218–22. Cf. also *idem*, "The Way of the Unadorned King," p. 309; Kanaya, *Kanaya Osamu Chūgoku shisō ronshū*, 1:169–74; and Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," pp. 130–33 and 252–54. See also the discussion in Aihe Wang, pp. 185–90, with conclusions differing from those offered here. Donald J. Munro must have had these "anthropocosmic" passages in mind when he wrote that Dong Zhongshu regards Heaven as a "Being" that "issues commands." See his *A Chinese Ethics for the New Century: The Ch'ien Mu Lectures in History and Culture*,

problem in the secondary literature. But it is clear that Dong imagines Heaven's workings, at least for practical purposes, as rational and regular. For example, he believes, like Xunzi and Lu Jia, that the Sages produced civilization by following the normative patterns laid down by Heaven.

I, your servant, have heard that Heaven is the ancestor of the teeming creatures. Thus it covers, embraces, and contains them everywhere, so that nothing is divergent. It has established the sun, moon, wind, and rain in order to harmonize them; it regulates *yin*, *yang*, cold, and hot in order to complete them. Thus the Sages modeled themselves on Heaven and took their stand in the Way. Indeed, they loved broadly and did away with selfishness; they broadcast virtue and acted with benevolence in order to enrich [the people], and set up propriety and erected ritual in order to guide them.¹⁰⁷

Again like Xunzi and Lu Jia, Dong Zhongshu believed that the greatest of the Sages' achievements was the composition of the Five Canons. Dong himself specialized in the *Springs and Autumns*, and cited that work most frequently, but he appreciated the unique value of each of the other four canons, and envisioned the entire corpus as a synoptic whole.¹⁰⁸ Moreover, for Dong as for Xunzi, the Sages' literary productions also included efficacious music, which inspires listeners to improve their habits and pattern their own utterances after the Sages' august models.¹⁰⁹

Armed with rites and scriptures inherited from the Sages, human beings organize themselves into stratified societies and thereby take their rightful place as suzerains of the living world.¹¹⁰

and *Other Essays on Science and Confucian Ethics* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2005), p. 71. Cf. also his earlier *The Concept of Man in Early China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969), pp. 40–41. Nowhere does Munro cite any primary texts supporting these claims. Zhang Qiang 張強, *Sima Qian xueshu sixiang tanyuan* 司馬遷學術思想探源 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2004), pp. 67–70, argues that Sima Qian's work evinces a similar unresolved tension between a materialistic conception of Heaven as the set of natural laws and a religious conception of Heaven as a volitional entity.

¹⁰⁷ "Dong Zhongshu zhuan," *Han shu* 56.2515. Cf. the translations in Puett, "Following the Commands of Heaven," p. 62 (also, *To Become a God*, p. 293); Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," p. 127; and Seufert, pp. 40–41.

¹⁰⁸ See "Yubei," *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 1.2.36, discussed in Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁹ "Dong Zhongshu zhuan," *Han shu* 56.2499. Cf. Dai Junren, 3:1880. On the place of music in Xunzi's philosophy, see Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, pp. 78–81.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Puett, "Following the Commands of Heaven," pp. 62–63; Itano, p. 158; Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," p. 138; and Machida Saburō 町田三郎, *Shin Kan shisōshi no kenkyū* 秦漢思想史の研究 (Sōbunsha, 1985), pp. 169–70.

Human beings receive their mandate from Heaven; thus they are surpassingly different from the teeming things. Within, they have intimacy between fathers and sons, elder brothers and younger brothers; without, they have propriety between lords and vassals, superiors and inferiors. When they gather and convene, they have conventions for seniors and juniors. Brilliantly they receive each other with culture; sedately they love each other with magnanimity. This is the manner in which humans are noble. They grow the Five Cereals in order to feed themselves, cultivate silk and hemp in order to clothe themselves, and tend the Six Domestic Animals in order to nourish themselves. They tame oxen, harness horses, ensnare leopards, and cage tigers. This is because they have obtained the numen of Heaven; they are nobler than other creatures. Thus Confucius said: "Of the living things¹¹¹ among Heaven and Earth, human beings are the noblest."¹¹²

A brief examination of Jia Yi's views of omens and ritual will serve to highlight the distinctive features of Lu Jia's and Dong Zhongshu's philosophies. Jia Yi agreed with his two coevals that human beings are responsible for their own fortune or misfortune and thus have no cause to blame Heaven:¹¹³

Doing good is simply the way to bring fortune on oneself; doing evil is simply the way to bring ruin on oneself. Thus Heaven cannot assail those who have received Heaven-bestowed fortune, while those who have been ruined by Heaven must not complain to Heaven, for they have caused this by their own actions. Those who know what is good but do not practice it are called unenlightened; those who know evil but do not reform themselves will certainly receive calamities from Heaven. Heaven's fortune is constant: it is always bestowed on the virtuous. Heaven's ruin is constant: it is always bestowed on those who snatch the people [for labor] during the wrong seasons.¹¹⁴

Yet it is clear from this and similar passages that Jia Yi does not reserve a role for *qi*—let alone *yin* and *yang*—in bringing about fortune or ruin. In this respect, he remains closer to Xunzi than either Lu Jia or Dong Zhongshu. Though he does not adopt Xunzi's keyword "human portents," his conception of the process by which we bring about our

¹¹¹ Following the commentary of Yan Shigu 顏師古 (581–645), *Han shu* 56.2516 n. 8.

¹¹² "Dong Zhongshu zhuan," *Han shu* 56.2516. Cf. the translations in Puett, "Following the Commands of Heaven," pp. 62–63; also, *To Become a God*, pp. 293–94; Arbuckle, "Restoring Dong Zhongshu," p. 138; and Seufert, pp. 42–43.

¹¹³ Cf. Jin Chunfeng, pp. 100–103; Cai Tingji, pp. 135–38; Kung-chuan Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, vol. I: *From the Beginnings to the Sixth Century A.D.*, tr. F. W. Mote (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 475–76; and Forke, *Geschichte der mittelalterlichen chinesischen Philosophie*, p. 18.

¹¹⁴ An allusion to *Mencius* 1A.5. "Dazheng shang" 大政上, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 9.339.

own success or failure is essentially the same: we help or harm ourselves through our actions because they have certain foreseeable consequences—as, for example, planting and harvesting in the wrong seasons will have the foreseeable consequence of famine—and not because we emit good or evil *qi*. It is also worth noting that Jia Yi, in line with Xunzi but in contrast to Lu Jia, argued unambiguously against physiognomy.¹¹⁵

In other matters, however, Jia Yi departed further from Xunzi than did either Lu Jia or Dong Zhongshu. Like most Han philosophers, Jia Yi was drawn to the idea of using ritual to differentiate roles within society, but he stressed the stability and order that would ensue rather than the power of human beings to dominate other species:¹¹⁶

If [distinctions between] the lowly and honorable are made manifest, if superiors and inferiors are distinguished, then human relations will fit the proper standards. Thus the ruler is to his vassals as the sun to the stars. Vassals do not hope to be able to imitate the ruler; the base do not hope to be able to encroach on the noble. If inferiors do not exceed their grades, the position of superiors will be honored; if vassals do not step beyond their level, the position of the lord is secure. If one carefully safeguards this skein of relations, disorder will have no place to arise from.¹¹⁷

Similarly Jia Yi stated:

Thus the Sage Kings of antiquity instituted the range of grades. Inside [the royal court], there were the [Three] Excellencies, the [Nine] Ministers, grand masters, and men-of-service; outside [in the feudal domains], there were dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, and barons. After these, there were superintendents and petty officials. They brought [this hierarchy] down to the commoners so that grades and levels would be clearly distinguished. And the Son of Heaven was placed above all of them; thus his honor could not be reached [by anyone else].¹¹⁸

Xunzi, Lu Jia, and Dong Zhongshu all argued that ritual does more than simply arrange the population in a conveniently governable fashion; it also benefits human beings by uniting them socially and thus

¹¹⁵ See “Dengqi” 等齊, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 1.47.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Wang Jixun 王繼訓, “Cong Lu Jia dao Jia Yi: Kan xian Qin ruxue dui Hanchu sixiang-jie de yingxiang” 從陸賈到賈誼：看先秦儒學對漢初思想界的影響, *Linyi shifan xueyuan xuebao* 臨沂師範學院學報 2004.4: 42; Jin Chunfeng, pp. 88–91; Wang Xingguo, pp. 91–102; Cai Tingji, pp. 107–9 and 143–48; Hsiao, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, pp. 481–82; and Chen Weiliang, “Jia Yi yu ru fa dao zhi guanxi,” in Jiang Runxun et al., pp. 37–38.

¹¹⁷ “Fuyi” 服疑, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 1.54.

¹¹⁸ “Jieji” 階級, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 2.80.

allowing them to take advantage of natural resources and domesticate other species—all of which would be impossible for individual persons acting alone. It is curious that Jia Yi did not emphasize this function of ritual, since it was a distinctive Xunzian idea, and he would not have had an obvious ideological reason for rejecting it. On most important issues, however, Jia Yi followed Xunzi more than he deviated from him.

However, despite the pervasive influence of Xunzi sketched above, in certain respects Lu Jia, Jia Yi, and Dong Zhongshu have more in common with each other than with Xunzi. Most obviously, they were all subjects of an empire, while Xunzi was not; thus their political arguments always had to proceed from the assumption that the Son of Heaven had already been chosen. In practice, many of their recommendations (such as organizing society on the basis of ritual) proved to be similar to those of Xunzi, but with an important theoretical nuance: they were writing about how the emperor could *retain* his position as Son of Heaven, whereas for Xunzi, the issue was how a particular ruler could *achieve* it. Similarly, Xunzi could travel from kingdom to kingdom and find a new patron if his old one no longer suited him. He is known to have served in Zhao, Qi, Chu, and Qin, and was free to berate princes in language that might have gotten someone like Jia Yi summarily executed.¹¹⁹

The differences between Xunzi's attitude toward the realm of Qin and those of the early Han writers are attributable to the same circumstances. For Xunzi, Qin was a mighty but flawed state that might, if corrected, eventually rule the world;¹²⁰ for Lu Jia, Jia Yi, and Dong Zhongshu, Qin was an empire that had lost its mandate in spectacular fashion, and whose failure had to be exhaustively analyzed so as never

¹¹⁹ See his scathing epistle to Huang Xie 黃歇 (Lord Chunshen 春申君, d. 238 B.C.), preserved in “Ke shui Chunshen jun” 客說春申君, *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1978), 17.567, and Qu Shouyuan 屈守元, ed., *Han Shi waizhuan jianshu* 韓詩外傳箋疏 (Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 1996), 4.414, and translated in Knoblock, 1:29. It is repeated, but not attributed to Xunzi, in “Jian jie shi chen” 姦劫弑臣, in *Han Feizi xin jiaozhu* 韓非子新校注, ed. Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 2000), 4.14.297–98.

¹²⁰ “Ruxiao” 儒效, *Xunzi jijie* 4.8.117–21, and “Qiangguo” 彊國, *Xunzi jijie* 11.16.302–4. Cf. Zhang Wenli 張文立 and Song Shangwen 宋尚文, *Qin xueshushi tanze* 秦學術史探蹟 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2003), pp. 68–89; and Yu Zongfa 余宗發, *Xian Qin zhuzi xueshuo zai Qindi zhi fazhan* 先秦諸子學說在秦地之發展 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1998), pp. 103–6.

to be repeated. Identifying and decrying the excesses of Qin was therefore commonplace in early Han literature.¹²¹

Finally, although Lu Jia, Jia Yi, and Dong Zhongshu respected the Five Canons as the patrimony of the ancient sages, they all drew particular inspiration from the *Springs and Autumns*, each becoming identified with one of its three major commentarial traditions: *Zuo* 左 (Jia Yi), *Gongyang* (Dong Zhongshu), and *Guliang* (Lu Jia). In this respect, they may have set the tone for generations of Han literati, who tended to place the *Springs and Autumns* at the summit of the canon,¹²² whereas, throughout the Eastern Zhou, the preeminent text had been the *Odes*.

Not long after Dong Zhongshu, Xunzi's star began to set. In *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (Discourses on salt and iron), compiled in the early first century B.C. by Huan Kuan 桓寬, quotations from Mencius outnumber quotations from Xunzi by ten to one.¹²³ Although one cannot rule out the possibility that these figures might reflect Huan Kuan's own preferences, it is reasonable to assume that, as a digest of the arguments put forward in a real debate, *Discourses on Salt and Iron* reveals at least a partial glimpse of the range of authoritative texts that literati were apt to cite at the time. The *Xunzi* does not seem to have ranked among them.

By the Six Dynasties, literati had developed an antipathy toward Xunzi for two reasons: they saw him as the exponent of the weaker

¹²¹ The most famous example, Jia Yi's "Guo Qin lun" 過秦論, is found in *Xinshu jiaozhu* 1.1–25. There is a comparable essay by Jia Shan 賈山 (fl. 175 B.C.; no relation to Jia Yi) in "Jia Zou Mei Lu zhuan" 賈鄒枚路傳, *Han shu* 51.2327–36. On Jia Shan, see Reinhard Emmerich, "Präliminarien zu Jia Shan und dessen Werk," *Über Himmel und Erde: Festschrift für Erling von Mende*, ed. Raimund Th. Kolb and Martina Siebert, *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 57.3 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 55–83; and Kanaya Osamu, *Shin Kan shisōshi kenkyū* 秦漢思想史研究, revised edition (Heirakuji, 1992), pp. 316–22. Dong Zhongshu's criticism of Qin law is discussed incisively in Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon*, pp. 127–30; see also Zhang Tao, *Jingxue yu Handai zhixue*, pp. 190–204. On Sima Qian's place in the Western Han *guo Qin* 過秦 movement, see Zhang Qiang, pp. 180–200.

¹²² Rudolf G. Wagner attributes the prestige of the *Springs and Autumns* to "Dong Zhongshu's intervention with Han Wudi." See his *Craft of a Chinese Commentator: Wang Bi on the Laozi* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2000), p. 34. Cf. also Zhang Tao and Yuan Fazhou 袁法周, "Jingxue yu Handai de zhidu jianshe" 經學與漢代的制度建設, *Nandu xuetan* 南都學壇 2005.5.2: 6–8. But the use of this text by Zhang Cang, Lu Jia, and Jia Yi suggests that it may have already begun its ascent two or three generations before Dong.

¹²³ Esson M. Gale, *Discourses on Salt and Iron: A Debate on State Control of Commerce and Industry in Ancient China* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1931), p. xlvii.

side in the debate over human nature and they condemned him as one of the main intellectual apologists for the hated empire. But neither of these considerations would have carried much weight in Huan Kuan's time, when the end of the empire was not in sight and the discourse of human nature had not yet taken its decisive Mencian turn. That Xunzi should have fallen out of favor so rapidly and thoroughly is puzzling. I believe there are at least two discernible reasons for this trend.

First, omenology became increasingly prominent in Han political culture.¹²⁴ Of the three early Han thinkers discussed in this article, only Jia Yi was ambivalent about the significance of portents, while Lu Jia and Dong Zhongshu both made omenology a cornerstone of their philosophies. Dong's view was the closest to that of later generations; eventually it became impossible to legitimate the ruler's sovereignty without appealing to Heaven-sent omens of various kinds. The burgeoning interest in omens is probably related to another preoccupation of Han political thought, namely, the Mandate of Heaven. Xunzi did not make much use of this concept, and the First Emperor of Qin, in keeping with the times, made little effort to affirm that his reign was mandated by Heaven. The Han historians, by contrast, took pains to scrutinize all the nuggets of evidence indicating that the emperor did indeed enjoy Heaven's sanction.¹²⁵ With the development of these intertwined concepts, omenology and Heaven's Mandate, Xunzi's role in shaping imperial ideology could only have been diminished.

Second, Xunzi may have suffered for expatiating on *li* 禮 instead of *ren* 仁. Without denying its importance, Xunzi rarely discussed *ren*, whereas he saw in *li* the sage guidelines for every conceivable human endeavor. Later writers, even when they admired Xunzi, found themselves compelled to grant *ren* more political purchase. For example, Jia Yi, no less of a devotee of ritual governance than Xunzi, noted when describing the rule of the Sage King Yao that, above all, he practiced *ren*:

He practiced humanity and established righteousness; he spread his virtue and lavished moral transformation [upon the people].¹²⁶ Thus, without being rewarded, the people were encouraged; without being punished, the people were orderly. He first

¹²⁴ Cf. Itano, pp. 313–28; Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy*, pp. 94–97; Hihara Toshikuni 日原利國, *Kandai shisō no kenkyū* 漢代思想の研究 (Kembun shuppan, 1986), pp. 64–82; and Qian Mu, pp. 209–14.

¹²⁵ Cf. Loewe, *Divination, Mythology and Monarchy*, pp. 88–93.

¹²⁶ Following the commentary of Yan Zhenyi and Zhong Xia, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 9.365 n. 27.

placed himself in other people's shoes, and only then would act; therefore, the reputation of his virtue was far-reaching.¹²⁷

If Xunzi was understood, rightly or wrongly, as a philosopher who emphasized doctrine and discipline at the expense of humanity, he would have become unpopular once China began to explore individualism in the first millennium A.D.

¹²⁷ “Xiuzheng yu shang” 脩政語上, *Xinshu jiaozhu* 9.360.